

Demonstrating ESD

Workshops for Councils about how to operate more sustainably



Challenges in making decisions that
are **environmentally**, **economically**
and **socially** sustainable

Participant Workbook

July 2005

Local Government
Association of NSW



Shires Association
of NSW



Printed on 100% recycled paper

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Workshops for Councils about how to operate more sustainably

Introduction

As a participant of the LGSA ESD workshop on ESD this Work Book is for you. It contains:

- **Worksheets** for use within the workshop (note not all worksheets will be used in every delivery of the Workshop Program)
- **Evaluation questionnaires for each workshop.** These must be completed by every participant and returned to the facilitator prior to leaving the workshops. If you leave early, it is your responsibility to do this. Please remove the form from the workbook, complete it and return.
- **Some Important Background:** Some information of relevance to this project/workshop
- **References:** A list of further references

We hope you find the workbook and the workshop useful.

If you wish to inform us and provide additional feedback, please contact either:

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Contents of this Workbook

Workshop Objectives	Page 3
Worksheets	Page 4
Hypothetical case Studies	Page 13
Other References	Page 16
Participants Notes	Page 18
Workshop Evaluation	Page 23

Workshop Objectives

Demonstrating ESD: A one-day workshop for Councils about how to operate more sustainably

Councillor and staff one-day workshop objectives

As a result of participating in this workshop Council staff and Councillors will:

(For both Staff & Councillors)

1. understand ESD and Council's obligations
2. appreciate Council best practice sustainability [operations, services, planning and policy]
3. understand the link between ESD and Council's management plan and policies
4. be able to balance ESD issues (environmental, economic and social sustainability) in decision making and practice.
5. be prepared to review each future issue or decision in the light of its sustainability impact.

(For Staff only)

1. be able to provide advice and support to Councillors, Council staff and the community about economic, social and environmental sustainability issues.

ESD for Councillors: Challenges in making decisions that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable

Councillor Workshop Objectives

As a result of participating in this workshop, Councillors will

1. understand Ecological Sustainable Development [ESD] and their obligations for its use
2. understand ESD can be incorporated into the Council management plan and policies
3. better appreciate the community's expectations about ESD
4. better appreciate how social, environmental and economic sustainability are a part of all Council decisions and operations
5. be prepared to review each issue or decision in the light of its sustainability impact.

Worksheet 1: Sustainability.....Who's Job is it Anyway?

This activity promotes consideration of a number of models for managing sustainability. These are:

- One designated person responsible (eg sustainability officer)
- The General Manager
- All of the Executive team
- The Mayor and Council
- Every person in a department/division (eg all those working in Environmental Services)

In small groups you need to develop the advantages and disadvantages for one of the models. Do so in the following table.

Model (please complete).....

Advantages	Disadvantages

Worksheet 2: How well is ESD incorporated into your current Council's Management Plan?

Consider your Council's Management Plan. Record on the worksheet below (column 2) where you find ESD/sustainability concepts within the current plan. Be real about your assessment. Also in column 3, rate your Council's integration of ESD into the Management Plan. The ratings are numerical as follows:

- 1 =don't know
- 2 =no mention of ESD at all
- 3 =lip service to ESD only
- 4 =ESD somewhat integrated into Plan
- 5 = ESD totally integrated into Plan

Is ESD/ Sustainability within.....	What does the plan say... Dot point only	Numerical Ranking for Each Area and Why
the underlying philosophy or principles of the plan?		Score.....
specific projects /activities within the plan?		Score...
specific policies within the plan?		Score...
specific Council operations that the plan details?		Score...
elsewhere in the plan?		Score...

Worksheet 3: Improvements to Council's Management Plan

Complete the following worksheet by determining areas where your Council's Management Plan might be improved to incorporate ESD more directly.

The underlying philosophy/principles of the plan: For example does the plan contain direct references to ESD? How might they be improved?

Specific projects /activities within the plan: For example does the Council employ officers to manage sustainability? Are there specific sustainability projects funded in the plan?

Specific policies within the plan: For example green procurement, affordable housing, sustainable transport, development approvals, community involvement etc

Specific Council operations and services: For example how sustainably are various Council functions managed?

