

6. PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN COUNCILS



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PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN COUNCILS



The main suggestion put forward in this guide is to initiate a collaborative network along the lines of that described in the previous section. This section provides ideas and tips for things that could be undertaken by the your collaborative network or sustainability officers within your council.

6.1 | Ideas for internal council operations

Developing a shared understanding of sustainability

Sustainability is a contestable notion. It means different things to different people. What it means for organisations and for individuals working in organisations is even more contestable. A useful and necessary means of instigating some change is to initiate a discussion among staff, including senior management, of what sustainability is, what it means for council and how established workplaces allow or impede progress towards sustainability.

Given the nature of the topic, the typical approach of sitting around the whiteboard drafting a document and circulating it for comment is unlikely to be useful. Instead, search for some innovative, creative and fun ways of approaching the discussion.

"It provides stimulation and something that people will remember."

"There is more value in doing something like that than just working together to develop some strategy, sending it around for comment. We've been staring at whiteboards for too long."



Staff from Ku-ring-gai Council during a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™ workshop.

An external facilitator might be a good idea. There are also many commercially (and freely) available tools that could be used to draw people out of their comfort zones and usual ways of approaching problems. A number of the CEEchange councils ran workshops designed to help key staff reflect

on established work practices. The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™ methodology was used.¹⁰ It uses a hands-on, fun and creative process that enables participants to draw on their personal and professional experiences, identify organisational challenges and opportunities and set in train future actions and scenarios to improve communication, decision-making and ultimately organisational outcomes. The approach has, in some councils, offered a circuit breaker in situations where frustration and cynicism were resulting from ineffective and hierarchical means of working.

CASE
STUDY

Read how Wyong Shire Council
used LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™
to engage staff.

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Developing and measuring against sustainability indicators

In most organisations, good data underpins good decisions. And there are many people who act far more decisively when the problem – and the impact of change – can be quantified and preferably expressed in dollar terms.

Understanding how much energy and water a council uses and how much waste it produces is a good first step. The results are likely to be surprising and may very quickly spark some action, particularly if there is the potential to reduce operating costs. Obtaining a baseline for sustainability indicators - such as energy - and water use greatly helps to establish some targets, which in turn underpin the development of strategies and actions to meet those targets. Without the data, inaction can easily result.

It is common for many organisations to be unaware of their 'footprint' and unaware of the potential savings that exist. It is also common for it to be difficult to access reliable data when common sense would suggest that data should be easy to obtain. It is very worthwhile, however, to start the process of exploring local government-specific data collection systems, understanding their limitations and identifying what needs to be done to produce more reliable data. In time, some improvements can be made and as the data is seen to be valuable, more support will be provided to improve data collection and reporting systems.

The use of data to facilitate change should not stop (or necessarily start) at energy and water use. Particularly where some sustainability initiative is supported, it is important to collect and analyse data to measure the impact. Demonstrating, for example, that a Switch-Off Blitz

¹⁰ <http://www.seriousplay.com/>

has reduced energy consumption and reduced costs or that a public transport subsidy scheme has kept private and fleet cars off the road helps to demonstrate the worth of these types of activities. In short, data can be used to show that initiatives are worthwhile and not just 'warm and fuzzy' or 'feel good' activities.

Different viewpoints and the importance of language

Many people have a narrow understanding of the concept of sustainability. The association between 'sustainability' and 'the environment' and more specifically with 'climate change' is somewhat unhelpful. Sustainability as a concept can easily become marginalised or compartmentalised. In short, it has an "image problem".

This narrow understanding of sustainability is easily translated to a reflex to oppose initiatives that might be worthy from a broad sustainability point of view but which 'come across' as environmental initiatives. In situations where decision-makers are sceptical of the value of measures to protect the environment, it is easy for them to say no on the basis that council "can't afford it".

For those working on sustainability issues, this can be very frustrating. However, it is important to accept that there exist different sets of values – in councils and in communities – that may be different to the values of those working in the sustainability field. This diversity is fundamental to democratic systems and should be seen as a healthy thing. Opposing views and sets of values can impede the progress of environmental sustainability initiatives – but the same could be said for social justice initiatives, employment initiatives, cultural development activities and everything else.

In trying to advance notions of sustainability, language is very important. Don't rely on there being a broad understanding of sustainability and take care to emphasise the financial and other benefits of sustainability initiatives. Use arguments and language that will convince decision makers, not the arguments and language that would convince you!

Engaging the executive and councillors

A constant message throughout this guide has been the need for executive support. One approach used in the CEEchange Program was to establish a reference group that includes senior managers. This approach has some merit in that the formality and structure of the group infers that there has been an organisational decision to embark on some process of change. However, in reality, it is not necessarily the case that such a commitment has in fact been made by the organisation, in which case the group will lack a clear purpose. It is essentially putting the cart before the horse. A reference group or similar may be useful to help guide a particular project or process, but is unlikely to work purely as an engagement tool.

There are some other techniques that may be useful – they are subtle and could be regarded as a little underhanded, but they may work. One such technique is appealing to

the competitive streak that we all have may also be useful. Noting the achievements of other councils can often work to spark interest among some senior people who may not want to be seen as 'behind the times' among their contemporaries in other councils or to be outdone.



Read how Ku-ring-gai Council's KGB team secured executive support for its Switch-Off Blitz.

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Finding the right 'hooks'

If you asked people in the community, you will find that not everyone is passionate about the environment, or that interested in sustainability issues generally. But chances are there is some aspect of sustainability that everyone is interested in – they just may not see it in those terms. And while people may be interested, the topic for the event just may not be interesting enough for them to give up their evening or lunch break. What works in one community, or for one segment of the community, may not work for another.

Getting people together so that some process of education and engagement can take place requires some careful thought. So ask the question: "What are the right 'hooks' to get the people we want along to our event?" Think laterally, try something that hasn't been tried before. Once you get people there, the opportunity is created to subtly convey the messages you want to convey – remember the story of the Trojan horse?



Read how Mosman Council used its "Food4Thought" sessions to engage a wider audience on sustainability (sometimes without them realising).

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Another 'hook' that can be very effective is to provide people in the community with some help, advice or even a rebate to help with the costs of making lifestyle changes. Providing energy audits, loaning metering equipment and helping people to make use of available rebates for new hot water systems for example is a great way to engage with people.

