

**Implement and
Monitor
Environmentally
Sustainable
Work Practices**

BSBSUS401



**SUCCESSION
TRAINING**

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Introduction

Resources are all the things you need to do your job on a regular basis. They are the things that you often take for granted and do not give much thought to. For example; in an office environment resources used can include:

- Paper products and stationery
- Toner and ink cartridges
- Chemicals for cleaning
- Office furniture and business equipment

Whereas in the telecommunications industry they might include:

- Lengths of cable and electrical leads
- Hardware items
- Data points
- Wall power sockets

Every organisation has a variety of items that they need in order to conduct their business. Each and every one of these resources adds up to make an enormous difference to the cost efficiency of the organisation and to its carbon footprint.

What is a Carbon Footprint?

A carbon footprint is the direct effect our actions and lifestyle have on the environment in terms of carbon dioxide emissions. The biggest contributors to carbon footprint are travel needs, and electricity demands. However, in some way, all our actions have a direct or indirect impact. Consider:

- the food we eat
- the clothes we wear
- the way we entertain ourselves
- the way in which we move from place to place (cars, buses, aeroplanes)

Everything we use needs to be manufactured or produced in some way. Machinery requires energy; cars, buses and aeroplanes burn fuel; and in our homes and offices we use a significant portion of electricity that generally come from fossil fuel burning power plants. All these actions contribute to accelerating global warming and climate change – leaving behind a 'carbon footprint'.

Many businesses are looking closely at their work practices and the resources they use in terms of reducing their carbon footprint or their impact on the environment. There are a number of government initiatives at a national and global level directed at making improvements in the way we work. In general, to assist in setting up 'green' offices and places of work we have a responsibility to:

- think about the way we use energy
- the products and services we use – and in turn produce
- the way we produce them

1. Investigate current practices in relation to resource usage

The first step towards developing a sustainable workplace is to review the organisations current resource usage. Ask yourself:

- What resources are being used?
- How they are being used and are there better alternatives to current practices?

1.1 Identify environmental regulations applying to the enterprise

A successful, environmentally sustainable workplace is bigger than your own workspace. It requires the resources, support and commitment of the entire organisation to fully succeed.

As with all other aspects of business operations, the environmental sustainability of an organisation involves policies and procedures at an internal organisational level and a legislative level – issues that are required by the government or environmental bodies.

These policies and procedures may include (but are not limited to)

- meeting relevant laws, by-laws and regulations or best practice models; best practices can be defined as the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people
- work plans and strategies to minimise waste or increase efficient use of resources
- addressing environmental and resource sustainability initiatives such as environmental management systems, action plans, green office programs, surveys and audits
- determining the most appropriate waste treatment methods
- appointing a staff member, or committee, to oversee the design, implementation and monitoring of a 'green office' strategy for the organisation
- prevention and minimisation of environmental risks and hazards

An important consideration in developing a sustainable workplace is to be aware of any legal requirements you may have to comply with.

This will be particularly true of any industry that has any environmental management issue such as:

- heavy water usage
- substantial power usage
- issues with hazardous waste or substances
- poor waste management

You will need to be aware of, and be compliant with, laws relevant to your organisation as well as meeting the by-laws and regulations (or best practice or codes of practice)

to support compliance in environmental performance and sustainability. This might mean developing an awareness of regulations including but not limited to:

Commonwealth – Department of Environment	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act http://www.environment.gov.au/
	National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 National Pollutant Inventory Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011
State/Territory	The Environmental Protection Authority in each state is responsible for regulating a wide range of activities and monitoring compliance with legislation and statutory instruments covering air emissions, noise, waste, water quality, forestry, contaminated sites, dangerous goods, hazardous materials and pesticides. For further information see: QLD: www.epa.qld.gov.au NSW: www.epa.nsw.gov.au VIC: www.epa.vic.gov.au WA: www.epa.wa.gov.au SA: www.epa.sa.gov.au
Industry	Depending on the industry you are in, there may be more – or less – stringent requirements for environmental protection and sustainability. Example when working in an insurance or accounts office you may look at recycling paper or using power and water more efficiently; whereas in the construction industry (or one where hazardous substances are in use) you will have to comply with waste management including hazardous waste handling policies and procedures at the very least.
Organisation	The organisation you work in (and its industry sector) will dictate internal policies and procedures in relation to sustainable work practices. Consider: • responsible use of water and power • recycling programs and waste management • use of suppliers who comply with sustainable work practices • building design and management

1.1.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 EPBC

The EPBC Act enables the Australian Government to join with the states and territories in providing a truly national scheme of environment and heritage protection and biodiversity conservation.

The objectives of the EPBC Act are to

- Provide for the protection of the environment, especially matters of national environmental significance
- Conserve Australian biodiversity
- Provide a streamlined national environmental assessment and approvals process
- Enhance the protection and management of important natural and cultural places
- Control the international movement of plants and animals (wildlife), wildlife specimens and products made or derived from wildlife
- Promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources
- Recognise the role of Indigenous people in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity
- Promote the use of Indigenous peoples' knowledge of biodiversity with the involvement of, and in cooperation with, the owners of the knowledge

The impact of this Act on the business environment ensures that all organisations will develop policies and procedures around their use of resources to make sure that no harm is done to the environment. This includes correct handling, storage and disposal of any hazardous waste or substances.

1.1.2 Hazardous Waste Regulations

To this end, the Government has introduced the Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1989. The main purpose of the Act is to regulate the export and import of hazardous waste to ensure that hazardous waste is disposed of safely so that human beings and the environment, both within and outside Australia, are protected from the harmful effects of the waste.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/environment-protection/hazardous-waste/about-hazardous-waste-act>

You need to understand

- Is your material waste?
- Is your material hazardous?
- Is your material intended for final disposal or recovery?
- Where is the waste coming from or going to?

Having determined whether material you are disposing of is, indeed, "waste" and "hazardous" it must be disposed of in the appropriate manner.

Many hazardous products and substances come with Safety Data Sheets (SDS), previously called Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). This document provides

information on the properties of hazardous chemicals and how they affect health and safety in the workplace. SDS includes information on

- The identity of the chemical
- Health and physicochemical hazards
- Safe handling and storage procedures
- Emergency procedures
- Disposal considerations

The SDS should always be referred to when assessing risks in the workplace. The risks include both injury to person or place as well as environmental.

Work health and safety regulations require the manufacturer or importer of a hazardous chemical to prepare an SDS for all chemicals. A supplier must provide the manufacturer or supplier's current SDS for the hazardous chemical on first supply to a workplace and upon request.

For a list of legislation administered by the Department of the Environment see:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/about-us/legislation>

Take a look at a sample Safety Data Sheet on the next page.

Safety Data Sheet sample

Product Name—Washwell	Heavy duty detergent
SDS issue date	1 February 2011
Product ID	1234
Company name	Kleenwell Pty. Ltd. Chemical Drive Keysborough VIC 3122 Phone: 03 9768 1234
Ingredient	Sodium hydroxide (caustic soda)
Health hazards data Effects of exposure Signs and symptoms of overexposure medical—aggravated by exposure first aid	Skin: concentrated solutions can be destructive to tissues producing burns. Ingestion: can cause severe injury. Burns: skin, lungs, respiratory system disorders. Wash affected areas of skin with copious amounts of water. Obtain medical attention in all cases.
Handling and disposal Waste disposal methods Handling and storage precautions	Dilute with copious amounts of water and dispose of according to federal, state and local Regulations. Store in a dry area: keep container closed when not in use.
Fire and explosion hazard information Fire fighting procedures Unusual fire/ explosion hazard	None required. Neutralisation with acids produces heat sometimes violently.
Control measures Respiratory protection Ventilation Protective gloves Eye protection Work hygienic practices	None required. Local exhaust sufficient. Use recommended. Use recommended. Remove clothing rinse thoroughly with water.
Physical/ chemical properties Appearance and odour	Purple liquid with natural odour.
Reactivity data Materials to avoid	Strong acids.

1.2 Analyse procedures for assessing compliance with environmental/sustainability regulations

When looking at developing an environmentally sustainable workplace it is necessary to look at the work practices and resources we use and determine the following:

Consideration	What is really happening?
Compliance	Is usage, storage and disposal compliant with relevant legislation and codes of practice?
Effective	Are resources being used as effectively as possible? Are you using your resources in accordance with the manufacturer or

Consideration	What is really happening?
	organisational instructions? Incorrect use of resources can cause damage, injury, waste and financial cost.
Alternatives	Are you using the best resource for the job? Are there 'green' products that could be substituted? Are there alternative methods of completing the task which use less?
Reuse, recycle, reduce	Are you wasting resources needlessly? Are you re-using and recycling wherever possible? Are you using only what you need?
Purchasing	Do your purchasing procedures for resources reflect an environmentally sustainable strategy? Can you do better?
Hazard management	Are you presenting hazards to people or the environment? Working with machinery, electrical equipment, chemicals or toxic substances, bad lighting or bad ventilation are all areas of concern and if they exist in a given workplace should be reviewed with alternative products and means in mind.
How sustainable is it really?	In terms of us understanding whether a product is sustainable we need to undergo a complete shift in our thinking right back to the design phase. How can we tell whether we are getting the real thing? Consider the Cradle to Cradle notes below.