Worksheet 4: Managing Council's Operations

A recent sustainability audit of Councils entire operations has revealed the following sections of Council have not fully considered sustainability elements in their operations:

1. Depot Management – Council's depot is over 5000m² in area and houses Councils 30 pieces of plant, machinery, 12 waste trucks etc. There are no environmental features of note on the site as it is located well out of town and does not draw too much attention.
2. Council Development Approval Processes – Council is both a major land holder and developer in the area focusing on new residential land releases. There is talk of a new Sustainability DCP being introduced that will have a positive environmental impact on the way this sort of development is undertaken in future and you are charged with developing a draft to take to the next Council meeting.
3. Council Procurement Policy – the primary driver for procurement of goods and services is based solely on price and all requisitions are managed by the Finance section of Council.
4. Risk Management Processes – recent insurance problems mean that Council is now faced with a potential liability problem in the event that a volunteer has an accident. This has significant ramifications for community groups and volunteers that care for bushland areas on behalf of Council. Risk management perspective of this activity is that the program should be scrapped and managed on a risk management basis from here on (i.e. preventing bushfires only).

Choose one area of Council's identified operations above and indicate how it might be improved so that it operates more sustainably.

Worksheet 5: The Debate

Nuclear power is the sustainable answer to generating power in NSW.

Preparation of the case YES NO case for this debate (circle the appropriate alternative).

Key Arguments

Issues that might destroy the other case. Please list....

Worksheet 6: What about My Council's Procurement Practices?

Complete the following worksheet and discuss in groups of 4

How do the procurement practices of my Council reflect sustainability principles?

What are the most sustainable features of Council current procurement practices?

What are the worst features of my Council's procurement practices?

If I had the capacity how would I change the procurement practices at my Council so that they were more sustainable?

Worksheet 7: Our Sustainability Score and Where to From Here

Answer the following questions by giving your Council a score on each issue. If you can totally agree that the statement is consistent with the Council position, then score it as a 10. Score a 1 for a statement where Council cannot be given any credit for sustainable practice. Scores of 2 to 9 reflect your view of current Council performance in this item.

Statement	Rating
All Councillors have a full understanding of sustainability
The whole senior management team at Council have full understanding of sustainability
All Council staff can relate Council's sustainability principles to their role
Residents would say that Council acted sustainably
Sustainability is reflected in the Council Management Plan
All Council operations are managed sustainably
Council has fully sustainable procurement practices
Council's development approval practices reflect an understanding of sustainability
Council conducts community projects that aim at increasing sustainable practice by residents
Council uses the SOE and other policies and reports to promote sustainable practices
Total score

What does your score mean?

A score of over 85 means that your Council is operating sustainably. There is still more to do, but you are doing well.

A score of between 65 and 84 is a good result but Council still has much to do.

A score of between 45 and 64 means Council is not meeting its ESD obligations and has much to do.

A score of less than 45 is an exceptionally poor result and Council needs to consider seriously how it can improve its performance.

Local Government Act 1993

Definition of ESD: (from glossary of Act)

principles of *ecologically sustainable development* means the following statements of principle:

Ecologically sustainable development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. **Ecologically sustainable development** can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

- (a) the **precautionary principle**—namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.

In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:

- (i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and
 - (ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options,
- (b) **inter-generational equity**—namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations,
- (c) conservation of **biological diversity** and ecological integrity—namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration,
- (d) **improved valuation**, pricing and incentive mechanisms—namely, that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:
- (i) polluter pays—that is, those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement,
 - (ii) the users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of costs of providing goods and services, including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste,
 - (iii) environmental goals, having been established, should be pursued in the most cost effective way, by establishing incentive structures, including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems.

ESD related Clauses

7 What are the purposes of this Act?

The purposes of this Act are as follows:

- (e) to require Councils, Councillors and Council employees to have regard to the principles of **ecologically sustainable development** in carrying out their responsibilities.

8 The Council's charter

- (1) A Council has the following charter:
to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of **ecologically sustainable development**

89 Matters for consideration

- (1) In determining a (planning) application, the Council:
(c) must take into consideration the principles of **ecologically sustainable development**.

