

2011 Winner: Cardinia Shire Council Tracking green purchases via its finance system

Award for Excellence in Green Purchasing – Measurement and Continuous Improvement

This award recognises improvement systems based on robust measurement of sustainable procurement performance.

Cardinia Shire Council has made significant progress in the tracking and reporting of its green product expenditure. This is despite limited resources, having not had a dedicated procurement employee until the beginning of 2011.

Cardinia Shire Council is located 45 km east of Melbourne's Central Business District and is one of the fastest growing regions in metropolitan Melbourne, with 64,500 residents. It extends from the Dandenong Ranges in the north to Westernport Bay in the south, with access to its residential and rural farmland areas provided by the Monash Freeway and Princes Highway.

The Council has set up mandatory fields in its financial software, which enable purchasing officers to accurately and consistently capture expenditure under various sustainability categories. These include 4-star or higher energy rating, accredited sustainability labels, recycled content and refurbished products. Measuring and tracking green procurement has been fully integrated into the finance system procedures and training.

The high quality of the Council's tracking and reporting system has been recognised by other local governments. Two of them have even received direct assistance from the Council to set up compulsory categories for sustainable purchases in their own finance systems.

Driven by the EcoTeam, behaviour and cultural change at Cardinia Shire Council has evolved to the point that staff identify potential sustainable options on their own initiative and come to ECO-Buy co-ordinator and Waste Education Officer, Ella Boyen, with new products to be investigated and tested.

As Ella notes, "even if purchasers hadn't thought about green options previously, having mandatory green categories is the prompt for them to seek information about what alternatives they should be considering before they make the purchase, rather than at the post expenditure analysis stage".



There are plans to improve the system even further by reviewing the category names to ensure they are as user friendly as possible for non-procurement staff. The next step is to form a cross functional team to collaborate on choosing the terms which have the clearest meaning across the organisation.






A formal process has also been initiated for evaluating and making recommendations to the Senior Management Team (SMT) on new products that will contribute significantly to improving the Council's sustainable procurement performance.

Officers from the Sustainable Environment Team attend SMT meetings to put forward green products as replacements for the higher environmental

impact equivalent. Examples include computers with green features, bamboo lanyards, post consumer recycled paper and recycled content toilet paper. The environmental features are presented together with the ways in which sourcing these products will support the relevant sustainability policies such as the Sustainable Environment Strategy (2009-2012) and the Sustainable Purchasing Policy. The evaluation process is explained and the cost and resource implications outlined. As a result decisions can be made at the SMT meeting and recorded in minutes and action plans. This helps drive tangible progress towards greener purchasing practices.

In 2009-2010, Cardinia Shire Council reported that 3.9% of its expenditure is on green products.

SNAPSHOT OF THE INTRANET GUIDE SHOWING EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING CATEGORIES AND PURCHASES

Category name	Meaning	Examples of purchases
4STAR	4 or higher star energy or water rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air conditioners (4+ star); • 4+ star showerheads • 4+ star LCD screens • Etc (includes whitegoods)
ECOBUY	A recognised accreditation (not just EcoBuy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goods with a <u>recognised</u> accreditation including but not limited to: • Certified Fair Trade • Certified Organic <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">      </div>