CEE strategy and action-planning

One of the key outcomes for each CEEchange partner councils was the development of CEE strategy or action plan to help ensure CEE would be integrated into (or at least considered with regard to) existing processes and policies. A number of councils strategically linked their action plan to the objectives of the organisation or designed CEE business plans to complement existing organisation-wide business plans. Creating an action plan gave CEE programs and activities legitimacy within council.

A template for designing a CEE strategy/action plan can be found on the Sustainable Councils Network (www.sustainablecouncilsnetwork.org.au).

Sustainability within staff inductions and assessments

Staff induction and performance appraisal frameworks and processes are an important means of communicating to employees the importance that council attaches to sustainability principles. In trying to better integrate sustainability principles into the operations and culture of an organisation, there are few more important ways of doing this than seeing it formally reflected in the expectations placed on all employees. Conducting a review of these human resources instruments is also a superb way of asking important questions of the organisation – what does sustainability mean for us and our role here at Council?

It is of course no small thing to make changes to induction and performance appraisal documents and processes. The HR departments in most organisations tend not to allow constant 'tinkering' with these things. However, a discussion can be initiated about how well these existing processes incorporate council's sustainability principles and what opportunities there may be to review them. It may be that there is a comprehensive review being planned for the near future, in which case there is a fantastic opportunity to 'inject' a stronger sustainability focus.



CASE STUDY

Read how Mosman Council has created a fun, interactive sustainability induction for all staff.

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6.2| Ideas for engaging the external community

In some ways, the integration of community education and engagement as a tool for sustainability in the wider community may prove to be a logical next step once the integration of sustainability in a local council becomes tangible. But without having done the work to transform the internal organisational culture, a council will lack the credentials or authority to engage more with the community around sustainability issues.

Apart from 'earning' the authority to engage with the community, councils also need to develop capacity to deliver effective CEE externally. This might involve developing a deeper appreciation of CEE and the many tools and techniques available. And it may involve a disturbance of existing 'community consultation' paradigms.

Much of this guide has been about using CEE as a tool for better integrating sustainability in council operations – about 'getting one's own house in order' before 'taking it to the community'. However, the CEEchange Program helped council partners to learn quite a bit about external engagement around sustainability issues. This section sets out a few lessons and some tips for councils seeking to build their capacity in the delivery of CEE.

Using demonstration projects to trial new ways of engaging

The best way to learn is by doing, trying something new and reflecting on how well it worked and how it could be done better. When a need arises to involve the external community in a council infrastructure project or around a particular issue, an opportunity arises to try something new.

It may involve an attempt to reach a part of the community that has been difficult to reach in the past or it may involve the use of new techniques to engage with people more deeply. Look for these opportunities – there may be projects on the horizon that would benefit from a good CEE component and there may be grant funds available to try something new.

Large infrastructure projects provide a particularly good opportunity to engage with the community. They can be used to demonstrate Council leadership, to create a focal point for the delivery of behaviour change messages and to secure community support for further investment in sustainable infrastructure.



CASE STUDY

Read how Orange City Council engaged local businesses in a program to conserve water resources

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Building capacity of community organisations and individuals, activating existing networks

Often, community organisations and individuals lack capacity to participate effectively in council-led processes. Communities are not always well organised, or well resourced, to take ownership of sustainability challenges and to play a part in addressing them. Community members may be disenfranchised, over-consulted or apathetic and are thus difficult to engage. It is common for councils to see 'the same old faces' at each consultation event.

Building capacity in the community to allow people and organisations to participate in solving local problems is part of the process. It is about building social capital and activating people's passion for their local community. Overcoming the 'stale' relationship between council and community brought about by traditional or ineffective efforts to engage is also important.



Community members at the launch of Coffs Connect, a Coffs Harbour program City Council to support local community organisations.



CASE STUDY

Read how Coffs Harbour City Council improved community engagement through the support of local community groups.

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Demonstrating expertise to other organisations

Perhaps your council has established a collaborative network that is doing great things to help make council's operations more sustainable. Perhaps your council has developed some very effective ways of engaging 'customers' around sustainability and other issues. These are things that are bound to be of interest to businesses and community organisations in your local area. It provides an excuse to talk to them about what you have been doing. It provides an opportunity for you to engage with other organisations around sustainability issues – to find out what they are doing and whether there are any ways that you can help.

6.3| Where to go for more help and information

The challenge of embedding sustainability can be daunting – but you are not alone! There are many people and organisations across NSW and beyond who are dealing with the same challenges that you are.

One of the best things that you can do is to tap into existing networks where you will get access to advice and ideas, some resources that others have developed, research findings and more. If you are thinking of doing something, chances are someone has tried it before and can probably save you some time and effort.

WEBSITES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN TEAMS

Victorian Local Government Sustainability Site – Municipal Association of Victoria

www.sustainability.mav.asn.au

Sustainability Victoria – local government forums

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/2927-local-government-forums.asp?intSiteID=4

Sustainability, Environment and Climate Change – Innovative Knowledge Exchange Network

www.iken.net.au/communities-of-practice/environment-and-climate-change

Education for Sustainability Hub – NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

www.efslearninghub.net.au

Sustainable Choice Products and Services Database – NSW Local Government and Shires Association

www.lgsa.org.au/sustainablechoice

ABC Green@Work – Australian Broadcasting Corporation

www.abc.net.au/greenatwork

6.4| Be part of the network

One of the outcomes of the CEEchange Program has been the development of an online collaborative forum, the Sustainable Councils Network. It is for people with an interest in bringing about some change in their organisations in order to see better sustainability outcomes. Already this forum is a valuable place for people in different councils to share their experiences of embedding sustainability and collaborative network activities. As well, it gives local government collaborative networks a place to stay connected and discuss network issues in private and without the need to meet in person. The more people to participate, the more valuable it will be for everyone.

Join us online and start collaborating now! Simply visit: www.sustainablecouncilsnetwork.org.au register your details and in no time you will be connected with many other people passionate about sustainability in government.



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CITY OF SYDNEY SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Internal focus
• Membership

Members of the City of Sydney's Green Champions network were rewarded with sustainability leadership training to help build the network's capacity as well as their own.



City of Sydney and Green Square Green Champions attend a presentation and celebration at Sydney Town Hall.



City of Sydney Green Champions receiving their Certificates of Completion for the Leadership Program from CEO, Monica Barone.

THE CHALLENGE

To invest in and reward collaborative network members for their contributions and to kick start the development of new sustainability initiatives within council.

