Regional Development Australia Moreton Bay

Moreton Bay
Sustainable Business Strategy

Stage 2 Progress Report

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15 April 2013
1. **Background**

This progress report summarises the outcomes of the first three steps of the consultation to develop a Moreton Bay Sustainable Business Strategy:

- Business surveys
- Focus groups
- Business Forum

Details of each step are available separately.

The main purpose of this report is to give direction to the final stage of the process – the development of a Sustainability Roadmap and a Sustainable Business Toolkit for the Moreton Bay Region.

2. **Summary outcomes of the Surveys**

2.1 Number of respondents 335

2.2 Sustainability strategies already in place

- Energy efficiency 83%
- Waste minimisation 72%
- Water efficiencies 58%

2.3 Strategies which would be considered in the future

- Renewable energy 18%
- Sale of green products and services 15%
- Reducing fuel costs 14%

2.4 Factors influencing (non) take-up of strategies

- Perceived cost/affordability 76%
- Knowledge about what to do 43%

2.5 Factors likely to assist take-up

- Online information 51%
- Subsidised goods and services 44%
- Networking businesses 32%

2.6 Other factors influencing take-up of strategies

- Government purchasing policies
- Consumer purchasing preferences
- Ease of access to information
- Simplicity of information
- Cost of introducing sustainable activities
- Cynicism
3. **Summary outcomes of the Focus Groups**

Three Focus groups were conducted with a total of 27 people participating, including 11 at Caboolture, 10 at Murrumba Downs and 6 at Samford.

### 3.1 The main needs identified across the Focus Groups include the need for:

1. High quality advice on how to build sustainable businesses.
2. User friendly access to that advice – both on-line and face to face.
3. Trusted source in an online one-stop-shop on sustainable business development.
4. Business networking to support the initiation and implementation of sustainable business practices.
5. Strong regional endorsement of the need to build sustainable businesses.
6. Strong regional support for businesses to act sustainably.
7. Exploration of creative and provocative ideas about how the region may tackle the challenge and opportunity of the ‘green economy.’

### 3.2 Specific practical ideas regarding the Sustainable Business Strategy and Toolkit and meeting the needs identified in 3.1 above include:

1. Provide a one-stop-shop website that lists how to be sustainable with detail on what the most efficient products and practices are, a directory of where to get these products and also service/product providers. Honest and easy to access information all in the one place.
2. Establish social media links to enable ways to advertise waste available for other businesses to use.
3. Ways of linking with other businesses that are trying to be sustainable and sharing stories, likely through sustainable business precincts by geography or virtual and a green business collective that learns by each others’ business’s best practice.
4. Solutions need to be tailored for different types of business, not just generic solutions.
5. Assistance with accessing green accreditation systems.
6. Provide a book of guidelines to being sustainable for particular industries.
7. Easy to access and simple information to enable easy decision making: Not a large list of actions, just small steps to start with and simple and easy to understand information.
8. Honest labelling of products for their energy efficiency.
9. Help businesses to get into a business premises to try their business idea out in a shop through Renew Moreton.
10. Provide new business owners with a sample bag of goods and services that are sustainable, including a checklist.
11. Provide library resources through a personal help information station.
12. Publish a DVD of people and businesses that are being more sustainable and showing what they are doing.
13. Provide a comparison of costs of being sustainable and the benefits.
14. Conduct a Sustainability Expo.
15. Provide a way of recording progress towards sustainability so businesses can see the progress they have made and the savings they have achieved, and also how they have been compliant with government regulation.
17. Help businesses to cater for consumers all along the sustainability continuum.
18. Retro-fit Redcliffe Firestation and use as a demonstration site for sustainability and also a precinct to learn about sustainability.
19. Establish a regional Sustainability Resource Centre at Samford Commons.
20. Help people re-connect to local and real solutions.
21. Start from where businesses are: acknowledge what they are already doing and appreciate it.
22. Provide a capacity for businesses to assess and measure their sustainability performance.
23. Support adaption for the future by showing businesses how they can be economically resilient by acting now to have benefit later and plan for changes in the future.
25. How do we do things locally so that we can take back our power to make decisions.
26. Support the personal wellbeing of the workplace and also of the customers and staff.
27. Enable storytelling which needs to come from an objective source, not government that can be mistrusted by some, implementation not just government but from a non-government organisation.
28. Establish sustainability focus groups which can in themselves start the process of people thinking about sustainability where they weren’t before.
29. Businesses that go through the sustainability process get a sticker to say they are economically resilient.
30. Regional Council signs up to the UN Global Compact as a way of modelling sustainable practice.