1.2.1 Cradle to Cradle

Manufacture of a product takes into account many factors:

- cost, both financially and environmentally
- responsibility for impacts of manufacturing
- health by-products of production, delivery and storage, material use
- reuse
- use of renewable energy sources
- water management
- social fairness

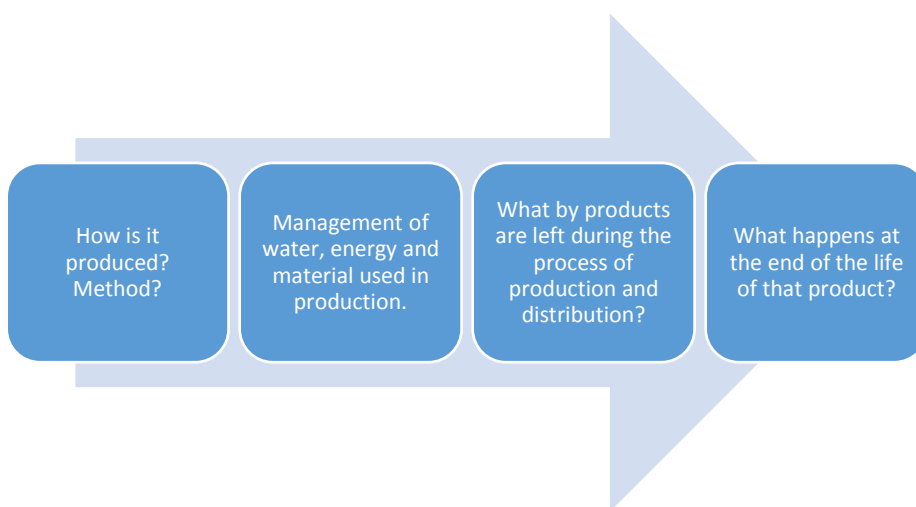
A truly sustainable product or service gets a big tick on each of these areas of production and the life of this product.

Traditionally we were only concerned with the financial impact of the production process. The answer to the last question was barely considered or poorly considered. Now with an increase in pressure to be more aware and responsible in the environmental sense we need to think from Cradle to Grave, or even better Cradle to Cradle. C2C.

Example

Premium blind manufacturers take great steps to produce blinds with an “environmentally responsible outlook”. Consider, colouring of fabrics without the use of dye baths, use of as few toxic and non-degradable materials as possible in the production of fabric. Use of non-toxic chemicals in the production of flame retardant fabrics, no lead or heavy metals. Fabrics which support reduction in heat gain in buildings minimising the need to air-condition are a great choice in sustainable building fit outs. Repair of products rather than disposal is a priority. Fitting blinds with sun sensors further maximises the potential for excellence in environmental sustainability practice. There are many producers at the top end of the market who adopt these initiatives and more. Yes, the products cost more to purchase at the outset but what are the long-term costs, and what are the environmental savings?

For the Cradle to Cradle principle to work, we really must address the last question in this cycle.



Many industry bodies have identified needs to “measure” the effectiveness of their sustainable initiatives.

Example

Several tools are available for use in the planning of buildings. Accredited assessors are required in most cases to look at a project with these principles and measurement tools in place.

These give you an indication of how much more there is to sustainability than recycling paper in your office. If you want more information on any of these tools visit:

<http://www.yourhome.gov.au/glossary/building-rating-tools>

<http://eex.gov.au/industry-sectors/>

In addition to the consumables in your work place consideration must be given to indoor environment quality. This means paying attention to:

- Light, optimising the amount of natural light available in the working environment
- Ventilation – fresh air and amount of ventilation
- Thermal comfort – not just temperature
- Noise
- Pollutants – asbestos, minimise materials that emit VOCs (volatile organic compounds)

Benchmarks allow us to evaluate elements of the workplace with industry standards. Depending on the area you are intent on managing there will be standards to measure your success against.

There are many initiatives that are targeted at various areas of waste management and sustainability. Consider the mobile muster which provides an opportunity for recycling mobile phones, local councils have collection services for green waste and obsolete technological equipment. Agricultural and veterinary chemical users are able to recycle chemical containers through DrumMuster. Each industry finds solutions to their own unique environmental management issues. These describe several other tools to help you with your planning;

<http://www.mobilemuster.com.au/>

<http://www.drummuster.com.au/>

1.2.2 Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, non-government not for profit, promoting management of productive forests with environmental and social considerations. FSC certified products are credible and help in consumers making environmentally and socially responsible purchasing decisions. This means real benefits.

- waterways and wildlife habitat and species are protected
- high conservation value forests are preserved
- forest management practices are monitored annually
- pesticide use is reduced
- worker safety and wellbeing is enhanced
- the rights of indigenous peoples are respected
- communities are respected and valued

FSC certification is internationally recognised as the most rigorous environmental and social standard for responsible forest management. It is the only forest label supported by environmental groups such as the World Wildlife Fund, Greenpeace and The Australian Conservation Foundation, and by major forest product retailers. Found in 81 countries all over the world.

1.2.3 Green Power

The GreenPower Program is a government managed scheme that enables Australian households and businesses to displace their electricity usage with certified renewable energy. The program was launched in 1997 after considerable consultation with the energy industry and various non-government organisations including the Australian Consumers Association (now Choice), Greenpeace, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

The program aims to

- facilitate the installation of new renewable energy generators across Australia beyond mandatory requirements
- encourage growth in consumer demand for renewable energy
- provide consumer choice for, and increase consumer confidence in, credible renewable energy products
- increase consumer awareness of renewable energy and greenhouse issues
- decrease greenhouse gas emissions associated with electricity generation

1.2.4 Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS)

Used to assess thermal performance of proposed and existing homes and assess compliance of new home designs with parts of the energy efficiency requirements in the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

- calculate heat gains and losses through the building envelope every hour over a year in a particular location, to determine how much additional heating and cooling may be required to maintain human thermal comfort
- model the complex effects of building mass, roof types and many other factors including levels of insulation, air leakage, window size and performance
- star rating 0 and 10 - the more stars, the better the performance
- star bands set for specific climate zones to allow fair comparison of buildings across climates

1.2.5 National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS)

A tool for comparing energy and water use of an existing home to that of an average household. This web-based tool is available for anyone.

- Focuses on the interaction between the occupants and building rather than the technical potential for that building.
- Provides a realistic assessment of how a home is actually performing as used by those occupants. The design of a home is only one factor in its performance: it is also greatly affected by the quality of construction and maintenance, the appliances chosen and how the occupants use the home and the appliances.
- A NABERS home rating analyses 12 months of actual energy or water use billing information, and supplies a rating out of 5 stars. 2.5 stars represents an average household. 5 star home –very efficient. 1 star home has opportunities to improve!

1.2.6 Green Star

Green Star was launched by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) in 2003 and is a voluntary environmental rating system for buildings and communities. Green Star certifies ratings only at 4 star (best practice), 5 star (Australian excellence) and 6 star (world leader). Projects under 4 do not qualify for a rating.

- Evaluates environmental design and construction of new and refurbished buildings and sustainable planning, design and construction of new communities.
- The Green Star — Multi Unit Residential and Communities rating tools assesses the design and construction of high-performance residential developments. A

holistic rating tool that evaluates not only environmental attributes but features that affect occupant health and wellbeing, such as indoor environment quality and access to transport.

- Evaluates environmental issues —minimising energy and water consumption, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, managing waste and reducing dependence on motor vehicles — as well as broader sustainability issues such as economic prosperity, affordability, liveability, design, governance and innovation.
<http://www.yourhome.gov.au/glossary/building-rating-tools>

1.2.7 Energy Star

Energy Star was created by US Environmental Protection Agency in 1992 and has been adopted by several countries around the world. The ENERGY STAR mark is awarded to the top 25% most energy efficient products, including heat pump/air conditioners, fridge/freezers, washing machines, dishwashers, TVs, AV equipment, set-top boxes, computers, monitors/displays, printers, copiers, multi-functional devices, scanners, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), and solar water heating systems.

1.2.8 Window Energy Rating Scheme (WERS)

- Ranks windows for energy performance in typical housing anywhere in Australia.
- It tells you whether a window is suitable for the climate or not. WERS also compares the performance of window films and windows covered by external fly screens, which provide some shading and insulation.
- Rated windows in WERS earn from 0-10 stars for both cooling and heating. The ratings apply to the effect of the whole window including the relative contributions of glass and frame. The rating information can be used in energy rating tools, such as NatHERS, to estimate the actual impact on performance for any house.

There are many more areas of sustainability that are regulated (consider water ratings for taps and toilets for example).

Advice is available to implement these into your workplace and home. If you are interested in these types of areas refer to www.yourhome.gov.au.

Many state government websites have great resources on case studies and facts to support the growing demand for education in sustainability.

1.3 Collect information on environmental and resource efficiency systems and procedures, and provide to the work group where appropriate

The first step in developing a sustainable workplace is to take a close look at current resource usage.

- What resources are you using and in what quantities or volumes?
- How are the resources being used?
- How efficient and/or effective are the current resources?
- Are there any issues with the current resources?
- What impact do these (if any) issues have on the organisation?
- Can current resources be replaced by more eco-friendly products?
- Can you replace resources by amending processes and procedures to (possibly) cut out the need for using a product to fulfil the task altogether.