THE SOLUTION

The City of Sydney engaged a training provider to deliver leadership training to a number of its Green Champions (the City of Sydney collaborative network). Training participants were selected on the basis of their efforts and contributions to the Green Champions program, and on the basis of their strategic positions in the organisation. The leadership training was offered as a reward for their passion and voluntary contributions.

Importantly, the training was aligned with a community-based program, the Green Square Green Champion Pilot Program. This community program was based on the existing City of Sydney Green Champions collaborative network and provided sustainability leadership training to 15 self-selecting community green champions in the Green Square area within the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA).

The training for City of Sydney staff required participants to identify a sustainability project or issue within Council that they wanted to pursue and to use this as a focal point for applying what they learnt during the training. The projects included:

- Developing a collaborative network sub-group for outdoor/operations staff (see the 'Fluoro Green Champions' case study)
- 'Green Faces' – a program to introduce new and existing staff to the principles and projects of Sustainable Sydney 2030
- A transport data collection project aimed at better understanding and reducing the number of trips using Council vehicles or taxis by Council staff and introducing an Active Transport Hierarchy to be used by staff.

In addition, a number of the City of Sydney participants acted as mentors to their community counterparts. This was an important part of the program as it increased enthusiasm in both networks, helped the City staff understand the needs of the community they serve and helped the community participants to understand and appreciate the role of the Council officers.

THE RESULT

The City of Sydney participants were invited to present to the Council's senior executive group and CEO on the nature of their projects and the progress they had made. Each of the groups demonstrated the contribution of their projects toward achieving the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan. The senior executive group was hugely receptive and found ways to provide further assistance and support for the projects. In effect, the 'pet projects' were legitimised at the meeting as being core business for Council.

It is important to note that many in the group were unused to public speaking and/or had not presented at this level previously, providing yet another opportunity for participants to increase their confidence and skill base.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

- People working within organisations or communities to advance sustainability principles can be more effective in their roles if they have good leadership skills. Seek out training opportunities.
- Invest in your network members and reward them for their passion and contribution.
- Seek buy-in from the executive to give projects legitimacy and to help remove operational barriers to achieving the project goals.
- A detailed report on the Green Square Green Champions Pilot Program has been produced by the City and is available for those interested in piloting such a program in their community.



ENGAGING OUTDOOR STAFF: THE 'FLUORO GREEN CHAMPIONS'

Internal focus

- Membership
- Staff engagement

Given their different locations and shift times, engaging outdoor staff can be challenging, but the City of Sydney has met the challenge with a staff-led initiative.



Removing paint from the waste stream.



Recycling the axels on damaged garbage bins.



Reminding staff to switch off.

THE CHALLENGE

The City of Sydney has established an extremely successful collaborative network called the Green Champions. Its list of achievements is long and it has an enormous amount of support from Council leadership. A number of other councils have modelled their activities on the Green Champions. However, there has always been a struggle in Sydney and other councils to engage outdoor staff through workplace activities and around sustainability issues generally. Participation is often limited due to being located in depots away from the head office, differing shift times and different priorities for sustainability action.

THE SOLUTION

Two members of the Council's Waste and Cleansing team were already members of the Green Champions and were rewarded for their contributions by being provided with a sustainability leadership training course.

One of the results of attending the leadership training was that these Waste and Cleansing members decided to establish a collaborative network sub-group, nicknamed the 'Fluoro Green Champions'. The team coordinate meetings to fit in with shift changeover times and to integrate with weekly 'toolbox' meetings.

THE RESULT

Since being established at the end of 2011, the 'Fluoro Green Champions':

- Have run a local Switch-off Blitz focussed on fridges, air conditioners and vending machines (rather than computers) which has seen four unnecessary fridges switched off and there are plans to replace three old vending machines with one multifunctional device.
- Have started washing and reusing work gloves instead of sending to landfill – reducing waste and saving money
- Have started recovering mattresses, paint cans and TVs from the waste stream and sending them for recycling
- Now recycle all parts of broken wheelie bins, a meaningful task offered to staff on light duties

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

- To engage outdoor/operational staff, the network or subgroup must accommodate the location, shifts and priorities of outdoor staff.
- While the activities of the Fluoro Green Champs are very worthwhile from an environmental sustainability perspective, environmental messages are deliberately not put at the forefront of discussions at team meetings. It's more about reducing waste and just what makes good sense.



SUSTAINABILITY INDUCTION FOR NEW STAFF

Internal focus

- Staff engagement
- Education

Including a sustainability component in induction clearly communicates the importance of sustainability to new staff at Council.



Mosman Council's sustainability induction clearly details the Council's commitments and initiatives, as well as expectations of staff and resources available.

THE CHALLENGE

To make all staff aware of the Mosman environment, their obligations such as environmental impact assessments, and their role in relation to sustainability.

THE SOLUTION

As part of the CEEchange Program and encouraged by the PIRATES collaboration network, Mosman Council has developed an e-learning module about sustainability for all new employees. The module now forms part of new employees' induction process.

The module was developed for Council by an e-learning provider. It comprises the following components:

- What is environmental sustainability?
- Mosman's ecological footprint
- Environmental initiatives in the LGA
- Sustainability in the workplace
- Being water-wise
- Being waste-wise
- Saving energy
- Sustainable transport
- Environmental assessments
- Sustainable purchasing
- Sustainable events
- What is my role?
- Success stories
- Sustainability pledge

The module is self-paced and employees can access it at any computer, at work or at home. Importantly the e-learning module has been integrated into induction for all new employees by making it part of the induction process that managers have to sign-off on.

THE RESULT

All new staff are introduced to the culture of sustainability at Mosman from the beginning of their employment and are more aware of the sustainability services offered by the Council and their obligations with regard to sustainability.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

Staff induction processes offer a valuable opportunity to integrate sustainability principles into the operations and culture of a council, making it clear to employees the value council places on sustainability.

It's a team effort that involves the whole of Council approach.

E-learning helped us spread sustainability learnings

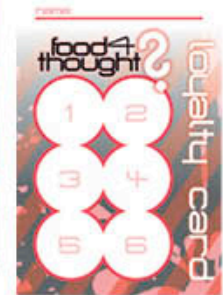


ENGAGING THROUGH LUNCH: FOOD4THOUGHT SESSIONS

Internal focus

- Education
- Staff engagement

Mosman Council needed a vehicle to engage and educate staff on sustainability issues which was fun and not intimidating.