4. **Summary outcomes of the Sustainable Business Forum**

4.1 Participation

Seventeen business people participated in the Forum which was also attended by three managers from the Moreton Bay Regional Council, three representatives from RDA Moreton Bay, two staff from NACC Sustainability and Forum consultants Howard Nielsen (NACC Sustainability) and Professor John Cole (USQ).

4.2 Process

The process included the following sequence:

- Guest Speaker Professor John Cole on “What it takes to build a sustainable business in a sustainable region.”
- Case Studies – what some businesses have done to be sustainable
- Workshop – components of a sustainable enterprise roadmap
- Sampling online support options of a regional portal and Green Street
- Working groups on ‘Provocative Propositions’ focussing on:
  - New markets and sustainable technologies
  - Knowledge transfer and skill acquisition
  - Accessing ideas, investment, entrepreneurs and networks in the region
  - Components of a regional sustainability strategy
  - What a Toolkit should look and feel like
  - Others as may be decided
- Group proposals, discussion, moderation and agreement
- Immediate next steps
- Summation – Professor John Cole
4.3 Outcomes

- **Opening presentation**
  The presentation by Professor Cole provided a powerful and insightful overview of the issues relating to the green economy and to the potential actions individuals and groups can take to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities. The powerpoint presentation by Professor Cole is accessible on the RDA website.

- **Case studies**
  Participants shared stories about the sustainability of their own businesses and also heard a case study of a business which has been tackling the sustainability challenges for a few years. People gained insights relevant to their own businesses through the process of structured conversation in both small groups and a large group.

- **Components of a sustainable business roadmap**
  The whole-group discussion process unveiled the following components of a sustainable business roadmap.
This input will be added to existing models so that a Moreton Bay Sustainable Business Roadmap is developed which will focus on both workplaces and the region.

- **Sampling online support options of a regional portal and Green Street**

  The draft portal page and the Green Street website were demonstrated and feedback was invited regarding the capacity to meet the need for a one-stop-shop for businesses.

  Feedback indicated that having a portal recognised as being regionally owned was a good idea and that it should link through to other websites. Green Street was acknowledged as a site to be used to meet a significant number of needs identified in the Focus Groups and the Forum, namely:
  - a Moreton Bay regional listing of businesses taking action on sustainability;
  - a tool for assessing a business’s sustainability and enabling a sustainability score; and,
  - a first point in starting the sustainability process.

- **Working groups on ‘Provocative Propositions’**

  The ‘provocative propositions’ of the working group sessions on ‘big questions’ are included below. (Note: Some editing occurred for grammatical correctness and unclear comments.)

  **Big Question # 1: What should be the contents of a Sustainable Business Toolkit?**

  A functional Toolkit must enable businesses to learn by doing, including taking risks, making mistakes, recalibrating when necessary and making decisions based on the lessons learned. It will therefore need to include:
  
  - Case studies
  - Learning workshops
  - Software systems in place or available for consultancy
  - Trialability processes
  - Network groups or forum
  - Opportunity to develop and expand knowledge and expertise
  - Access to accreditation, compliance and evaluation

  **Big Question # 2: What new and sustainable business markets are out there?**

  - Have communities reduce travel miles by 50% or higher and measure on Green Street
  - Local businesses reduce non-compostable waste by 100%
  - Use multi-function processes such as aquaponics
  - Co-ordinate space sharing and resource sharing
  - Co-ordinate urban food production in the community
  - Access software to assist with food production
  - Link businesses to manage use of waste
Big Question # 3: How can we access the ideas, networks, entrepreneurs and investments to help build sustainable businesses?