1.3.1 Environmental Management Systems

An *Environmental Management System* is a tool for managing the impact of the activities of an organisation on the environment. An effective Environmental Management System (EMS) provides a structure to aid in the planning, implementing and monitoring of the organisation's environmental protection practices. Use an EMS to help manage an organisation's

- costs of materials
- waste and energy impact and usage
- compliance with legislation
- help to maximise market and investment opportunities
- staff morale

Key questions in establishing an Environmental Management System include:

- Which resources are being used (what are the inputs in terms of energy, water and materials)?
- Where do the resources come from?
- Where do the resources end up after use?
- How much is used and how much does it cost?
- How much is wasted (how much does not end up in the final 'product')?
- What is the environmental impact?
- Why is so much used / wasted?
- What can you do to reduce the quantities used, waste produced and environmental impact?
- How will you do it (Action Plan)?
- Develop sustainability targets to measure and control consumption.
- Has it made an impact? How effective is/was your action plan? Were targets met?

- Do you have the full commitment of the organisation? From top level managers to staff at all levels.

When developing an EMS consider the following

Environmental policy	What you aim to achieve from your EMS. This needs to be in keeping with the rest of the organisational objectives.
Environmental impact identification	Environmental audits are good ways to discover the actual and potential environmental impacts of the activities of an organisation.
Objectives and targets	What actual measurements does your EMS want to achieve. Remember to constantly review these targets to maintain consistent improvement and good management.
Consultation	Consider the stakeholders affected by your business? Staff and community need to be involved in order to create commitment to a successful EMS. Make sure you address all terms and conditions of employment such as daily tasks.
Operational and Emergency Procedures	Are your procedures in keeping with your environmental objectives?
Environmental Management Plan	How will you achieve your targets, objectives?
Documentation	Regulators, staff and community may need proof of your environmental management. Accurate records are critical when verifying environmental performance measures you have taken.
Responsibilities and reporting	Who will be responsible for what - in terms of implementation?
Training	Providing staff with training in this area builds skill, understanding and motivation. As in all areas training is the key to improvement and growth.
Review Audits and Monitoring compliance	Reviews and resulting improvements forms a basis for meeting regulatory and organisational requirements.
Continual Improvement	Can you do better? Are there other ways in which to manage processes and procedures for improvement or creation of more effective systems?

Adapted from <http://www.environment.gov.au/node/20494>

1.3.2 Sharing the Information

The development of a successful sustainability program requires research; finding appropriate alternatives to current resources (where practical), looking at efficient management systems and gaining an understanding of legislative and organisational

requirements. This can only, realistically, be done in cooperation with other members of your workplace team. Sharing information provides a pool of knowledge that assists in creating a better work environment. You might choose to conduct toolbox meetings each week to reflect on the successes, create charts or other visual tools to demonstrate the effectiveness of the efforts of the team with regard to agreed sustainable objectives and targets.

1.4 Collect, analyse and organise information from a range of sources to provide information/advice and tools/resources for improvement opportunities

The more an organisation knows about a specific subject, the better decisions it will make. So it is with information about environmental sustainability. An organisation will need information to determine the best way forward to ensure that their project complies with legislative requirements. Sources of information could include (but are not limited to)

- Organisation specifications such as current policy and procedure documentation and how these will be affected by any change.
- Regulatory sources such as government agencies and industry bodies.
- Discussions and advice from relevant stakeholders such as staff, customers, consultants and suppliers. Fostering commitment to the process involves everyone.
- Resource usage records – which should be kept to provide historical data and to show usage trends and current standards.

1.4.1 The Environmental Audit

An environmental audit identifies environmental compliance and management system implementation gaps, and related actions to correct the system. It does for your environmental systems what a financial audit does for your bookkeeping systems.

In looking at current processes, procedures and resource usage with a 'green office' in mind, you are in effect conducting an environmental audit of the organisation. The purpose of this is to look at the organisation's present work practices and assess areas that can be improved – determining where the organisation is now, where they would like to be (in terms of environmental sustainability) and how to close the gap between the two issues.

An "audit" can be as basic as members of the committee walking through the office, observing and reporting on how work is currently carried out.

Example

- checking to see if equipment is left switched on when not being used for long periods of time or after staff have gone home
- checking types of waste being put into rubbish bins, and how often paper is used on only one side
- finding out about current purchasing policies

- talking to other staff about their ideas to 'greening' the workplace - saving energy or reducing waste
- Stationary energy consumption. Stationary energy - fuel is combusted that does not involve transport (non-stationary) energy purposes.

Transport energy or Non-stationary energy purposes includes purposes for which fuel is combusted that consist of any of the following, transport by vehicles registered for road use, rail transport, marine navigation, air transport.

<http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/>

An environmental audit can also be a complex task involving in depth reviews of each area of the workplace;

- looking at each task and determining if it is being undertaken in the most effective, energy efficient way
- determining how organisational activities affect the environment
- assessing significance of the impacts and looking at options to make low cost and no cost improvements
- identifying and controlling hazards and risks
- A Risk management policy should include areas that will
 - identify the risks and hazards within each department of your organisation
 - outline procedures to be followed to control, eliminate or minimise these risks and hazards
 - provide a reporting process for non-conformance with the procedures i.e.; if a new hazard or risk has been found or if a procedure is not being followed correctly
 - provide a method of monitoring the effectiveness of the procedure – so changes can be implemented if/when necessary
 - training staff in the organisation's procedures

1.5 Measure and document current resource usage of members of the work group

Keeping statistics over a number of years will build trends and show peaks and troughs that allow accurate forecasting budgets and resource requirements for the coming year.

Trends can tell us what items are being used, by who, in what quantities and when they are using them.

Peaks - times of high usage. Many industries are subject to seasonal fluctuations – like the tourism industry, or have certain times of the year where they are busier than others – like accountants during tax time. During these peak times there would be an increase in the expected use of consumables compared to other times of the year.

Troughs - times of low usage. In the same way that some industries have peak times, they may also have low times when they are not busy. During these times the amount of consumables used should decrease.

Monitoring the use of consumables helps you determine what to order, when to order, what quantity to order and therefore forecasts of material costs to the organisation are more likely to be accurate, equalling cost control!

1.5.1 Tracking Resource Usage

There are a number of ways in which an organisation can track and monitor the way in which it uses resources.

Example

A simple spreadsheet could be used to record and measure resource usage in an office (or any other) environment. *See Figure 1.1*

Items	2011			2012			2013			Total	Total
	Qty	Unit	Cost	Qty	Unit	Cost	Qty	Unit	Cost	Qty	Cost
Photocopy paper (boxes)	100	30.00	3,000.00	115	32.50	3,737.50	130	32.50	4,225.00	345	\$10,962.50
Toner cartridges	10	85.00	850.00	12	85.00	1,020.00	20	92.50	1,850.00	42	\$3,720.00
Pens	65	0.55	35.75	69	0.56	38.64	80	0.56	44.80	214	\$119.19
Note pads	120	1.20	144.00	131	1.25	163.75	135	1.27	171.45	386	\$479.20
Staples (boxes)	50	2.50	125.00	55	2.55	140.25	57	2.75	156.75	162	\$422.00
Paper clips (boxes)	70	2.95	206.50	68	3.10	210.80	72	3.15	226.80	210	\$644.10
Post it note pads	200	1.10	220.00	250	1.15	287.50	255	1.15	293.25	705	\$800.75
Sticky tape	25	0.85	21.25	20	0.95	19.00	28	0.95	26.60	73	\$66.85
Manila folders	350	0.20	70.00	400	0.22	88.00	415	0.24	99.60	1165	\$257.60
Lever arch files	100	2.50	250.00	115	3.00	345.00	110	3.10	341.00	325	\$936.00
Hanging indent files	210	0.55	115.50	200	0.65	130.00	215	0.75	161.25	625	\$406.75
Plastic sleeves (boxes)	30	20.00	600.00	25	22.50	562.50	28	23.85	667.80	83	\$1,830.30
Mailing labels (boxes)	20	25.00	500.00	21	28.95	607.95	25	29.55	738.75	66	\$1,846.70
totals			6,138.00			7,350.89			9,003.05		\$22,491.94

Figure 1.1 - Example of resource analysis sheet showing usage and costs

This example shows a number of columns outlining the items being analysed. For each year the quantity used, the cost per unit, the total cost, the total number of each item ordered and the amount spent over the period of the analysis.

We can see that the amount ordered and spent each year has increased. In the coming year the organisation will be introducing a new procedure whereby promotional materials will be produced in house by the marketing department rather than being sent out to be printed. We would therefore expect an increase in the use of copy paper. Consider this when setting requirements and budgets for the year to come. This increase has a flow on effect, more paper means using more toner, this too will have to be factored into future budgets and plans.

At the same time the organisation is moving to an electronic document management system which means that the majority of its files will be stored online rather than in filing cabinets. This will mean less paper, printing and need for manila folders and hanging indent files and printed documents. Perhaps the filing cabinets will be obsolete, what can you do with them?

An organisation will find this type of information is extremely useful when the time comes to look at its work practices, the way it currently uses resources and to look for more eco-friendly methods of working. It is also very useful in controlling costs.

To be most effective, monitor the use of consumables according to

- **Department.** Keeping a record of what each individual department uses is an excellent way of understanding the overall picture of how an organisation operates.
- **Items used.** Do all areas of the organisation use the same materials or do they use materials specific to the work they carry out?
- **Frequency of use.** Are there times where some items are used more than others? If so then supplies at times of high use must be maintained so work can carry on without interruption. In low usage times the supplies of these items can decrease.
- **Reasons for use.** Are there alternatives that could do the job more effectively?
- **Wastage.** Could the introduction of new procedures or alternative products save material usage thereby saving money and improving environmental sustainability outcomes?

This information can be used to determine what stocks of consumables need to be purchased in the coming year, the cost, and if monitored accordingly, when these stocks must be available to the workforce.