Staff who attended a number of the F4T sessions were rewarded.

THE CHALLENGE

Mosman Council needed a vehicle to engage and educate staff on sustainability issues which was fun and not intimidating.

THE SOLUTION

Following an extensive consultation process with Mosman Council senior staff and managers at the commencement of the CEEchange Program, the Food4Thought (F4T) event series was created as a regular sustainability "informational" event.

Open to all Council staff and contractors, each F4T session is held quarterly at Council during lunchtime. Those who attend receive a free lunch and enjoy either a documentary film, guest speaker or discussion about a broad range of sustainability topics. Recognition events have also been included to reward staff for participation in sustainability initiatives.

Designed for broad engagement, the principle behind F4T is that you don't have to be a "greenie" to learn about broad issues and opportunities affecting the world today and then to consider how they relate to us locally. Discussion and a diversity of views is supported and encouraged as part of building shared vision and ownership of sustainability within Council.

The concept was initiated by Mosman's CEEchange project officer, who has largely been responsible for organising the events. The Council's collaborative network, known as PIRATES (Proactive Innovation and Responsible Action Towards Environmental Sustainability) contributes to choosing the subject of each event and brainstorms possible feature speakers. Events are run about once a quarter and enjoy broad support.

So far the Food4Thought sessions have included:

- Documentary - How the City of Chicago is driving sustainability and leading by example through tough leadership
- Documentary - Food Miles: the impacts of fossil-fuel driven food systems and the merits of localisation
- Guest speaker - Beyond Zero Emissions presenting the Australia 2020 report on how Australia can generate 100% renewable base-load energy by 2020 using existing technology
- Documentary - Paris Velo Liberte: A public-private bicycle initiative with more than 17,000 quick-hire bikes throughout the city
- Earth Hour/Switch-Off BBQ for staff hosted by PIRATES
- Guest speaker - Nik Midlam from the City of Sydney presenting on tri-generation technology
- Switch-off Blitz celebration and awards event for staff
- Documentary - A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba
- Guest Speaker - Chris Lee's talk "Bursting with Energy" discussing coal seam gas

THE RESULT

The staff response to Food4Thought has been very positive. To date, 81 individuals (or about 55% of all staff) have attended at least one F4T film or speaking event, with the majority attending three or more sessions. Surveys and feedback have shown that staff like the format, the broad range of topics and speakers, and want the event to continue.

One of the challenges will be the transition from the formal CEEchange project phase with events driven by the CEEchange officer to post-project where responsibility will be with the PIRATES collaborative network (supported by the Sustainability Team) to continue the work. Given the positive view of F4T by both the PIRATES and staff in general, it is expected that there will be enough support and enthusiasm to continue F4T into the future.



Food is always a good hook for attracting an audience.

F4T commenced with its own identity and with an incentive for staff to attend multiple sessions through the introduction of a 'loyalty card' where three or more stamps qualified for a draw to win one of several sustainability themed prizes. Lunch and the opportunity to connect with other staff have been additional ongoing incentives to join the events.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

Some of the success factors for Food4Thought have been:

- There was initial broad consultation with all directors and managers by the CEEchange project manager prior to designing the events. As a result, there has been good executive support for the program. The general manager attended the first session and gave his support. Some of the directors have attended a number of sessions and have actively encouraged staff to go.
- It is run in a 'bite-size' chunk at lunchtime so doesn't require managerial approval for time-off to attend.
- Lunch being provided is also clearly an incentive, making it easy to attend. The food is attractive but simple and the room is well setup – staff are treated so that it doesn't feel like a regular meeting. Another option is to invite staff to bring in a plate of food to share.
- Attendance is completely voluntary – no one is pressured to attend.
- The events give staff that might not otherwise interact, a chance to meet and mingle, so F4T offers a positive, informal team-building opportunities for Council.
- No one attending needs to 'believe in' sustainability. The sessions are structured to be open, exploratory, information and focussing on solutions rather than just problems.
- Effort is made to ensure each event is interesting and topical, with engaging speakers being particularly popular.

YUM!

The sessions are structured to be open, exploratory, information and focussing on solutions rather than just problems.



BUSINESS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

External focus

• Community engagement

Businesses in the Orange City Council area were engaged in a program to help them reduce risk while protecting local water resources.



Local business people learning about the stormwater harvesting system.

THE CHALLENGE

Building on its capacity to engage with the local business community on issues of sustainability and in particular on reducing the risk of polluting the town's drinking water supply, Orange City Council has developed a world's best-practice system for harvesting stormwater for the town's drinking water supply that is highly dependent on the ability to keep pollutants out of the system.

THE SOLUTION

Orange City Council used the opportunity provided by the CEEchange Program to engage a contractor to develop a self-audit and education tool for local businesses to identify risks in their operations. Through the process of developing, testing and then delivering the tool, businesses were engaged at various points through site visits, workshops and in trialling the audit tool. An important component of the project was that Council officers attended many of the face-to-face activities in the hope of learning from the consultant about how to effectively engage. It was a meaningful project in its own right, but also one designed to build capacity in Council to deliver community education and engagement.

THE RESULT

The approach represented a big departure from the usual regulatory approach and helped to build a stronger and more trusting relationship between the local business community and Council. While some immediate outcomes were seen in terms of the lowering of risks to the town's water supply, it was also thought that the business community had become more receptive to Council messages about sustainability issues.

The project received some very positive media coverage and helped to send broader messages to the community about water quality. Further development of the tool has been undertaken, with future plans to develop and deliver an online module. There has been considerable interest from neighbouring councils in make use of the tool that Orange had developed.

In a related process, 'ownership' of one of the remediated wetlands used to filter water coming through the system was given to a group of local environmental community groups. Once established, the ongoing management of the wetland area was coordinated by these community groups, with the support of Council.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

- Keep an eye out for infrastructure projects that would benefit from a good CEE component.
- Effective CEE can lead to better outcomes than the usual regulatory approach.
- The use of a self-regulated toolkit is a valuable 'non-regulatory' approach to improved community engagement and sustainable management, with many long term benefits
- The business community is interested in taking part in non-regulatory projects and interested in change when given information on how change can be achieved.

KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL

INTRODUCING A BOOMERANG BAGS SYSTEM AT COUNCIL

Internal focus

- Staff engagement
- Plastic bags

Given its proximity to the shops, a high level of plastic bag use was identified as an issue at Ku-ring-gai Council and a solution was developed.