403 Contents of draft management plan with respect to Council's work and activities

- (1) A draft management plan must contain the following statements with respect to the Council's activities for the period to which it relates:
- activities to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of **ecologically sustainable development**
 - activities in response to, and to address priorities identified in, the Council's current comprehensive report as to the **state of the environment** and any other relevant reports

428 Annual reports

- (1) Within 5 months after the end of each year, a Council must prepare a report as to its achievements with respect to the objectives and performance targets set out in its management plan for that year.
- (2) A report must contain the following:
- (c) a report as to the **state of the environment** in the area, and in particular in relation to the following environmental sectors:
- (i) land,
 - (ii) air,
 - (iii) water,
 - (iv) biodiversity,
 - (v) waste,
 - (vi) noise,
 - (vii) Aboriginal heritage,
 - (viii) non-Aboriginal heritage,

with particular reference, with regard to each such environmental sector, to:

- (ix) management plans relating to the environment,
- (x) special Council projects relating to the environment,
- (xi) the environmental impact of Council activities,

ESD Hypothetical Case Studies

Case Study 1 – Wind Farm (Development)

A major wind farm developer has expressed an interest in acquiring a portion of a privately owned site currently used as a sheep farm. It is proposed to install 32 x 10 metre high wind turbines along a 1.5 km ridge line. The turbines will provide enough renewable energy to supply 30% of the town's energy needs.

As the proposal is considered "designated development", the State Government will make the ultimate decision as to whether the proposal goes ahead or not. However, it has written to Council to formally seek their comments on the proposal.

The community is divided on these issues with those in support arguing the economic and environmental benefits and those against saying it is blight on the landscape and will set a precedent for further wind farm development in the area.

Case Study 2 – Air Pollution (Regulation)

A Sydney couple have decided to cash in their investments and retire to a newly developed retirement village situated in a new subdivision in the heart of the Hunter Valley that adjoins a long established vineyard.

3 days after moving into their retirement home, they notice a strong odour emanating from the vineyards and go to investigate. They are told by the site manager that major pesticide spraying is currently underway and is regularly performed every 3 to 4 months.

The newly arrived residents ring their local Council to complain about this potentially harmful operation occurring right on their back door step.

Case Study 3 – Water Pollution (Regulation)

A timber mill has been continuously operating at this site for the past 45 years. It is a family owned business that employs 7 locals. Its location beside the river makes transport of its products to the nearest major port by barge still the most economically viable option.

Constant concerns about the level of pollution generated by this activity (pulp, diesel residues) entering the river particularly during periods of rain have resulted in Council officers looking to evoke their powers under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act .

The owner of the timber mill has requested a meeting with the Mayor in a week's time to "sort the matter out as I am just a business man trying to make a dollar and helping a few others along the way".

Case Study 4 – Shopping Centre (Development)

A Development Application has been lodged with Council for a large new shopping mall in a quiet residential area. The area is currently serviced by 3 other shopping malls within a 5 km radius. This new proposal threatens up to 6 existing shopkeepers located 100metres down the road who have up to this point serviced the ancillary needs of the neighbourhood (e.g. medicine, milk, smokes, bread, grog, papers).

Council has been trying to curb its legal bill and made a 30% cut in its legal budget at the last revision of its Management Plan to try and instead meet more important infrastructure needs. The local community is steadfastly against the proposal on a number of grounds including traffic generation, overdevelopment and aesthetics. They have called a community meeting to show their disapproval of such a development in their neighbourhood and history suggests a crowd of about 200 people are expected to attend.

Case Study 5 – Extractive Industry (Regulation)

A gold mining proposal has received approval from both state and local government to commence exploration in a nominated location 15 kms out from the centre of town. A number of conditions have been placed upon the operator to ensure that they comply with all legislative requirements that safeguard the local environment.

The proposal caused much controversy in town as previous extractive industries have left many legacies that the town still has to deal with such land and water contamination, soil erosion etc. The community is still voicing its concern that this new development will mean more of the same.

Employment opportunities in this region are normally limited and Council sees the longer term economic benefit this development will bring should the exploration phase prove to be successful.

Case Study 6 – Agricultural (Development)

Council has received an application to consolidate a number of sites to create the largest rice growing farm in the Riverina. Concerns however have been expressed about the large amounts of water harvesting required to keep this crop growing.

The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Association believes that the industry is close to reaching its maximum capacity in the area but has agreed to the proposal provided the normal user pays scheme for water consumption is agreed to.

The previous 4 years weather pattern has seen a 20% drop in rainfall in line with CSIRO backed research findings. The Environment section at Council is acutely aware of this issue however, the proposal is being managed by the Development section of Council with minimal input from other areas.