1.5.2 Ensuring Supply Levels

Ensuring there is always an adequate supply of consumables on hand is extremely important. Often, in an organisation, there will be projects to complete in order for a business commitment to be met.

Example

A large job has been ordered. Do you have all the materials available to meet your order? Not having the materials ready on time leads to embarrassment on your organisation's part, a loss of reputation and potential loss of business. Particularly bad if deadlines are missed due to lack of basic raw materials resulting in purchasing items which don't match your criteria for sustainability, or non-delivery. This situation is entirely avoidable with proper planning.

Disregarding this vital part of an organisation can stop work in its tracks, decreasing productivity while staff are waiting for supplies to arrive; supplies that, with proper planning, should have been on hand.

1.5.3 Forecasting

We have talked about monitoring and gathering information about resource usage, but how can you constructively use this information to predict what you might need in the future? The answer is relatively simple –look at the number of items used in each year and costs. Analysis of usage is a valuable tool for planning and forecasting.

Some years the organisation may have used more, some years less. What reasons could explain the shift in numbers?

- Has the company grown?
- Are there more staff?
- Were specific projects or campaigns to account for the fluctuation in numbers?
- Did the organisation change suppliers?
- Did the suppliers cost structures change?
- Did the organisation's peaks and troughs change? If so why?
- Did the organisation change or introduce new procedures?

The answers to these questions, among others, will give you a full understanding of the organisation's past resource requirements and help you to determine future needs.

Having looked at past figures now estimate what you will need in the coming year.

- take past data into consideration
- look at upcoming promotional campaigns and projects
- look at any changes the organisation will make in the coming year that could affect work output
- are there new industry trends that might affect peak and trough periods
- check with suppliers about next year's prices, volumes and targets

When all of this is done you should have sufficient information to estimate the coming year's requirements and can set up a budget accordingly.

1.6 Analyse and document current purchasing strategies

More and more organisations are establishing environmental or green purchasing policies and strategies. Such policies and strategies are important for many reasons

- green purchasing of products and services raises environmental awareness, which in turn motivates people to buy more environmentally sound products
- green purchasing has potentially direct environmental benefits- fewer emissions, less waste and more efficient resources use
- an increase in demand for greener products and services improves the market position of suppliers
- demand for green products acts as an incentive for technological development towards greener products
- increasing demand on your suppliers can create a catalyst for change, if they want your business they will be willing to invest in the type of sustainability you demand

1.6.1 Purchasing Criteria

When developing a green purchasing policy it is important to first ask questions over a range of areas.

- Does the product cause ecological damage, such as loss of habitats or damage to threatened species?
- Are there alternatives to using this product?
- Can the product be re-used, refilled, recharged or reconditioned to extend its life?
- Can the item be easily upgraded by adding or replacing a part?
- Does the product have a recycled content? If so, what percentage?
- Can the product be recycled easily (in the workplace and/or local community)?
- Is the product or its components hazardous to humans and/or the wider environment? If yes, what are the health and safety implications and disposal requirements?
- Are there any non-hazardous alternatives available?
- Are technical data sheets available?
- Does the item use energy? Electrical appliances, equipment, machinery, space heating or vehicles.
- If so, is the item as energy efficient as the alternatives?
- Does the item have energy consumption data for all operation modes?
- Can product packaging be reduced or eliminated?
- Is packaging made of recycled material(s)?
- Can packaging be re-used, recycled or returned?
- Is the product locally manufactured and/or locally supplied?
- Does the supplier have a Green Transport Plan for their operations?

By asking these questions you can begin to put together a purchasing strategy that will contribute to workplace sustainability.

1.7 Analyse current work processes to access information and data to assist in identifying areas for improvement

Environmentally-sustainable work practices help to protect or reduce harm to the environment and reduce wastage of resources. They can be the actions that people at work take to improve the organisation's environmental performance such as;

- Identifying key sustainability issues,
- Implement identified procedures,
- Monitor and report on procedures to ensure they continually improve,
- Review the procedures to ensure continuous improvement.

Procedures might include;

- Implementing energy strategies and processes;
- Reducing carbon footprints of the organisation produced by energy and greenhouse gases;
- Maintaining, servicing and repairing plant, machinery, fittings, fixtures and equipment;
- Avoiding and reducing the use and consumption of particular materials;
- Reducing waste products;
- Reusing and recycling materials;
- Responsibly disposing of waste products.

An audit is the primary means of investigating and evaluating the status of existing work practices. Audit processes are typically;

- Systematic
- Independent
- documented

An environmental sustainability audit is an examination of the nature and scope of current environmentally-sustainable work practices. They usually take two forms; Desktop and Physical audits:

1.7.1 Desktop' audit

A desktop audit focuses on identifying the existing systems, procedures and practices in place without physically observing and/or analysing what is actually happening. As a document review, it investigates work practices by reviewing the likes of: standard operating procedures, purchase orders and invoices, organisational policies and guidelines, operations manuals; relevant environmental legislation, regulations and codes of practice, permits / licences and their conditions, prior audit reports and compliance history and evidence of prior environmental performance.

1.7.2 Physical' (or 'Practical') audit:

Physical auditing enables direct observation, measurement and evaluation of actual conformance with internal environmental policies, procedures and guidelines. This is a comprehensive inspection /observation of work practices and procedures that are being carried out; it typically includes measurement and analysis of elements such as resource usage and waste management.

The first key step in conducting an environmental sustainability audit is to identify the scope and objectives of the audit.

1.7.3 Scope

Scope refers to the size, extent and boundaries of the audit including;

- Geographical location(s):
- Organisational or departments, activities and processes;
- Time period
- Stakeholders

Stakeholders may include:

- Management
- Finance Staff
- Administrative Staff
- Purchasing Officers
- Environmental Maintenance Staff
- Human Resources
- Frontline Staff

1.7.4 Objectives

Objectives refer to the purpose or aims of the audit. They not only drive the audit itself, but become a reference point for monitoring work practices at a later date.

1.7.8 Collecting information

Once clear about the scope and objectives of the audit, it is time to collect the information by:

- Asking open questions
- Completing audit checklists
- Documenting observations
- Take photographic records
- Examine and obtain copies of relevant documents
- Collect and retain samples
- Taking notes

2. Set Targets for Improvements

Having surveyed your organisation's work practices, looked at alternative products and services and researched methods by which your organisation could improve its sustainability, you should then look at setting specific targets to ensure that improvement goals are met.

2.1 Seek input from stakeholders, key personnel and specialists

It takes a team effort and commitment to design and develop an environmentally sustainable workplace – one that is tailor made for the organisation.

This is an important aspect of the design and development process, as every organisation is different with different needs, operational and financial issues to consider.

So it is important to communicate with and provide feedback to a range of people both inside and outside of organisation. People with an interest in the project could include

- **Customers** – must be happy with the products and services you offer as well as the philosophy your business lives by. The fact that you are using and/or producing environmentally friendly products and/ or adopting sustainability practices is good for everyone and helps promote the business as responsible.
- **Employees** at all levels of the organisation need to be fully committed for the full benefit to be taken up.
- **Government departments** will offer support and advice on environmental issues. Depending on the nature of your plans they may even offer grants. For example, installation of water tanks or solar power projects may be eligible for government funding.
- **Specialist consultants** will have expertise and advice that will help establish sustainability at all levels of the organisation.
- **Investors or sponsors** could be found to fund 'green office' initiatives in exchange for partnership arrangements and/or promotional opportunities.
- **Local community** – depending on the nature of changes to be made, the local community; residents and business, may be affected and can be called upon to provide advice or even funding.
- **Suppliers** should be encouraged and rewarded for offering alternatives to their practices as well. Most suppliers offer a range of eco-friendly products in response to the demand as it grows. How sustainable it really is depends on many factors as discussed previously.

2.2 Access external sources of information and data as required

In developing targets and goals for your organisation it can be useful to access a range of documents that outline sustainability goals and programs on a larger scale. These

can offer insight in to where environmental policies are going on a state, national and even a global scale.

While no one expects you to follow the lead outlined in these documents or programs they can be useful in giving guidance about the impact that certain areas such as water usage, waste management and so on have in a larger arena.

There are a great many sources of such information.

A copy of the Australian Governments sustainability plan can be found at <http://www.environment.gov.au/>

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) also provide information on sustainability on a global scale. www.iso.org

ISO 14004 gives general EMS guidelines.

ISO 14001 is a voluntary international standard for environmental management systems EMS. ISO 14001:2004 provides the requirements for an EMS. An EMS meeting the requirements of ISO 14001:2004 is a management tool enabling an organization of any size or type to

- identify and control environmental impact of its activities, products or services
- improve its environmental performance continually
- implement a systematic approach to setting environmental objectives and targets, to achieving these and to demonstrating that they have been achieved
- organisations implementing ISO 14001 usually seek to obtain certification by independent Certification Bodies; certification indicates that documentation, implementation and effectiveness of the EMS conform to the specific requirements of ISO 14001

In addition, state and local governments will have information or programs that will assist in developing sustainability programs and targets.

An excellent example of this is run by the Marrickville Council in NSW; small business owners are encouraged to make use of expert advice to access a range of services and contribute to community sustainability.

www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/; *environment; working with business; about target sustainability @ Marrickville*

2.3 Evaluate alternative solutions to workplace environmental issues

The use of alternative products can be an excellent way to reduce expenditure both the financial cost and the environmental cost. An organisation can waste money and resources simply by using the same materials and suppliers they always have done over the years without researching if there are better services and products available.