BOOMERANG BAGS ARE HERE!



IT'S EASY!

1. Borrow a bag from a convenient collection point near you
2. Go shopping
3. Return it when you're finished!

Feedback: kgr@nsw.gov.au or call #150



COLLECTION POINT

Feedback: kgr@nsw.gov.au or call #150



Boomerang Bag collection points were located in handy spots around Council and promoted with fun posters featuring one of the KGB mascots, Stella the Spider.

THE CHALLENGE

Ku-ring-gai Council staff were regularly visiting the shops at lunch and bringing things back in plastic bags after leaving their personal collection of re-usable bags in their car or at home.

THE SOLUTION

The Ku-ring-gai Green Backs (KGB) observed that this was a problem and during a brainstorming session, a member of the group came up with the idea of Boomerang Bags. Staff throughout the organisation were asked via email to bring in spare re-usable bags and to drop them off at a labelled box in customer service over a two-week period. Boomerang Bag pick-up stations were then set up with collections of re-usable bags on hand for staff to borrow and then return when they are done.

Temporary hooks were stuck on the wall, with one string bag hanging off it and a collection of "green" reusable bags inside that bag. The locations were strategically selected for their ability to provide a visual reminder to staff on their way out of the building and where they wouldn't obstruct movement around hallways. For these reasons, kitchens and exit points to the building were chosen in consultation with the building manager and staff who knew the behaviour of their colleagues in that area.

The launch of the system was communicated via email. KGB-branded posters were placed at each station and reminder posters were placed at exits to remind people to use the Boomerang Bags.

THE RESULT

Staff are now regularly using the Boomerang Bags preventing the use of a significant number of plastic bags.

The informal consultation with staff about where to set up each station served as a valuable engagement method. Despite emails being sent out about the initiative, many people didn't really know about it. The conversations allowed staff to ask questions, be involved in selecting appropriate locations they were happy with, to give positive feedback and to build relationships with the KGB.

The initiative also raised staff awareness of the impact of plastic on the environment and the need to avoid single use disposable bags. The Boomerang Bag reminder posters and stations themselves also serve the purpose of giving the KGB a visual presence in Council.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

Is it already being done? During development the KGB were informed that the libraries in the area already had an informal system in place. They made sure to acknowledge their leadership in communication pieces.

Consultation with staff and building managers (who may have workplace health and safety concerns) can serve as an invaluable staff engagement tool.

Set up stations where people pass by on their way out for lunch. If people have to remember to go out of their way to grab a bag, they're not as likely to use it.

There were already small, simple collections in most kitchens of plastic bags for staff to re-use, so this wasn't addressed. Depending on your situation, you may want to consider if your message could get confused and address it appropriately.

Periodically check that stations are tidy and that bags are evenly distributed.

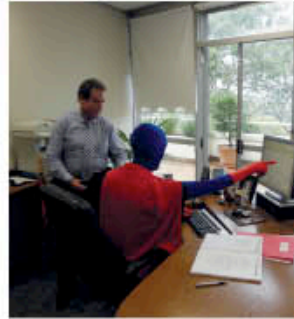
KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL

DEVELOPING A COMPUTER SWITCH-OFF BLITZ

Internal focus

- Energy
- Council staff engagement

The KGB network at Ku-ring-gai Council has refined its computer Switch-off Blitz to deliver real benefits to Council.



The KGB engaged General Manager, John McKee, and the directors to be a part of the most recent Blitz, including starring in promotions with KGB mascot, Energy Man.

THE CHALLENGE

Soon after establishing the Ku-ring-gai Green Backs (KGB) collaborative network at Council, the group was faced with two challenges:

- 1) To establish the KGB's identity in the organisation
- 2) To find a meaningful staff engagement activity to increase the organisations level of sustainability

A year later, the challenge was to increase the amount of computers being turned off overnight at Council.

THE SOLUTION

The KGB decided to organise two computer monitor Switch-off Blitzes in its first year. This involved KGB members completing an audit of computer monitors left on at the Council chambers one evening. Staff who had turned their monitors off were rewarded with a Fair Trade chocolate accompanied by a congratulatory note. A follow-up email was sent the next day from the KGB and the GM backed up the campaign with an email of support.

Several weeks later, a second audit was conducted unannounced and found a significant reduction in the number of monitors left on. The results and environmental and financial savings made were communicated to staff.

A year later energy use from computers overnight was still a problem, on average 25% of computers (both the monitor and hard drive) were still being left on which translated to several thousand dollars in unnecessary annual costs for Council. So the KGB decided to run another Blitz – but to take it to the next level. This time, the campaign ran for a

month and the objective was to increase the amount of staff regularly turning their computers off completely (both monitor and harddrive) overnight. Directorates went up against each another to win a free BBQ lunch, which would be cooked by the losing director.

One point was awarded to each directorate for every night that they reached Johnny's (the GM's) Target of 95% of computers off. Daily results were communicated to staff on the intranet, via emails and through visits from Energy Man.

THE RESULT

It took a couple of weeks to gain momentum, but by the final week it became clear that the KGB had achieved engagement from staff across all levels of the organisation. Unprompted emails came from the general manager to the organisation in support of the KGB's campaign and directors were sending emails to their staff encouraging them to switch off their computers. Directors exchanged competitive banter about who would be cooking the snags and staff were reminding colleagues to switch off their computers at the end of the day. The really competitive nature of some people came out with staff identifying computers that needed to be left on for operational purposes and others enquiring if any computers were incorrectly listed under their directorate.

The final outcome was an increase in computers switched off from 75% to 93%, a sustained presence from the KGB and a new level of engagement and buy-in from the executive and staff. Unfortunately, the switch-off rate dropped slightly soon after the competition ended. The next challenge is to try to achieve a higher rate of permanent change in staff behaviour, with an ongoing communication campaign planned.



The leaders of Ku-ring-gai's corporate and civic directorate celebrate their Blitz win.

SWITCH-OFF BLITZ 2012

Week 2 Results

Directorate	Points
Strategy & Environment	3
Corporate/Civc	0
Community	0
Development & Regulation	0
Operations	0

How the scoring works

Every day a directorate hits Johnny's 95% PC-off target that team is awarded 1 point. Who almost 2 weeks left for the Blitz, it means that's is still *DIRTY* if you've *ALREADY* directorate to take the lead!

How close is your directorate to Johnny's 95%-off target?

