

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The year is drawing to a close and holidays are on the way. For many of you that will be a great opportunity to revive and re-invigorate for the coming year.

I have been working with [Sustainable Business Australia \(SBA\)](#) to generate corporate interest in the Network which will be increasingly more important as the green agenda is now more than ever being carried by communities and business.

As many of you are aware COP 19 is taking place in Poland as I prepare this e-News and Andrew Petersen CEO of SBA is [blogging](#) from the event which he is attending. The COP 19 is struggling to achieve real outcomes with conflicting views taking up a large part of the agenda. In addition, Australia - which is represented by a diplomat rather than a senior government minister - has said it won't make any commitments other than the pledge to reduce carbon emissions by five per cent on 2000 levels by 2020.

For more information about the complexity of COP it is worth looking at the information below.

*The ultimate decision-making body of the Convention is the **Conference of the Parties (COP)**, which meets every year to review the implementation of the Convention. The COP adopts COP decisions and resolutions, published in reports of the COP. Successive decisions taken by the COP make up a*

*detailed set of rules for practical and effective implementation of the Convention. The Kyoto Protocol supplements and strengthens the Convention and provides a further framework for action. The **Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP)** adopts CMP decisions and resolutions on the implementation of the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol, published in reports of the CMP.*

Two more Institutes have joined our Network in the past couple of months and please encourage any Institutes you know who might be interested. To contact me on lcondon@tda.edu.au.

Have a great Christmas and New Year – and see you in February.

Linda Condon

Director, International Green Skills Network

“Unless someone you like cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

Dr Seuss, from The Lorax

NEWS

THE CONVERSATION

An article written for [The Conversation](#) by Gitanjali Bedi from Swinburne University National Centre for Sustainability and Linda Condon, TDA is about the importance of green skilling our workforce. The Conversation is a great news read and is generally likely to express an alternate view to many you read elsewhere.

GEN GREEN SURVEY

The [Gen Green Survey](#) which many of you are currently participating in has recently reported on the last survey undertaken in 2011. The current survey can be responded to by apprentices and trainees.

The survey results of 2011 show that:

- Young people increasingly cared about environmental issues and consistently nominate the environment as an important current and future issue for government over the years 2006 to 2009;
- Women were more likely to be concerned a great deal about environmental problems and to express any level of concern and men were more likely to be not concerned.

In addition, The Gen Green research shows that, according to apprentices and trainees, TAFE is the main source of learning about sustainability skills in 2011, as in 2008.

NEWS (CONTINUED)

When asked 'Where have you learnt about skills and sustainability?' the number of young skilled people responding 'TAFE' almost doubled over the last three years, up from 39% in 2008 to 77% in 2011 (54% said 'employer', up from 38% in 2008).

MoU

TDA has recently developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Australian Campuses Towards Sustainability. The MoU aims to:

- Share resources, ideas and innovative practices
- Seek opportunities to collaborate on projects and conferences
- Work to develop a meaningful partnership which encourages support and promotion of the partnering organisation
- Provide opportunities to learn from one another
- Encourage interaction between respective staff, including meetings, publications and practical collaboration
- Undertake, where possible, research in education for sustainability and the integration of green skills in teaching and learning

EVENTS

SUSTAINABILITY DRINKS AUSTRALIA

Sustainability Drinks Australia, founded in August 2007, has become one of Australia's most highly regarded and successful monthly sustainability based events organisations. An open invitation is extended to all who are "passionate about creating a better world" to come and mingle with like-minded people and listen to an inspiring speaker share their sustainability story. Events are held monthly in small towns and big cities across Australia, and attendees meet a wide range of passionate people who are interested in making a positive difference. The next major event can be found at the [Sustainability Drinks](#) website.

TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

GREEN SENSE

A great article on behaviour change and the importance of addressing this when creating a changing environment. See Mark Boulet's insightful article at [Green Sense](#). Mark is currently the Manager of [Green Steps](#) at Monash University. Mark's leading contribution through Green Steps was recognised when he was listed at one of the Top 100 most influential and inspiring people for 2010 by the Melbourne Magazine (Fairfax media). Mark is a recipient of a Leadership Award from the Australian Davos Connection (ADC) Forum.

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

GRANTSLINK

GrantsLINK makes it easier to find suitable and relevant grants from the many government grants that are available. GrantsLINK also helps you find the best source of funding and assists you to complete application forms. Click here for a list of [education and training related grants](#).