Modern technology and a competitive market place mean that many companies can produce excellent quality materials for less money and with a better ecological footprint. They are also prepared to negotiate excellent prices for regular customers. So it is always worth a phone call and a little research to check what is available.

Many functions that previously required manual/paper handling can now also be accomplished electronically. A regular review of workplace procedures can often highlight areas that could be done more efficiently.

2.3.1 The 5 R's?

There seems to be many words which fall into the category of the 5Rs of sustainability, many more than 5 in any case. On a very quick search on the internet there were at least ten different pages with ten different versions. Consider these

- Reduce
- Reuse
- Recycle
- Recreate
- Repair
- Respect
- Renew
- Rethink
- Repurpose
- Rot
- Refuse

As you can see there are many words vying for the top 5! Whichever “words” you adopt the top three are the main principles and the other words support the philosophy behind a sustainable approach to work and life. If you can’t reduce, then reuse, if you can’t reuse it then hopefully it can be recycled.

Another way to save costs, minimise waste, and contribute to sustaining our natural resources is to reduce, reuse and/or recycle materials

2.3.2 Reduce

Reduce the amount of use or waste of resources by looking at your organisation and its practices to see what is really happening in terms of waste.

Example

An organisation which receives freight in cardboard with large amounts of packaging can ask the supplier to change their packing methods, thereby reducing the amount of packaging waste which may or may not be recyclable in your area. By putting this sort of pressure on suppliers there is a chance we can affect change. If they don’t respond to you perhaps there is another supplier who will.

Remember this problem exists in large and small ways. We have discussed the use of excess paper, this is by no means the only resource wasted excessively in many organisations. Power for technology and air-conditioning is another great wasted

resource in an office environment. Consider also the impact of dumping materials into landfill, hazardous and nonhazardous, or water management.

2.3.5 Re-use

Re use or repurposing is another way we can all affect change in this area. Recycling is of course, great but also uses power and energy to process the recyclable material and convert it to a useful product to be manufactured into something new. When reusing and repurposing we deal with by products or waste which have a value **as is**. Many products are now using the waste from one industry in products created for sale.

Example

Old tyres are a real problem, they do not break down, when burnt do so slowly and emit toxic gasses into the atmosphere and the water supplies. Tyres can be reclaimed for fuel, engineering projects, flooring just to name a few great reuse examples. In Cambodia some enterprising soul is reusing tyres to create rubbish bins. For very little effort and virtually no cost an object has been repurposed into very useful product and saves the world from yet another unusable waste product.

Some other products which can be reused may sound crazy but offer real opportunity over and above simple paper reuse. Think outside the square!

2.3.3 Recycle

When a piece of paper can no longer be re-used it can be recycled. Many offices have recycling bins for cans, glass and paper products.

Going back to the tyre example it is possible to shred, granulate or powderise tyres for other uses. Coffee grounds from a local coffee shop will feed a worm farm in the basement of the building or on the roof of your building and makes great fertiliser for renewing your garden. Wooden pallets are a fantastic resource for building furniture. Use cooking oil for bio fuel. Coal, petroleum and gas are non-renewable fossil fuels, once they are gone that's it. Using alternative power sources solar, wind or wave power will help but so will biodiesel options. This clean energy fuel source can be made onsite from locally produced resources, to be used in specially converted cars as well as blended with conventional fuels for use in regular motors.

Remember recycling is more than just throwing stuff in a bin and forgetting about it. Research potential in your area.

2.3.4 Recycling ink and toner cartridges

Australians throw away more than 18 million laser toner and inkjet cartridges, photocopier toner bottles and drums every year that will eventually end up in landfill. This amounts to over 5,000 tons of material. Programmes have been developed to help alleviate this problem – most notably Planet Ark. www.planetark.org.

In July 2014 Planet Ark had recycled 25 million cartridges as part of their Cartridge recycling program.

By taking part in this programme you can make an enormous impact on our environment. All of these are recycled into new products or reused in new applications. Even residue toner is reused as pigment for colouring plastic products.

2.4 Set efficiency targets

At a certain point in the process; identifying resource use, conducting an environmental audit, looking for opportunities to improve and conducting general research, the organisation will develop a set of performance targets for achieving environmental sustainability – areas where it will endeavour to reduce its carbon footprint. Performance targets could include

- Energy consumption (Electricity, Natural Gas, other). The target might be to reduce the amount of energy used. This could be accomplished by turning off equipment or lights that are not being used or by using equipment with better energy ratings. The success of this method would be a significant or set reduction in electricity or gas bills.
- Materials consumption (resources and products it uses). As with the point above, this might include reducing the amount of materials used and finding alternative ways of completing work. Again, success could be measured by a reduction in the cost of these consumables.
- Looking at your waste generation; how it recycles, reuses and renews and setting goals for decreasing the amount of waste using these methods
- Environmental condition – the ecological significance of the way the organisation uses its land and / or premises
- Transportation impacts — materials and people; how the organisation moves its products and people around and looking for ways of reducing impact or finding alternative methods of distributing products or having people attend meetings.
- Water consumption can be reduced significantly by efficient maintenance and used responsibly at all stages of production. Successful reduction in water use will, once again, be reflected in lower water bills.

3. Implement performance improvement strategies

Action plans and targets are only useful if they are actually put in place and if people know about them and understand what they have to do. All team members need to be “on board” with the changes to be made and willing to work towards the sustainability targets the organisation has set.

3.1 Source and use appropriate techniques and tools to assist in achieving efficiency targets

Performance targets are just that they are targets to be reached. All relevant stakeholders need to know what these targets are and be committed to achieving the results desired.

Targets need to be monitored for success and need to be ‘SMART’ in order to measure success in a clear and concise way.

Example

One of your targets might be to reduce energy consumption by 15% over the next 12 months across the organisation. Your target is

Specific – you will reduce energy consumption by 15% over 12 months

Measurable – have you reduced energy consumption by 15% over the 12 months?

Achievable and realistic; 15% is not an unreasonable target and should easily be achieved

Timely; you will do this within the next 12 months

There are a number of techniques and tools you can use to keep control of your sustainability policies and check whether targets have been achieved – or not.

- Examination of invoices from suppliers to see if costs or resource usage has been reduced.
- Examination of relevant information and data kept on how resources are used. This might include an inventory tracking system such as a log book or excel spreadsheets. It may also include systems set up specifically to measure how goals and targets are tracked.
- Measurements made under different conditions. Not all equipment you use will have the same output at all times. Use of power is often considerably higher during the summer months when air conditioners are in constant use. Measuring resource usage at different times and under different conditions can give you a clear idea of how and when to make reductions – or use alternatives.

3.2 Apply continuous improvement strategies to own work area of responsibility, including ideas and possible solutions to communicate to the work group and management

By conducting an environmental audit, the organisation is looking for opportunities to improve its methods of operation so that they fall within the guidelines of an environmentally sustainable workplace.

In addition to the audit, there are a number of ways in which an organisation can initiate changes and improvements in their workplace to embrace environmental sustainability. Some of these are

- taking note of staff suggestions
- working with colleagues and stakeholders to ensure targets are met
- changing the organisation's purchasing strategies to ensure sustainable products and services are used
- working with suppliers to encourage better outcomes for your purchasing
- conducting regular reviews on resource usage and sustainability issues
- forming a workplace team or committee to look after these aspects of business operation
- an annual (or bi-annual) review might then result in an action checklist where individual team members are given the responsibility of moving the organisation forward and ensuring that sustainability targets are met

3.2.1 Your Area of Responsibility

Each level of personnel in an organisation has a responsibility to contribute to sustainable practices. Determine your own level of responsibility and take active steps to contribute to the change in behaviour in every aspect of your life, not just at work.

"... social norms are important tools for behavioural management changes within the office environment... for the policies...to be effective, activities such as recycling, turning off office appliances at the end of the day, and switching off lights must become social norms within the office environment. Most people have positive attitudes towards protecting the environment, but won't behave the way they know would protect the environment because of convenience, cost (\$ or time), social norms, or they simply don't know how."

http://www.health.qld.gov.au/carbon_management/green_office_guide.pdf

The best and the easiest way to contribute to sustainability in your workplace is to look at your own area of responsibility and the specific things that you personally have control over. This means looking at the way you work and doing your job as conscientiously as possible - to be aware of **what** you are doing at all times.

Look at how your work habits might affect the environment and ways in which you could use workplace resources more efficiently.

There are many simple ways you can make a difference. The following example would be useful in an office environment and some of these ideas apply across many organisations. However if you consider a manufacturing plant that uses chemical treatments or an agricultural aerial spray operation there will be many more to add to this list. Remember each industry will have its own areas that must be considered morally, legally and ethically.