Percentage of Computers Turned Off

Remember all of Council's computers left on overnight will cost \$71,000/yr and create the same amount of carbon emissions as 800 cars!

— Strategy & Environment
— Corporate/Civc
— Community
— Development & Regulation
— Operations

Get feedback? Email kgb@kmc.nsw.gov.au

Regular staff communications featured the directors to encourage competition.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

- The month-long computer Switch-off Blitz probably achieved a higher level of staff engagement than the one-night audits as it simply went for a lot longer. It did require significantly more effort, but it allowed for more regular communications. The KGB was assisted by the IT department which supplied an automatic update on overnight switch-off rates and locations of computers. The initiative was able to gain momentum and engage more staff on a deeper level, so the level of behaviour change was probably more significant and hopefully the degree of long term change was greater.
- Positive, 'sustainable' rewards like the Fair Trade chocolate are always positively received.
- It can take a bit of strategic effort to engage the executive, but the benefits of having their support and endorsement are invaluable.
- Communicating results in a simple and timely manner is important. Take staff on the journey and share audit results and statistics on financial and environmental savings.
- To avoid having staff ignore the group messages, be respectful and don't clog email inboxes every day. Write concise, visually appealing emails and use a variety of channels such as strategically placed posters, daily updates on the intranet, posts on work social media sites and visits.
- It's difficult to please everyone. Some criticisms were made regarding methodology and how the winners should be chosen, but this provided a good opportunity to engage with staff in conversation.
- A personal visit to every section of Council in the Chambers from Energy Man and a member of the KGB with a copy of the first week's results was a really effective way of informing staff about the details of the Blitz. It provided an opportunity for staff to ask questions and sparked their interest. Whilst a little time-consuming, it was much more effective than deliberating over the wording of a perfect email or poster and it allowed for the KGB to work on building relationships with staff.

The Northy News

20 April 2012 The source of the truth in Sydney's green heart \$4.55

KMC GM enlists Energy Man to help Council better manage energy, says Wikileaks



Wikileaks has uncovered documents and surveillance photographs which reveal that the General Manager, John "Johnny" McKee, and the famed Energy Man are in talks to make Ku-ring-gai Council a more energy conscious organisation.

Documents downloaded from the Council's air-tight server state that the GM has asked Energy Man and the "MGM" to implement a plan to encourage staff to switch off their computers at the end of the day or their shift.

The documents say "Like IT department has calculated that while previous Switch-off Blitzez have been effective, around 100 PCs are still being left on every night. If all Council computers were switched off regularly, Council would be saving a total of \$13,000/year and reducing CO₂ emissions by about 60 tonnes/year!

"It's time to take these Switch-off Blitzez to the next level. It will be a big saving and an easy win, for Council and for the environment."

Photographs from our investigator confirm that Johnny and Energy Man have been meeting secretly, and the word is that Council directors are also somehow involved.

Stay tuned for more breaking news...

MAKE IT QUICK & EASY, & MAKE IT FUN.

WANT TO ENGAGE THE EXEC?



BUILDING CAPACITY BY INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Internal focus
• Membership

When faced with declining signs of life, a network will benefit from an investment in its people.



Wyong Council's sustainability leadership training attendees joined with participants from fellow CEEchange councils, Mosman Council and Ku-ring-gai Council.

THE CHALLENGE

Wyong Shire Council's collaborative network, the S-Team (sustainability team), was established in 2008. The wider network consists of approximately 45 staff with an average of 10-15 staff attend meetings. Over the last four years the network has undertaken several successful collaborative projects improving different aspects of Council operations and has provided a supportive environment for staff to discuss and apply Wyong's sustainability principles.

While the S-Team has maintained its existence through a major Service Delivery Review and other pressures over the previous 24 months, the activity levels and 'signs of life' had waned and the network's survival was considered vulnerable. Fluctuations in the level of collective ownership and initiatives being undertaken; staff availability; group communications and dynamics; as well as a perceived lack of demonstrated executive support for the S-Team, all played a contributing role.

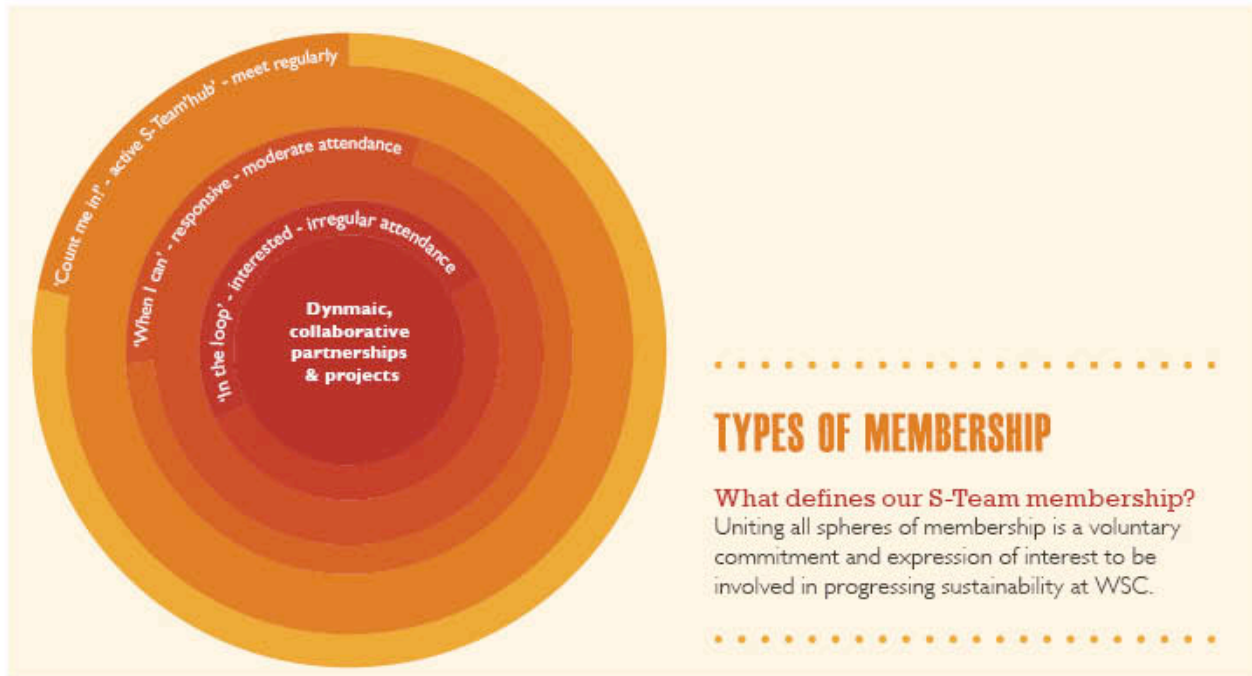
THE SOLUTION

The S-Team's re-emergence has been a team effort - a combination of actions and contributors that have helped reignite the productivity of the network. During 2011-12 the Council's CEEchange project, Working Sustainably, was utilised to help create change. A 'needs' and 'assets' approach was used to target actions that were best placed to leverage existing resources and opportunities in a way that would create new value - where the strengths of the members were harnessed and new connections and benefits created.