Council needs to make a decision about this proposal but its internal processes do not necessarily allow all shortcomings to be highlighted.

Case Study 7 - Noise Pollution (Regulation)

The weekend markets in this inner city location have been in place for over 30 years. Encroaching residential development all around has seen the site become the subject of a number of ongoing complaints to Councils primarily in relation to noise from crowds, motor vehicles and stereos etc.

A review of the tenants at the markets reveals over 60% live outside the Council area. Revenue to Council over the years has been very strong with little or no capital outlay on their part. A residential action group has been established to curtail the market's operations to pre 1980 levels which translates to a 50% drop in tenants.

Case Study 8 – Tower (Development)

A new 16 storey residential tower is proposed near an existing railway corridor. Council's strategic planning documents have earmarked this site and adjoining sites to permit "high rise residential developments that can demonstrate strong ESD principles in both their design and construction".

Previous planning meetings between Council and developers have skirted around the issue of ESD as discussions have tended to centre around floor space ratios, carparking etc. A new Council however with a strong environmental ticket has just been elected and it appears as though ESD is now firmly back on the agenda.

The next planning meeting with developers has been scheduled for a weeks' time and the newly elected Mayor wants some environmental wins on the board with this development to get the newly elected Council off to a good start.

Case Study 9 – Stormwater (Development)

A major regional town has historically been inundated with floods during times of heavy rain. This has economic consequences for local businesses as well as obvious safety concerns. The town's popularly elected Mayor was elected largely on a platform of promising to erect a major concrete levee to keep flood waters out in future.

The local business community is right behind the initiative due to its long term economic benefit as they will no longer suffer loss of production due to flood damage etc. Other nearby low lying areas fear that the levee will save the business end of town at their expense as they predict water will simply be channelled through to their catchment which is less populated.

Budget forecasts put the construction of the levee at \$21 million which places a great financial burden on Council. The other confounding factor is the weather pattern for the preceding 5 years has been such that no flooding has occurred and people are questioning whether the project needs to go ahead anymore.

Case Study 10 – Stormwater (Regulation)

Bob Smith owns the largest service station in town and he is very well respected in the community. Most people in the town go to him for all their car repairs and petrol because he is a good business man and he also coaches the town football team. Bob helps out those in need by providing free petrol and services when people are in trouble and offering credit when it is needed

But the council staff are concerned about the run-off from his service station into the stormwater system. Bob runs a car-wash where water goes straight into the drain, his vehicle maintenance area is not bunded and he has been known to use the hose to wash down the forecourt even though it is illegal.

Council staff are keen to use their regulatory powers (a PIN and a prevention notice) to protect the quality of the stormwater.

Resources for supporting local Councils in their transition to sustainability.

Research:

Who cares about the Environment in 2003?

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whocares

Article from Australian Journal of Education, vol 20(1), 2004

Is Sustainability a Breakfast Cereal? Public program based research into community understandings of sustainability. Lynette C. McLoughlin. **PDF attached.**

Litter it's in your hands. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/litter/research

Educating the community about stormwater pollution, changing knowledge, attitudes and behaviour about stormwater 1994-2003.

This publication has been released in a draft form for the USEP seminar in November 2004, and is now being prepared for publication. At this stage I cannot provide a publication date.

Tools and Resources:

Litter it's in your hands Council Resource Kit. Copies of this kit went to all Councils in 2003

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/litter/research

Stormwater Council Resource Kit Copies of this kit went to all councils in early 2003 some resources (old) available on web

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/stormwater

Our Environment it's a living thing Partner Resource Kit.

Designed to enable partners to piggyback on the states largest sustainability environmental education program. See www.livingthing.net.au

What We need Is A Community Education Project. Available in hard copy and on the web at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/edproject

The Drain is Just for Rain - Did it Work? A summary Report on the evaluation of the NSW Urban Stormwater Education Program. Available in hard copy and on the web at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/stormwater/esp/evaluation

Improving the Environmental Management of New South Wales Golf Courses. DEC and Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association publication 2003. Copies have been forwarded to most councils.

Learning for Sustainability, NSW environmental Education Plan 2002-05.