Activate	There are energy-saving functions available on most computers. If not, save energy by switching off the monitor when not in use. Monitors can consume 3 x the energy used by your PC.
Choose...	Low water, low energy consumption feature on appliances. Put up signs to this effect for all users, including cleaners.
Electronic	Use digital versions of documents. Print needed pages only (rather than whole reports). Avoid cover sheets or with compliments slips when sending physical mail.
Move	Walk, cycle or use public transport if possible. Use the facilities at work or be creative.
Open windows	If you can - instead of using air conditioners. Most air conditioning systems provide less than 10% fresh air.
People power	Establish a 'Green Office' team or committee to implement longer-term and ongoing energy efficiency initiatives.
Recycling	Install bin for all appropriate recyclable products –re-use a cardboard box or ask your waste paper collection contractor to provide one. Most waste collection companies can provide these. Recycle everything possible or reduce use in the first place!
Remove...	Light bulbs from areas where not needed or more than necessary. Some offices have many more ceiling lights than necessary. Removing some bulbs saves money and electricity. Replacing old inefficient ones with energy saving ones is obvious!
Re-set...	Photocopiers and printers to default to double-sided printing.
Re-use	Make a space in your stationery store area for people to recycle stationery. Re-use paper unprinted on one side for in-house documents Re-fill toner cartridges used in photocopiers and ink-jet printers or recycle them at Planet Ark.
Turn off...	All computers, monitors and machines when not in use (especially overnight and on weekends). There may be a reason in your organisation why not to do this - find out! Lights especially overnight and on weekends remind others. Program climate control systems to turn off at the end of each day and on weekends – DO NOT heat and cool empty offices

There are many more initiatives - take a look around and see what else you can do.

3.3 Implement and integrate environmental and resource efficiency improvement plans for own work group with other operational activities

In order to properly make a workplace truly sustainable people need to be informed about their work role. What will change, when and how this will happen and what the expected performance standards are going to be? The development of an environmental and resource efficiency plan is necessary.

Depending on the industry you are in this may include

- addressing environmental and resource sustainability initiatives such as environmental management systems, action plans, green office programs, surveys and audits
- applying the waste management hierarchy in the workplace
- determining organisation's most appropriate waste treatment including waste to landfill, recycling, re-use, recoverable resources and wastewater treatment
- initiating and/or maintaining appropriate organisational procedures for operational energy consumption, including stationary energy and non-stationary (transport)
- preventing and minimising risks, and maximising opportunities such as:
 - improving resource/energy efficiency
 - reducing emissions of greenhouse gases
 - reducing use of non-renewable resources
- referencing standards, guidelines and approaches such as
 - ecological footprint
 - Energy Efficiency Opportunities Bill 2005
 - Global Reporting Initiative
 - Green office program – a cultural change program
 - Green purchasing
 - Greenhouse Challenge Plus (Australian government initiative)
 - ISO 14001:1996 Environmental management systems life cycle analyses
 - Product stewardship - an approach to managing the impact of products and materials. Persons involved in production, selling, using and disposing of products have a shared responsibility to make sure that these products and materials are managed so that the impact on the environment and human health is reduced over the life of the product or material. Examples of product stewardship projects are ;
 - Paint recycling
 - packaging to reduce impact of used packaging and litter

- end of life air conditioners and refrigerators with small gas charges
- Supply chain management - the management of the flow of goods, including movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-process inventory, and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. Your type of business and availability of supply chain options affects how you can improve sustainability of the supply chain. Try to prioritise buying local materials and using local suppliers. This can reduce the overall carbon footprint by reducing the amount of fuel used in transport. Do your suppliers use renewable resources in their processes?
- sustainability covenants/compacts
- Triple bottom line reporting abbreviated as TBL or 3BL is an accounting framework with three parts. Social, environmental (or ecological) and financial. These three divisions are also called the three Ps: people, planet and profit, or the "three pillars of sustainability". Stretches the traditional model of measuring profit in terms of return on Investment and shareholder value to include the environmental and social profits or losses.

Implementing change involves drafting an action plan that spells out actions to be taken in areas such as purchasing, recycling, energy, finance and transport.

As mentioned earlier, it is important to ensure the plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Depending on the nature of the change and the size of the organisation, all changes to be made could be implemented immediately or various changes rolled out gradually and in stages to evaluate their effectiveness and so as not to put too much pressure on staff too quickly.

This is where the action plan comes in to its own as it provides a 'blue print' for implementation of each stage of the changes to come.

Starting small is always best – you can always revise and update the plan when early objectives have been met. The plan should state

- what the current practice is
- its impact on the environment
- what action is to be taken
- by whom and
- by when

Current practice	Environmental impact	Action to be taken + performance targets	Who	Time scale
Plain, bleached bond paper used for all tasks Both draft and final versions of documents are printed	De-forestation Use of harsh chemicals to bleach paper	Source local supplier of recycled paper Introduce use of recycled paper for 50% of paper usage needs	Gabriella	Immediate

		Printer restrictions introduced to control printer access.	It dept.	End financial year
Toner cartridges disposed of in normal rubbish bins	Plastic casing is not bio degradable residual toner is toxic	Obtain toner and ink recycle box for office and print shop Reduce amount of documents printed by 25% by end of this year	Jillian	By end of year

3.4 Supervise and support team members to identify possible areas for improved practices and resource efficiency in work area

A common mistake made by many when considering change is to think that the change will always be viewed in an unemotional, rational manner.

The truth is change is an emotive subject for most people and, while they might feel apathetic about change, rarely is there no emotional response at all.

This is because change involves two extremely emotive events; *an ending and a beginning*.

An ending means that some part of your life, the way you've done things, is about to come to a conclusion. You are about to be taken out of your comfort zone and placed into a situation that, while it might be better, is unfamiliar.

This often engenders fear of the unknown

Will I be able to perform these new tasks properly?

What will happen if I can't do this?

A beginning means that you must move on to something new. This is often traumatic, as it means new training and systems. There is an initial period where you are not quite as sure of yourself as you were before. This puts a dent in your self-esteem and may cause negative reactions.

Most people will resist change for a number of reasons including

- fear they may lose their job
- not understanding the need for the change
- believing it may demote their position
- having others telling them what to do or how to run their lives
- others acting in a superior way and making them feel insignificant
- lack of trust in management
- not being consulted about the change process

These are all very emotional issues that can lead to resistance and serious problems within an organisation if not addressed thoughtfully. While it is not possible for the

organisation to consult every single employee, it is very important to keep staff informed of what is happening within the organisation and to encourage suggestions.

By asking for comments and suggestions

- all staff are shown respect
- staff are aware of issues involving their work area
- staff are able to contribute to the process by making useful suggestions
- management can move forward with their plans in a more positive way

You need to be able to highlight benefits for the staff. What's in it for them is an important way to foster commitment. It might be as simple as them being part of the big picture for improvement, or you may choose to link successful targets with a staff incentive scheme. Be consistent and fair, whatever you do follow through with information in order for the conversation on sustainability to gain momentum.

3.5 Seek suggestions and ideas about environmental and resource efficiency management from stakeholders and act upon where appropriate

A smart organisation will encourage suggestions from its staff. They are the ones who know their own work areas best and may have the most innovative ideas on how to improve energy efficiency and increase use of renewable, recyclable and reusable resources in their areas. They may also suggest how to prevent and minimise risks, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and they should also be encouraged to report breaches (or potential breaches) of policies or procedures.

This last point is important. If a staff member sees or is aware of any issues that could put other staff, premises or equipment in danger or could compromise the sustainability goals, they have a duty to advise their supervisor or manager.

Equally, if they are aware of unnecessary waste or can see areas where improvements to energy efficiency can be made they should be encouraged to say so.

As you have learned, the use of electricity is one of the main contributors to carbon footprint. If there are ways of reducing the amount of energy needed by an organisation this will decrease the carbon emission as well as save on costs. Staff need to be involved in the improvement processes.

3.6 Implement costing strategies to fully utilise environmental assets

An understanding of your organisations particular environmental assets is required in order to determine what your impacts are on the environment.

This might mean looking at your purchasing policies to ensure that you buy sustainable products wherever possible or practical. It may also mean making the best use possible of any environmental assets that your organisation has. These may include

- climate
- biological assets (produced or natural)
- biodiversity

- land
- water areas with their ecosystems
- subsoil
- air including air quality
- geology/geomorphology

Does your business impact on the air quality of the area or contribute to poor water quality? You must know, understand and be prepared to minimise the impact you have on environmental assets. Costs of the impact can include, note that different industries have a strong impact on certain areas and less in others. It is up to each industry to manage the impact of their own operation.

- natural resource depletion from use of raw materials in the construction industry
- land degradation from waste going to landfill
- water degradation from toxins and chemicals released from manufacture
- pollution from emissions produced from the use of equipment

Example

Take a target to reduce waste sent to landfill from an insurance office.

Costing Strategy	
Target	To reduce waste removal from the premises by 50% in 3 months - minimising impact on land degradation and natural resource depletion.
Tools	
Communication	Education programs and inductions for all staff Training program to examine cost savings from • environmental, individual workload and financial viewpoints
	Establish a green committee to oversee, motivate and educate
Costing strategy considerations	What does the implementation of the plan cost? Who will be involved in this process, work hours? Training program establishment costs, will external trainers be required?
Estimate cost savings associated with reductions	Printing, paper, time filing, archive storage Printer use, maintenance and replacement Waste removal contractor Additional cost improvement by improved efficiency of operation over time
Impact of program on organisation?	Will there be resistance to little or no paper copies of documents? How will the work need to be restructured? Will there be a need to upgrade the file management system?
Timeframes	Create schedule for improved induction program Create schedule for training existing staff
Responsible personnel	Establish levels for reporting, identify key personnel for induction and training rollout

At the end of this you must communicate this to all personnel in order to gain their support. You need their help to make sure you get this working to the best of its abilities.

4. Monitor Performance

4.1 Use and/or develop evaluation and monitoring, tools and technology, and;

4.4 Set new efficiency targets, and investigate and apply new tools and strategies

Changes in the way an organisation works will not always happen quickly or smoothly. In order for change to be successfully introduced in to the everyday working life systems and procedures will need to be monitored.