Capacity building, increasing social cohesion and relationships, and working to increase demonstrated executive support in order to increase the value experienced by individual members of the network, were key priorities. Some of the best results came from skilling up five network members through a two and a half day sustainability leadership program, organised by the CEEchange Program for its partner councils.

Delivered by external trainers, the program aimed to build professional capacity in key areas such as leadership, innovation, collaboration, strategy, design, personal effectiveness and impact generation for sustainability. This unique training opportunity was promoted as an exclusive opportunity for S-Team members, as a reward for their contributions to date. Interested candidates were asked to articulate their motivations and commitment through an 'expression of interest' process. Another four training places were allocated strategically across the organisation to staff nominated by managers.

The training was conducted over two full days at an external location, scheduled two weeks apart, and followed up with a half-day mentoring session. Wyong was one of several councils represented at the training and feedback indicated that participants benefited from the opportunity to meet, network and learn from other local government staff. As an organisation, investing in the human and social capital of staff through the sustainability leadership training had many valuable results.



TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

What defines our S-Team membership?

Uniting all spheres of membership is a voluntary commitment and expression of interest to be involved in progressing sustainability at WSC.

THE RESULT

The benefits of increasing the capacity of several individual members produced an overall net benefit for the network, enabling timely skill-sharing, leadership and increased ownership from within the group. As part of the training, participants were required to undertake a collaborative leadership project to apply their new skills and tools. Our Wyong group chose the reinvigoration of the S-Team. Stepping up on a personal and professional level, the group worked together to devise a way forward for the S-Team over the coming 12 months. The mentoring and support received through the training program were important contributing factors in the success of the group's process.

Through collaborative planning, network engagement and leading by example our sustainability leaders have had a significant impact on the current state of health of the collaborative network. One effective change involved

S-Team members taking on the organising and hosting of network meetings, rotating this role between members.

Just one month following the conclusion of the training in June 2012:

- Around eight new sustainability projects being worked on by S-Team members from across the organisation;
- The network's internal communication channels have been reactivated;
- There are signs of increased motivation and personal rewards being experienced by members; and
- A number of 'wins' are now on the board for Wyong Shire Council's sustainability journey.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

- While having a dedicated staff member appointed to drive/support Wyong's collaborative network has been very important to its success and positioning, it has been crucial to ensure that there is adequate ownership of the network by its members to avoid the pitfalls of over-dependency. Having members take turns to host and organise meetings has helped significantly with this issue and allowed members to add their own distinctive styles and interests to the meetings.
- Membership of Wyong's collaborative network has intentionally been kept open and flexible. The success of the network has centred on a non-prescriptive, non-judgmental culture which accepts all levels of interest and participation from its membership. Membership consists of a core 'hub' of active, regular members and a wider network of participants and supporters (a more passive, but no less passionate observer group).
- Wyong's collaborative network has benefited from regular investment in the network's social capital and their available resources. This includes seed funding for initiatives, training opportunities for the group and individuals, recognition/rewards and facilitation assistance when necessary.
- Collaborative networks are a wonderful forum for staff to demonstrate and be recognised for their leadership and positive contributions to the organisation. In the case of Wyong's leadership training placements, capacity building of several motivated individuals resulted in net benefits for the whole group through information sharing and leading by example.
- Expect and accept fluctuations in network participation and productivity over the long term. Many external factors can affect the network such as time of year (reporting cycles, financial year, etc.), staff turn over and the current management climate or level of demonstrated management



ENGAGEMENT THROUGH LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™

Internal focus

- Engagement
- Education
- LOGO SERIOUS PLAY

A series of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™ workshops that focused on sustainability were conducted with staff from across the organisation in an effort to engage a wider audience on sustainability issues.



The objective of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™ is to foster creative thinking by having staff build metaphors of their organisational identity and experience using LEGO® bricks.

The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™ sessions were well attended and positively received. Attendees each signed a sustainability commitment card based on their ideas and work in the sessions.

THE CHALLENGE

To engage staff from a wide range of backgrounds and varying levels of environmental awareness on sustainability issues. It can be difficult to engage staff if their role is not specifically focussed on sustainability as the subject matter can be intimidating.

THE SOLUTION

As part of the CEEchange Program activities at Wyong Shire Council, a series of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™ workshops that focused on sustainability were conducted with staff from across the organisation.

The objective of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY™ is to foster creative thinking by having staff build metaphors of their organisational identity and experience using LEGO® bricks. The approach is based on research that finds that hands-on learning produces deeper, more meaningful understandings. The approach claims that participants come away with more effective communication skills and are better able to engage their imaginations in problem solving.

At Wyong Shire Council, the Sustainability Team decided that providing education around sustainability in a fun and engaging way would suit Council's workforce and circumstances. The fact that a number of workshops could be offered across Council and that staff only had to be released from work for two hours made the initiative more attractive to deadline and budget-conscious managers. Also, a conscious decision was made that the workshops would not be promoted as being explicitly about sustainability.

THE RESULT

Identified outcomes from the workshops included:

- Participants were exposed to multiple perspectives from across the different Council business areas.
- Participants learned what other staff and business areas were doing.
- A number of participants reported they have modified their thinking and behaviour within their roles in general as a result of the education through workshops, e.g. switching off lights, planting native trees, recycling, replacement of an air conditioning system with a more sustainable system, replacement of taps, planning for solar panels on community centres, replacement of cleaning products with green products, buying local and increased use of the Council's internal Swap Station (office equipment recycling).
- Participants made a wide range of personal commitments to sustainability.
- Several managers were engaged, including some of the harder-to-engage staff from operational areas.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

Success factors for the workshops were:

- The workshops did not demand large amounts of time from employees, which was important in a cost-conscious environment, and yet was considered to be part of the general training agenda.
- The workshops were fun and engaging and had novelty value. Word of mouth was important in getting more staff to sign up for the training.
- The workshops combined staff from different areas of Council, which allowed multiple perspectives to come out and be shared.
- Members of the S-Team (Wyong's staff collaborative network) assisted in the facilitation of the workshops, which exposed them to other staff members' perspectives and they were provided training for facilitating the workshops themselves.