Available in hard copy and on the web at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cee

Effective Stormwater Education Case Studies

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/stormwater

A collection of 21 synopsis and 3 detailed case studies highlighting outstanding stormwater education projects and initiatives that can be used as a basis for future learning and support for local government and industry.

Resources in preparation:

Towards Environmental Management Excellence in Local Council Operations Activities.

A manual designed to assist local government operations staff, supervisors and managers to improve the environmental performance of their council operations. This document is currently being prepared for publication however I cannot provide a publication date at this stage. It will be produced in hard copy and distributed to all NSW councils.

Industry Environmental Assessment & Education Toolkit for Local Government.

A toolkit designed to help build the capacity of councils and the skills of council officers to undertake environmental assessments (auditing) and education of their local businesses. The toolkit will be web based and contain a number of elements including why run an industry assessment program, planning an environmental assessment program, research and ground work, developing client relationships, conducting an assessment, keeping records, evaluation, reporting and training. It also contains a virtual industry assessment 'flash' tutorial of four priority industry sectors. The material is currently being prepared for the web, however I cannot provide a publication date at this stage.

Leading Practice Principles for Environmental Education.

A publication based on material prepared for DEC and developed from the experiences of 327 Stormwater Trust funded projects conducted by council officers in local communities across NSW. This document is currently being prepared for publication however I cannot provide a publication date at this stage. It will be produced in hard copy and on the web and will be distributed to all NSW councils.

Air:

there is some good materials on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/publications/air

Noise:

there is some material on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/publications/noise

Workshop Notes

Workshop Notes

Workshop Notes

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LGSA ESD Workshops: The Evaluation Process

ESD for Councillors: Challenges in making decisions that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.

and

Demonstrating ESD: One-Day workshops for Council about how to operate more sustainably.

The NSW Local Government & Shires Associations is sponsoring the development and delivery of a series of workshops for Councils and Councillors on ESD/Sustainability

This program will be evaluated in three ways:

1. ***Pre Workshop:*** Collecting pre workshop information about participants understanding of ESD and the current level of focus on sustainability within the Councils.
2. ***Immediately After the First Workshop:*** Collection of information about the participants understanding of ESD following the workshop.
3. ***Three Months After the Workshop.*** All participants will be contacted three months after the workshop and asked to complete an evaluation form. This will be sent by email and will be focus on what changes have been made as a result of the workshop.

Your involvement in the evaluation process is important so that the LGSA can support you in the future to extend your sustainability efforts.

The Pre Workshop and the Immediate Post Workshop Evaluation Forms follow.

END OF WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

Section 2. Questions for completion at the end of the workshop

7. Please circle some of the following words or phrases that describe your views of the workshop:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------|
| satisfying | enjoyable | thought-provoking | interesting |
| useless | waste of time | valuable | rewarding |
| timely | repetitive | boring | challenging |
| relevant | overdue | uncomfortable | okay |
| confronting | patronising | appropriate | mediocre |
| irrelevant | down-to-earth | at my level | beyond me |
| good | quality time | uneasy | unnecessary |
| offered important perspectives | | gave me new insights | |
| professionally stretching | | gained nothing new | |

8. Can you explain why you've chosen those words [3/4 words only] to describe the workshop or aspects of the workshop?

9. As a result of the workshop what is your understanding of ESD/Sustainability?

X-----X-----X-----X-----X
 low fair reasonable high very high

Comments:

10. Now, how prepared are you to review each issue or decision in the light of its sustainability impact and determine your position accordingly?

X-----X-----X-----X-----X
 not prepared sometimes do this major decisions only do this often always do this

Comments:

11. To what extent did the workshop improve your understanding of ESD and the obligations of Council under the legislation?

X-----X-----X-----X-----X
not at all a little some increase a lot significantly

Comment:

12. To what extent did the workshop help you to gain an increased appreciation of Council best practice sustainability [operations, services, planning and policy]?

X-----X-----X-----X-----X
not at all a little some increase a lot significantly

Comment:

13. As a result of the workshop can you provide improved information, advice and support to Council, other Council staff and the community about economic, social and environmental sustainability issues?

- No more able
- More able
- Much more able

Comment:

14. Are there areas or issues regarding sustainability which emerged from the workshop that you would like to focus upon in the future? Why?

15. Are there any other general or specific comments you would like to make about the sustainability workshop?

Thank you for participating and acting sustainably!