LATEST RESEARCH

INNOVATION IN AUSTRALIA

A new report released in November this year outlines the role of innovation in Australia. There is a very thoughtful analysis on green growth and innovation by Andrew Petersen, CEO from SBA on page 141. The report is located [here](#)

CREATING SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

An interesting and informative research paper, 'Seven recommendations for creating sustainability education at the university level' by Janet Moore. [This paper](#) describes a set of recommendations that will aid universities planning to create sustainability education programs. These recommendations are not specific to curriculum or programs but are instead recommendations for academic institutions considering a shift towards "sustainability education" in the broadest sense. The purpose of this research was to consider the possible directions for the future of sustainability education at the university level.

PERSONAL STORY

ANNIE NOLAN

Project Officer, Corporate Sustainability, Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING AT YOUR INSTITUTE/ ORGANISATION? AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

I have been at the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE since 2010, on a part time basis

WHAT IS YOUR WORK AND EDUCATION BACKGROUND?

Way back in the 80s I did an environmental science degree at Griffith University much to the horror of my father (how many jobs can you get hugging trees?). Since then I have worked for large companies looking at environmental compliance issues and environmental impact assessments for new developments. I had a stint as an Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Manager which gave me some great insights in to change management processes and leading change. I completed a Masters Degree in organisational systems at Monash University focusing on systems thinking and systems dynamics.

In 2007 I left my role as a Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Manager for Alcan to study sustainability at the Blekenge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, Sweden which was based on the principles of the natural step.

On arriving back in Australia, I worked for the Sunshine Coast Environment Council and then moved to Sunshine Coast TAFE. I initially taught the Diploma of Sustainability and then was given the opportunity to put these principles in to reality within the TAFE operations.

HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INVOLVED IN ISSUES RELATING TO SUSTAINABILITY?

I have always been interested in the natural environment. Much of my previous work has focused on the technical aspects of environmental compliance and assessment and local impact. My OHS experience was focused on people and change management. I realised that to conserve the environment, it was necessary to involve people. The issue of climate change made me realise the global impacts of the cumulative local impacts and that the whole system needed to change. Further reading, and study, made me realise that we had to move from short term local thinking for solutions to long term system problem solving.

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS HAPPENED? WAS IT A PERSONAL CHANGE DECISION? AN ACCIDENTAL MOVE OR ONE YOU WERE ASKED TO TAKE ON? PLEASE EXPLAIN FURTHER.

The issue of climate change has highlighted our unsustainable living choices. However it is just one of many symptoms of our natural systems being eroded over time as illustrated by the Millennium Ecosystem Services report. It was a personal decision to study in Sweden and gain a better

understanding of what sustainability meant and how I could contribute to a more sustainable future.

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN YOUR ENTHUSIASM?

Meeting with like-minded people who care. I have found networking opportunities like Australian Campuses Towards Sustainability invaluable.

I really enjoy teaching the Diploma of Sustainability and I have learnt so much from my students – the implementation of their practical projects was inspiring.

Working with people who initiate sustainability projects themselves.

IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU CAN GIVE OTHERS ABOUT HOW TO INFLUENCE CHANGE?

Be positive and celebrate small wins. Sustainability can be doom and gloom so it's important to focus on the innovation that understanding the current problems and constraints can bring. Provide information to stakeholders on a regular basis.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING EXPERIENCE?

Sustainability is becoming the world's most overused word and it is losing its holistic meaning. I find it really frustrating when management, local councils and governments talk about "being sustainable" when they really mean being financially viable. Getting people to understand that organisations, communities and the planet will not be sustainable until we recognise that the economy is a subsystem of the social system which is a subsystem of the natural system. If we erode the systems on which the

PERSONAL STORY (CONTINUED)

economy relies we will ultimately erode the economy!

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE?

Being invited to be a judge of the Sunshine Coast Councils internal staff sustainability awards which rewarded individuals and teams for their contributions to making the council. The manager stated that the plethora of sustainability initiatives was a direct result of the staff undertaking the Diploma of Sustainability which I had taught.

Becoming the first tertiary educational facility to be certified as carbon neutral recognises that the Sunshine Coast TAFE is committed to reducing our carbon footprint and being a leader in this area.

CASE STUDY

SUNSHINE COAST INSTITUTE OF TAFE

Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE recently won the International Continuous Improvement and Institutional Change Award in the Green Gown International Award in the UK.



RETHINK FOR SUSTAINABILITY AT SUNSHINE COAST INSTITUTE

The TAFE is thrilled to win the International Green Gown Award for Continuous Improvement – Institutional Change recently. It is a true acknowledgement of all the efforts staff across the Institute has made to make the vision to be a leader for sustainability a reality.