To determine whether outcomes are being achieved as intended, maintenance and monitoring program must be implemented. This is scheduled to ensure that actions and tasks are being carried out as planned. It is imperative that there are ongoing troubleshooting activities to address any implementation issues promptly and as they arise. To facilitate this, there must be regular data collection and tracking of indicators to assess actual progress against intended targets. Some appropriate methods could include:

- Conducting visual observations of the workplace to monitor participation by staff and ensure required equipment modifications or installations have been completed,
- Ensuring scheduled counting and/or calculating using checklists is undertaken,
- Interviewing or surveying staff and other stakeholders,
- Checking and analysing purchase orders and supplier invoices,
- Conducting audits, using the same tools, technology that was used for evaluation from the beginning,
- Using reports generated from independent environmental consultations that have been appointed to conduct audits

Some tools and technology that will assist in monitoring and ensure appropriate recordkeeping might be

- Tracking templates;
- Checklists
- Tally sheets
- Spreadsheets
- Environmental Management System (EMS)

An Environmental management system (EMS) refers to the management of an organization's environmental programs in a comprehensive, systematic, planned and documented manner. It includes the organizational structure, planning and resources for developing, implementing and maintaining policy for environmental protection

EMS Software is available to capture, track, report and act on every aspect of your environmental programs and initiatives in real-time using core and optional applications to suit the organisation.

Monitoring can also determine if the organisations environmental initiatives have been cost effective, or not. Potential impacts could include;

- Compliance with the governing regulatory framework including permit / licencing costs and considerations
- Increased brand reputation and loyalty
- Increases in revenue generation;
- Reductions in injuries / illnesses and workers compensation claims

Monitoring progress also means determining the success of the program.

- How much has been saved in terms of energy consumption due to a decrease in electricity requirements?
- What other initiatives have been successfully adopted?

This is an ideal opportunity to continue to communicate the progress of sustainable work practices.

So too should the organisation's standards. In addition to this an environmentally sustainable strategy should take a longer term view of improvements it could make – more than simply changing the paper it uses and how it is used.

The purchase of 'capital equipment' such as machinery, computers, printers, furniture, company cars and so on are a major consideration and expense in any organisation. This type of resource cannot simply be thrown out and replaced because the organisation is now 'green'.

Future plans, however, could include replacing current business equipment and machinery with more energy efficient models when these are worn out, or are due for replacement within the regular update schedule of the organisation.

This could take several years to accomplish and would need to be reviewed on a regular basis as, again, technology changes rapidly and what is new and eco-friendly today ... can be replaced by something better and even more environmentally friendly tomorrow.

4.2 Document and communicate outcomes to report on efficiency targets to key personnel and stakeholders

In order to document and communicate outcomes to report on efficiency targets to key personnel and stakeholders, the organisation must compare outcomes against the set targets. This typically involves the establishment of a new action plan, to compare to the original action plan to determine if outcomes have met or exceeded the targets, therefore becoming an indicator that strategies and efforts have been effective or ineffective. It will also demonstrate if specified targets have been met, and if not, existing strategies may need to be modified or new strategies identified and implemented. This comparison will be a useful tool to report the following to internal and external stakeholders;

- Any recommended corrective action to address the identified causes of unfavourable performance;
- Improvements being made to the initiatives, policies or procedures including implementation systems and processes. This could also include revisions being made to the original Action Plan;
- Targets that need to be being reviewed and modified accordingly to promote performance improvements.

Adopting an action plan is not the end of the process. The people responsible for looking after sustainability should talk to colleagues on a regular basis and should be prepared to listen to their comments. You need to know how these new policies are affecting work habits and productivity. They may have

- more ideas now they are starting to think “green”
- concerns about the new processes
- comments on what is or is not working
- ways of further improving the systems

External reporting and communication can demonstrate the organisation’s commitment to achieving effective environmental responsibility and therefore enhance its reputation as a responsible and respected corporate citizen. Internal reporting will demonstrate accountability for the resources and efforts invested in implementation of initiatives. It will provide feedback that will enable more effective decision-making and planning. It will assist staff to recognise and understand their contributions and how they can enhance organisational performance.

Reporting can be in the form of:

- Email
- Intranet updates
- Internet updates
- Meetings
- Presentations
- Newsletters
- Annual Reports,

To be effective, communications should:

- Be transparent
- Be accessible
- Be current
- Link data and information to the original targets;
- Include a relevant data and meaningful information
- Present information clearly

Guidance and direction on report quality is available in the G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, produced by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI);

<https://www.globalreporting.org/resourcelibrary/GRIG4-Part1-Reporting-Principles-and-Standard-Disclosures.pdf>

The GRI is a non-profit organisation responsible for establishing a framework for making sustainability reporting a standard practice for all organisations. The Guidelines propose the following six (6) principles for defining report quality as follows:

Balance: The report should reflect positive and negative aspects of performance to enable a reasoned assessment of overall performance;

Comparability: Information should be selected, compiled and reported consistently. The reported information should be presented in a manner that enables stakeholders to analyse changes in the organization's performance over time, and that could support analysis relative to other organisations;

Accuracy: The reported information should be sufficiently accurate and detailed for stakeholders to assess the performance;

Timeliness: Reporting should happen on a regular schedule so that information is available in time for stakeholders to make informed decisions;

Clarity: Information should be made available in a manner that is understandable and accessible to stakeholders using the report;

Reliability: The organisation should gather, record, compile, analyse and disclose information and processes used in the preparation of a report in a way that they can be subject to examination and that establishes the quality and materiality of the information

- By using the GRI Guidelines, reporting organizations disclose their most critical impacts – be they positive or negative – on the environment, society and the economy. They can generate reliable, relevant and standardized information with which to assess opportunities and risks, and enable more informed decision-making – both within the business and among its stakeholders. G4 is designed to be universally applicable to all organizations of all types and sectors, large and small, across the world –

Source: <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/g4/Pages/default.aspx#sthash.6FIqlbPI.dpuf>

4.3 Evaluate strategies and improvement plans

It is essential to regularly monitor, measure and evaluate any performance plan. The organisation's or workplace's environmental performance must be reviewed post-implementation to determine the outcome of planned initiatives. Criteria could include;

- If targets, specifications and expectations of the environmental improvement action plan meet actual performance,
- The implementation is achieving its intended purpose;
- If specific environmental initiatives have been specific,
- How processes have impacted on of the workplace or organisation,
- If the organisation has created cost saving opportunities,
- Adherence to planned obligations and performance standards by staff and stakeholders
- Gauging the level of culture change, support and commitment for the initiatives within the workplace

Making and implementing changes to build an efficient and sustainable business and workforce is not a singular event; it must be monitored and reviewed regularly. The world does not stand still and improvements and new trends are constantly coming to light. This means that the team looking after sustainability will need to put in place a "continuous improvement program" to ensure that the good work done in implementing new systems and procedures does not grind to a halt and stagnate.

Continuous improvement programs work best when

- outcomes are properly documented and reported to relevant staff and stakeholders
- outcomes are regularly reviewed and evaluated
- conclusions are drawn from the documented evidence of resource usage and how new procedures are working (or not)
- staff are advised of success or failure in reaching objectives so that amendments can be made and they can be encouraged to make improvements
- new targets are set for continued improvement

4.5 Promote successful strategies and reward participants where possible

Let staff know what results have been achieved. Produce charts and notices to display on staff comment boards or at the reception so customers can see your efforts in protecting the environment. Depending on your team you could communicate;

- how much the demand for electricity has dropped
- the resulting financial savings over the year
- how much less CO2 has been produced
- how much paper, aluminium has been recycled or water saved
- what does this mean for them

Depending on the results achieved in the initial stages of the plans implementation and feedback received from stakeholders, improvements could (and should) be made on a continual basis. Products and processes change rapidly and continually.

It is critical to track team members' opinions and attitudes, number of queries, suggestions and feedback to understand and evaluate how well the environmental initiatives have (or have not) been received. All feedback should be followed up on in order to find the root cause of why certain initiatives were received or rejected.

Key indicators that are indicative of the level of awareness and engagement to use and improve initiatives may include:

- The amount of improvement suggestions or ideas
- The number of enquiries regarding the initiative
- The amount of feedback (positive or negative, or compliments and complaints)

Tangible rewards and incentives for recognising contributions and success factors may include;

- Monetary bonuses
- Discounts or reimbursements for 'green' products;
- 'Green' prizes and gifts;
- Charitable gifts, donations and sponsorships;
- Functions and events.

'Green' prizes, gifts and collateral may include;

- Calico bags;
- Eco-switches;
- Solar kettles;
- Solar torches;
- Solar chargers;
- Solar pocket calculators;
- BPA-free water bottles;
- Seed packs;
- Fairtrade hampers;
- Shower timers;
- Eco staple-free staplers;
- LED bicycle lights;
- Biodegradable pens;
- Eco-thermo mugs;
- Recycled compendiums.

Practice

An important part of the learning process is practicing. It is very difficult to get better at anything without undertaking the time to practice on purpose.

Sustainability is the same, we need to practice changing our mind set in order to

- refine our skills for improvement
- remember the lessons to adopt life changing habits at home and at work
- make mistakes in order to learn and implement change in a more effective way
- build confidence that an initiative will be adopted and worthwhile sometimes this involves thinking laterally to involve the whole team
- identify area where you can improve

Sustainability and the successful adoption in our work practices involves changes in behaviour.

As we have seen it is more than saving paper - though we must be grateful for any step which is taken up willingly and effectively by our teams.

