Flinders University
School of Nursing and Midwifery

Summary Report from Staff Development Day:
Developing an Environmentally Sustainable Workplace

Prepared by Susan Raphael

July 2008
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Context
The aim of this paper is to provide a summary of the Staff Development Teambuilding Day conducted on 16th July 2008 for 23 administration and technical staff of the Flinders University School of Nursing and Midwifery. The School of Nursing and Midwifery is committed to developing practical strategies to encourage an environmentally sustainable workplace. This is aligned with the OHS&W Action Plan and the Vice Chancellor’s and University’s priorities. The Green Steps program has been engaged to conduct an environmental site audit. The laboratories audit has been undertaken and the office area is yet to be completed. It is anticipated that the contributions from this workshop will support the recommendations in the Green Steps report.

During the workshop it was decided to nominate a staff ‘Green Team’ environmental committee to ensure implementation for some commitments and action. The term ‘Green Team’ has been used by the workshop facilitator to describe this group for the purposes of this document; however a name has yet to be decided. This team includes Diana Paice, Gregory Mathews, Jeni Jones, Emma Stockham and Jacqui Troath. It is hoped that this team will now take some of these contributions further in terms of an implementation plan that will be supported by management and that systems will be developed to review and monitor this initiative.

Benefits and Challenges
Participants explored the benefits and challenges of developing an environmentally sustainable workplace. These are outlined below.

Benefits
- Reduce carbon footprint
- Reduce the amount of paper - save trees
- Cost saving
- Self satisfaction
- Improve team morale
- Encourage others
- Become role models
- Reduce landfill

Challenges
- Breaking old habits
- Sourcing recipients for our recycled materials
- Processes and systems
- Time and space
- Education
- Initial expense
- Sustainability = more?
- Risk of over estimating benefits
- ‘Green wash’
Questions

1. What have you already done at work or outside work to assist the environment?

**Trees**
- Planted trees and native plants
- Grew Trees for Life
- Planted drought resistant plants
- Built a frog pond
- Mulched garden

**Water**
- Installed water saving device
- Use bucket/water can to water plants
- Rainwater tanks
- Reduced water consumption – shorter showers, (use e.g. egg timer), bucket in shower, less grass/garden watering - h
- Use washing water on the garden
- Wash cars in the rain

**Energy**
- Turn off lights/power that are not needed
- Turn off computers and screens
- Turn off printers before leaving
- Reduce printing/photocopying
- Automatic lighting sensor
- Consider before printing - digital filing, breaking old habits
- Buy star rated electrical appliances
- Dry clothes outside
- Wall insulation
- Energy saving globes - h
- Car pooling – reduce driving
- Solar electricity – h
- Electronic folders instead of hard copies
- Reduce use of additional heating and cooling

**Cars**
- Bought smaller cars – h
- Reduced numbers of cars I own
- Think before I get in the car and use petrol
- Catching public transport

**Recycling**
- Recycle paper – o
- Using Council recycle processes
- Recycling cans, bottles, paper, etc
- Recycling clothes, plastic, water
- Recycling ink cartridges, batteries, cups
Procurement
  o Less packaging – h
  o Purchasing Australian made
  o No helium balloons – h
  o Buying organic if possible - $$
  o Shopping bags – green bags
  o Shorter cycle on washing machine, front loading washing machine or fuller load
  o Shop at local markets – reduce packaging - h
  o Buy in bulk – reduce packaging

Other
  o Financially support environmental groups
  o Diet – reducing intake of cow products

2. What suggestions do you have that could help make a more environmentally sustainable workplace?

  * Working from home - 12
  * Eliminate hard copy assignments - 11
  * System so lights turn off automatically – 9
  * Tap into natural light and resources to minimise energy usage – 8
  * Introduce individual recycling bins, e.g. plastic, glass, metal – 6
    o Worm farm for lunch scraps – 4
    o Build futuristic buildings that re environmentally friendly – 3
    o Introduce target scheme for gradual reduction of paper - 2
    o Car pooling – increase - 2
    o Recycle anything we can – 2
    o Electronically files and documents – 2
    o Use ‘grey water’ on gardens – 2
    o Solar energy - 2
    o Open windows -1
    o Educating through leadership and example – 1
    o Insulation – warmer in winter, cooler in summer, use less air con power, less greenhouse gases - 1
    o Urinal cubes – 1
    o Reduce fan heaters in individual offices – 1

The total next to each suggestion represents the number of people who regarded this item as a priority. The top three priorities were identified and a beginning process explored to progress these suggestions. The table below represents this initial work.