For the Sunshine Coast Institute, there were a number of drivers to begin the sustainability journey.

1. The Sunshine Coast Council has a vision to be “Australia’s most sustainable region” and as one of the major employers and influencers on the coast, the TAFE leadership team saw both a responsibility and an opportunity to commence their own sustainability journey.
2. The roll out of the Greenskills agreement and the National VET Sector Sustainability Policy and Action Plan (2009-2012).
3. The awarding of federal funding to build Australia’s first dedicated Sustainability Discovery Centre.

The Staff Conference of 2010 focussed on sustainability and asked the staff

the question – *what does sustainability mean to you?* The conference included sessions on the incorporating sustainability in to the educational sector and sustainable operations.

The leadership team were instrumental in setting the vision for sustainability and aspired to be a “leader in Education for Sustainability and Sustainable Operations.”

The three pronged approach to sustainability comprising education for sustainability, sustainable operations and community engagement was badged by “*reTHINK for Sustainability @ Sunshine Coast TAFE*”

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Of course the most impact the institute can have on the future is through our students. The Institute commenced with rolling out the Diploma of Sustainability to public and corporate clients. A number of it’s own staff undertook this course as well. The biggest client to date has been the Sunshine Coast Council. As part of their own sustainability plan, over 100 council employees across the organisation completed the diploma. Students were required to design and implement a sustainability project within their own workplace. Many of these projects have been implemented and the council is reaping the tangible and intangible rewards.

As part of professional development, a number of the Institute staff has undertaken the Vocational Graduate Diploma in Education for Sustainability. Others have completed the TAE Sustainable Skills Set. These courses equip the teachers

CASE STUDY (CONTINUED)

with the principles of education for sustainability and the ability to unpack and repack their training courses to embed sustainability as an integral part of the training package.

We are spreading the sustainability message far and wide. In India we delivered Certificate III in Renewable Energy to provide practical training to those directly involved in installing the infrastructure necessary to achieve the India's National Solar Mission of providing 20 Giga Watts of solar power by 2022.

In the Asia Pacific region, we partnered with the UN to educate Pacific Island forum nations on how to deal with CFCs from refrigerants in an environmentally responsible manner.

SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

The leadership team recognised that we needed to practice what we teach. So in 2009 we undertook a baseline study of our operations using the Sustainable Campus Group Report. This provided the basis to develop reduction plans for energy, waste to landfill, water and general resources. We have been able to show electricity reductions which resulted in cost reductions year upon year. Initiatives to reduce our electricity consumption have included changing light fittings to LEDs and other energy efficient lighting; changing air conditioning operating parameters, changes to operating hours for the Institute overall the capital works all consider how they can operate more sustainably. The most recent building achieved a four star green star rating. The waste reduction initiatives have included source segregation and education on what can go where to

recycle. The technical changes are complimented by behavioural change programmes. The "Flick Off" signage was a talking point!

The Institute staff continue to be involved in the sustainability programme. The IT gurus implemented Papercut to monitor our paper usage, set targets and prepare reports. They have reconfigured servers and reviewed the overall IT fleet and they reuse, re-home or recycle redundant PCs. Their current project is to implement PC power management software.

Our facilities staff continues to look come up with ways of doing things differently e.g. waste minimisation through the stores and recycling of metals, plastics, cartridges etc.

In 2010 the Institute became the first and only National Carbon Offset Standard (NCOS) certified carbon neutral tertiary education facility in Australia.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Institute gets out in to the community to spread the word. The Sustainability Discovery Centre (SDC) is an interactive, educational facility designed to challenge people to rethink their everyday choices. Whilst the Sustainability Discovery Centre is open to everyone the exhibits are particularly designed for school children and can be effectively utilised to bring the sustainability component of the National Curriculum alive.

The SDC has hosted a variety of events including the Sunshine Coast Business Expo, community groups, award nights and industry functions. The centre is a flexible community asset which exposes

the general public to sustainability during these functions for diverse audiences.

The Institute participates in regional events such as the World Environment Day Festival (WED), and Sustainability Awards and Green June and has created partnerships with universities, community groups and the council. The sponsorship of WED and the Business Expo enable the Institute's students to exhibit their work in sustainability to the general public and industry representatives.

The struggle to save the global environment is in one way much more difficult than the struggle to vanquish Hitler, for this time the war is with ourselves. We are the enemy, just as we have only ourselves as allies.

Al Gore