Sustainable work practices are about the processes we currently use, what we can do better at and how we can achieve the targets that we set ourselves for improvement.

Appendix A – Example of an Environmental Management Audit Form

Internal Audit Checklist

SAMPLE ONLY

The following is a generic checklist that can be used in internal audits to evaluate conformity of an environmental management system with the requirements of AS/NZS ISO 14001:2004.

Prompts	Notes – Audit Evidence
SCOPE OF EMS	
Documented scope of EMS Scope of certification to requirements of AS/NZS ISO 14001:2004 Exclusions from scope of certification Justification of exclusions	
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY	
Policy is documented Consistent with scope of EMS (i.e. covers whole scope and no broader) Appropriate to nature, scale and environmental impacts of activities, products or services Includes commitment to continual improvement Includes commitment to prevention of pollution Includes commitment to comply with applicable legal requirements Includes commitment to comply with other requirements to which organisation subscribes relating to environmental aspects (e.g. government policy, industry guidelines, voluntary agreements) Provides framework for setting, reviewing environmental objectives and targets Implemented Maintained Communicated to everyone working for or on behalf of organisation (incl. contractors, volunteers, temp staff, remote workers) Available to public	
ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS	
Procedure to identify environmental aspects within scope of EMS that it can control and influence Procedure provides for planned or new developments, or new or modified activities, products and services Procedure provides for determining significant aspects (i.e. those that have or can have significant impact on the environment) Procedure maintenance Information on <i>all</i> environmental aspects documented and up-to-date (not just significant aspects) Significant aspects are taken into account during implementation and maintenance of EMS (e.g. communication, setting environmental objectives, audit program, training/awareness, emergency preparedness)	
LEGAL and OTHER REQUIREMENTS	
Procedure to identify and have up-to-date access to legal and other req (e.g. WPI, Greenhouse Challenge) to which your organisation subscribes directly applicable to <i>all</i> environmental aspects (not only significant ones) Procedure provides for determining <i>how</i> these legal and other requirements <i>apply</i> to environmental aspects Responsibility for identifying and determining how requirements apply Procedure maintenance Assurance that requirements are taken into account in the EMS	

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS and PROGRAMS	
Documented environmental objectives and targets at relevant functions and levels in organisation (obtain copy to check progress against several objectives and targets later*) Objectives and targets are measurable (where practical) Objectives and targets are consistent with the policy regarding: - prevention of pollution - legal and other requirements - continual improvement Objective and targets maintained (reviewed and updated) Legal and other requirements and significant environmental aspects are taken into account when establishing and reviewing objectives and targets When setting objectives and targets, the following are considered: - Technological options? - financial, operational and business requirements - view of interested parties ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS(S) Program(s) established for achieving environmental objectives and targets Responsibility for achieving objectives and targets at relevant functions and levels in organisation Means includes or resources allocated Program includes timeframe	
RESOURCES, ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES	
Management provides resources for implementation, maintenance and improvement of EMS (resources include human resources, specialised skills, organisational infrastructure, technology, and financial resources) Roles, responsibilities and authorities for effective environmental management defined and documented (e.g. in position descriptions) Roles, responsibilities and authorities for effective environmental management communicated Management representative(s) responsible for EMS: - Management representative has responsibility for ensuring that EMS is established, implemented and maintained - Management representative has responsibility for reporting to top management on performance of EMS for review, including recommendations for improvement	
COMPETENCE, TRAINING and AWARENESS	
Determination of competence of persons performing tasks on its behalf with potential to cause <i>significant</i> environmental impacts Competency records Identification of training needs associated with (all) environmental aspects and EMS (including internal audit, corrective and preventive action) Training or other action taken to meet such needs Training records Procedure on making workers aware of: - importance of conformity with environmental policy and procedures and with requirements of EMS <i>significant</i> environmental aspects and actual or potential impacts associated with their work, and environmental benefits of improved personal performance - their roles and responsibilities in achieving conformity with requirements of the EMS (including emergency preparedness and response) - potential consequences of departure from specified operating procedures - Procedure maintenance	
COMMUNICATION	
Procedure(s) regarding environmental aspects and EMS for: - internal communication between various levels & functions of organisation - receiving, recording and responding to external communication	

Documented decision whether to communicate externally about significant environmental aspects If the decision is <i>YES</i> , method(s) used:	
CONTROL OF DOCUMENTS	
Procedure(s) on document control established to: Approve documents for adequacy prior to issue Review and update as necessary and re-approve documents Ensure changes and current revision status of documents are identified Ensure relevant versions of applicable documents are available at points of use Ensure documents remain legible and readily identifiable Ensure external documents are identified and their distribution controlled Prevent unintended use of obsolete documents, and apply suitable identification to them if they are retained for any purpose. Procedure maintenance Documents required by EMS and AS/NZS ISO 14001:2004 and sighted in the audit are effectively controlled (record any nonconformities to this requirement)	
OPERATIONAL CONTROL	
Identification and planning of operations and activities associated with <i>significant environmental aspects</i> consistent with policy, objectives and targets to ensure they are carried out under specified conditions: Establishment of <i>documented</i> procedures to control situations where their absence could lead to deviations from environmental policy and objectives and targets Procedures stipulate operating criteria Procedure maintenance Establishment of procedures related to <i>significant environmental aspects of goods and services</i> used by the organisation Communication of procedures and requirements to suppliers and contractors Procedure maintenance	
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS and RESPONSE	
Procedures to identify <i>potential</i> emergency situations and <i>potential</i> accidents that can have an impact(s) on the environment Procedure(s) includes <i>response</i> to emergency situations and potential accidents? Procedures maintenance <i>Actual</i> response to <i>actual</i> emergency situations or accidents since last audit especially prevention/mitigation of environmental impact Periodic <i>tests</i> of procedure(s) where practicable Review and revision (where necessary) of emergency preparedness and response procedures, particularly <i>after</i> accidents or emergency situations	
MONITORING and MEASUREMENT	
Procedure(s) to monitor and measure on a regular basis the key characteristics of operations that can have a <i>significant</i> environmental impact Procedure(s) includes recording of information to track: performance operational controls conformity with environmental objectives and targets Monitoring and measuring equipment is calibrated or verified Calibration and verification records retained and up-to-date	

EVALUATION OF COMPLIANCE	
Procedure for periodically evaluating compliance with applicable legal requirements Procedure for periodically evaluating compliance with other requirements to which organisation subscribes Procedure maintenance Records of the results of periodic evaluation	
NONCONFORMITY, CORRECTIVE and PREVENTATIVE ACTION	
Procedure for: - dealing with actual and potential environmental nonconformities - taking corrective and preventive action Procedure defines requirements for: <i>identifying and correcting nonconformities</i> and taking <i>action to mitigate environmental impact</i> <i>investigating</i> nonconformities, determining their <i>cause</i>, and taking <i>corrective action to avoid recurrence</i> - evaluating need for action to prevent nonconformities and implementing <i>preventive action to avoid occurrence</i> (including suggestions for improvement) - recording <i>results</i> of corrective and preventive action - reviewing <i>effectiveness</i> of corrective and preventive action <i>Action taken is appropriate</i> to magnitude of problems and environmental impacts encountered - Changes made to EMS documentation resulting from corrective, preventive action	
CONTROL OF RECORDS	
Procedures for following control of records: - Identification, Storage, Protection, Retrieval, Retention, Disposal, Procedure, maintenance - Environmental records are: Legible, Identifiable and traceable to activity, product or service involved	
INTERNAL AUDIT	
Procedure(s) for: - the responsibilities and requirements for planning and conducting audits, reporting results and retaining associated records - determination of audit criteria, scope, frequency and methods - Procedure maintenance Internal audits of EMS conducted at planned intervals: - Interval/schedule - Last audit conducted - Next audit planned - Results of audits reported to management - Audit program based on environmental importance of the operations concerned and results of previous audits (especially <i>significant</i> environmental aspects) - Selection of auditors and conduct of audits ensure objectivity and impartiality of audit process (e.g. training and qualifications of auditors)	
MANAGEMENT REVIEW	
Top management reviews EMS at planned intervals to <i>evaluate continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness</i> Types of (or forums for) management reviews (include only those that are holistic and strategic) Management reviews recorded (agendas and minutes) Input to management review includes: - results of internal audits (preferably evaluation of effectiveness of internal audit program) - evaluations of compliance with legal requirements and other requirements - communication from external interested parties, including complaints - environmental performance of the organisation - extent to which objectives and targets have been met	

status of corrective and preventative action follow up actions from previous management reviews changing circumstances, including developments in legal and other requirements related to environmental aspects recommendations for improvement (from management representative) Output includes decisions and actions related to possible changes to environmental policy, objectives, targets, and other elements of EMS, consistent with commitment to continual improvement	
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Source: <http://www.environment.gov.au/search/site/internal%20audit%20checklist>

Additional Reading

<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/1a4b629e-2cf0-49de-b5d1-ddd866b14c4b/files/esd-design-guide.pdf>

<http://www.cciqecobiz.com.au/resources/>

http://www.yourenergysavings.gov.au/guides/work-what-can-we-do?items_per_page=1

<http://www.mobilemuster.com.au/>

<http://au.fsc.org/>

<http://www.business.qld.gov.au/business/running/environment/environment-your-business>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/archive/settlements/publications/government/purchasing/green-office-guide/pubs/green-office-guide.pdf>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/national-waste-policy/product-stewardship/projects>