COFFS
HARBOUR
CITY COUNCIL

COFFS CONNECT AND COMMUNITY WORKING GROUPS

External focus

- Community engagement
- Collaboration

To encourage the community to take ownership of the 2030 Plan by 1) supporting them to take real actions aligned with the plan, and 2) helping them understanding how their groups “fit into the jigsaw” of the 2030 Plan.



A number of community working groups received funding from Council.



Members of the Coffs Harbour community at the launch of the Coffs Connect website.

THE CHALLENGE

To encourage the community to take ownership of the 2030 Plan by 1) supporting them to take real actions aligned with the plan, and 2) helping them understanding how their groups “fit into the jigsaw” of the 2030 Plan.

THE SOLUTION

In order to achieve this, Council developed and implemented a comprehensive strategy to build capacity within the local community. Using the opportunity provided through the CEEchange Program, the project was designed to revitalise the relationship between Council and community and empower individuals and community organisations to play an active part in implementing the 2030 Plan. Firstly, a number of community working groups were established around the 2030 Plan themes. Council liaison officers provided support but did not look to lead the groups. Each of the groups were then encouraged to identify a manageable project and grant funds were provided by Council in support of some of the projects. The projects were as follows:

- The installation of solar-powered lighting along a commonly-used bike and pedestrian route.
- The ‘Little Pizza My Heart’ launch event, which comprised presenting the theatre work “I Am Here” (the story of the refugee journey to Australia) followed by entertainment and culturally diverse pizzas by provided local culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and mainstream community members.
- Two dune protection and bush rehabilitation projects.
- A project to open a computer room in a community college for recently-arrived migrants, with technical and teaching support provided by TAFE students.

One of the groups has now gone on to apply for and receive further grant funding with the assistance of their Council Liaison Officer.

Secondly, Council developed ‘Coffs Connect’, a searchable website for community groups to place information about their groups online. Community groups who sign up to the website need to identify which theme and area of the 2030 Plan they are working within. This allows Council to identify how many active groups there are working around each of the 2030 themes and to provide support as needed. At the same time it offers communities a “real time” directory of groups throughout the area so it acts as a connection point for all groups in the local government areas (LGA). While the site was built by Council, it is owned by the community. Community groups can add events, meeting dates and information about their groups. There is also a grants section and a community service providers section. It is hoped in the future to build the site to include the ability to cross-connect between the groups.

THE RESULT

Not all of the groups flourished, but most did. The aim was to provide an opportunity for community passions and energy to coalesce around some important sustainability issues that aligned with the 2030 Plan and for that to slowly grow into something more substantial. It is hoped that further rounds of funding will be made available to groups to continue working on projects.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

Councils are in a fantastic position to act as “enablers” within the community, supporting the community with expert advice and resources (if possible) to allow the community to undertake projects across the community. This is a great example of the old adage “a problem shared is a problem halved”.

Councils are also perfectly placed as “connectors” – they often have a great “helicopter view” of what is happening in the area and so can link different groups together to pool resources and encourage them to work together on projects.

Whilst these types of processes require initial time to set-up and groups needed support at the start, the time required as the groups got their projects up and running became less. If Council had simply undertaken these projects themselves (the more traditional process), the costs would have been far greater and the sense of ownership and capacity built within the community would not have happened.



DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Internal/external focus

- Staff engagement
- Community engagement

Coffs Harbour City Council's collaborative network focussed on engagement was the perfect group to develop the Council's community engagement framework.



The CHAOS collaborative network at Coffs Harbour City Council.

THE CHALLENGE

Like most Councils, Coffs Harbour City Council recognises the importance of community engagement to achieve its strategic objectives and delivering a quality service to its local community. Following the adoption of Council's Coffs Harbour 2030 plan at the end of 2009, it was recognised that Council needed a community engagement strategy to help achieve its goals.

THE SOLUTION

An important outcome of the CEEchange project for Coffs Harbour City Council has been the creation of a Community Engagement (CE) Framework. The framework has been created collaboratively by CHAOS (the Council's collaborative network focussed on community engagement), with the process coordinated by the Sustainability Programs Coordinator and CEEchange Project Officer.

The framework will provide a 'roadmap' for Council to achieve best practice community engagement on the 2030 plan and therefore all aspects of Council operations. It will outline how capacity is being built for CE (through staff training, the collaborative network CHAOS and community advisory groups), how Council operations support CE (through CE guidelines, Council's intranet portal, the CHAOS Wiki and CHAOS brainstorming sessions), how Council policies reflect its commitment to CE and how performance in CE is measured.

A three-year action plan will accompany this framework to outline how it will be implemented across Council.

The existence of CHAOS with membership of managers has meant that staff are aware of the framework even before it has been written, which is creating ownership and buy-in. By developing the framework collaboratively with CHAOS members, it is anticipated that the framework will be more easily adopted by Council and will be utilised by all Council staff involved in community engagement. This process will ensure that the CE Framework is not just "another plan" sitting on a shelf not being used.

THE RESULT

Following a review of the CE framework, Council's Executive has now requested that Council's existing community engagement policy be revised, to align with and reflect the values and components of the comprehensive CE framework. After the September 2012 local government elections, the CE framework will go to Council for adoption.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNCILS

The involvement of CHAOS in the development of this framework has been invaluable. The broad representation of Council staff and departments within the network helped to ensure a wide range of interests were taken into account during development, making for a more comprehensive and connect framework. As mentioned, the involvement of CHAOS also created a great sense of ownership of the framework which will do no harm during the adoption phase of the framework.

Discuss sustainability issues and activities

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“

This is a space for collaboration within Councils, across Councils and across the country.

”

SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK IDENTITIES:



City of Sydney



Wyong Shire Council



Mosman Council



Ku-ring-gai Council



Parramatta City Council



Gosford City Council



Waverley Council



City of Canterbury



Bellingen Shire Council

COLLABORATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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The CEEchange project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.