Please refer to the Appendix for further suggestions.
## Priorities for Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/goal</th>
<th>Obstacles</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Working from home</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− technology at home</td>
<td>− motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>individuals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>− OHS&amp;W policy</td>
<td>− isolation</td>
<td>Green team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>− Uni ‘working from home’ policy?</td>
<td>− OH&amp;S</td>
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<tr>
<td>− identify positions that fit with this</td>
<td>− expectations</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>− research other places</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Eliminate hard copy assignments</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>December 09</td>
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<tr>
<td>− academic champion</td>
<td>− initial costs - time and training</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>− research evidence</td>
<td>− technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>− cost/benefit</td>
<td>− attitudes and habits</td>
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<tr>
<td>− consider best way to meet with academics</td>
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<tr>
<td>− speak with academics</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. System so lights turn off automatically</td>
<td></td>
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<td>December 08</td>
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<tr>
<td>− identify rooms</td>
<td>− budget priorities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>− budget</td>
<td>− maintenance priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>− negotiate with ‘Building and Maintenance’</td>
<td>− staff time</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Tap into natural light and resources to minimise energy usage</td>
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3. What are some practical steps you can take to have a ‘green’ workplace?

**Emails and printing**
- Send emails rather than hard copies
- Print less emails
- Contact technician about changing default of printers to double sided
- Research what is available in double sided printers
- Less handouts

**Systems**
- Consider recommendations from Green Steps
- Committee to drive whole concept of environmental changes
- Have a follow up session to review progress

**Decaf**
- Approach Decaf to waive 50 cent fee to encourage people to use their own mugs rather than paper cups
- Taking my mug to Decaf for coffee
- Have more healthy food in Decaf
- Plastic versus washable crockery
- Organise for everyone to have a standard size mug

**Energy**
- Be vigilant about electrical wastage – switch off power
- Switch off student computers in labs
- Encourage more energy efficient computers in the library
- Provide bikes
- Teleconference rather than meetings
- Consider walking!
- Communicate with staff about carpooling arrangements
- Wash dishes in smaller basins
- Use stairs rather than lifts

**Plants**
- Plant more shade trees near buildings
- Introduce natural plant life

**Other**
- Signs to increase awareness
- Recycle cans and bottles - Have sorting bins in strategic places
- Sponsor a child or other initiative with the money
- More teamwork to promote cooperation
- Increase my awareness of what is around me
- Encourage other staff to be more aware
- Purchase environmentally friendly cleaning products
- Rainwater to service toilets
Recommendations

Recommendation 1
- The Green Team should examine existing environmental practices and habits and decide if there are any domestic practices that can be transferred to the workplace. (Question 1)

Recommendation 2
- The Green Team should develop an implementation plan with priorities and timeframes and supports this with a monitoring and review process. (Question 2)

Recommendation 3
- The Green Team should consider if any of the individual commitments could be adopted across the School. (Question 3)

Recommendation 4
- The Green Team should consider the recommendations of the Green Steps Audit Report and align those recommendations with the workshop outcomes.

Appendix
Other suggestions from Question 2 considered a lesser priority
- Use electronic communication - less hard copy filing
- Inspiring others
- Collaboration with other schools in Flinders
- Public transport - revamp routes, time, efficiency, frequency ad security
- Education - water usage, paper usage, power usage
- Shuttle bus - local bus stops, train stations
- Double sided printer - set photocopier to double sided default
- Set printers to sleep mode
- Email phone messages
- Recycling bins in Decaf

Websites
- www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au
- www.epa.sa.gov.au
- www.gbca.org.au

Resources
CD from Environmental Protection Authority - ‘Environmental Management Systems using eco maps’ Bryce Routley – Eco Efficiency Officer, bryce.routley@epa.sa.gov.au