- On an industry specific basis link similar businesses with similar objectives
- Give credits for recycling unwanted materials to other businesses
- Businesses which achieve top sustainability ranking must include mentoring to other businesses as part of their role
- Bring all ideas to one central location, one portal

Big Question # 4: What new knowledge and skills do we need to build sustainable businesses?

- Need a trusted source to tell us the supplier/business is actually sustainable
- Don’t just wait for government to change
- Recognise that there are things business can do – there are programs out there like Greenstar Building Accreditation
- Business needs to understand sustainability is a long-term commitment
- Build sustainability into courses on architecture, town planning etc
- Promote TAFE courses in the region

Big Question # 5: What should be the components of a regional sustainability strategy?

- Provide a trusted information source
- Moderate the quality of service provision via social media
- Provide ease of access to events and information
- Facilitate a stepped approach which enables buy in from stakeholders
- Map the implementation process
- Showcase to other regions and the world – aim for the top!

5. Next steps

It is proposed that the needs of the project be met by implementing the response to the inputs from the surveys, focus groups, business forum and discussions with the RDA Moreton Bay and other stakeholders.

The consulting team’s response to the insights, issues and other comments raised through the process are expressed here as answers to what are seen as the core questions?.

Item 1: What does a sustainable business look like?

Response: Develop a Sustainable Enterprise Roadmap

This roadmap will use the model developed at the Business Forum (see 4.3 above) as a basic guide and integrated with a framework generated by the Department of Environment and Heritage. This provides an overarching strategy for businesses and other enterprises wanting to be more sustainable.
Item 2: How do we know how sustainable our business is at the moment?
Response: Provide access to online sustainability assessment tools.

The tools will assess both the eco efficiency of the business and the overall sustainability of the business. The Sustainable Business Score will be accessed via a new portal website – www.sustainablemoretonbay.org which will take people to the Green Street website and the scoring process.

Item 3: How will we know what to do practically to build a more sustainable business?
Response: Provide access to online ‘how to do it’ activities

These tools will provide specific checklists of things to do in relation to the assessment undertaken on the business. These will be accessible via the new website and links to a number of other websites.

Item 4: What online resources will be available to businesses?
Response: Develop a new portal which enables both a regional focus and a national and international capability.

The Sustainable Moreton Bay Region website will act as a portal to other online services which provide high quality information and networking capability.

Item 5: What human resources are available to help us build a more sustainable business?
Response: The Sustainable Moreton Bay web portal will provide a capacity for local consulting support agencies to be listed for access by businesses.

A starter list of consulting agencies and government support people will be provided on www.sustainablemoretonbay.org and additional agencies may be added at any time.

Item 6: How can we network with other businesses and also promote our businesses as being more sustainable within the region and wider?
Response: Establish an online capacity to list businesses on a regional and national basis and also set up Sustainable Business Precincts.

It is important for consumers to be able to access sustainable businesses in their local area and also regionally. It is also important for Moreton Bay businesses to be accessible by consumers from both within the region and outside of it. The web portal will provide access to such a Business Listing through Green Street’s capacity to list and group businesses.

Item 7: How can the Region model and support sustainable business practice

Response:
1. A Regional Sustainability Roadmap is developed which provides guidance on the way forward
2. Regional Council applies for membership of the United Nations Global Compact and undertakes both a Rapid Assessment and Advanced Assessment process to determine the starting point for regional sustainability.
3. Regional Council supports the continuation of sustainability resource centres at Caboolture and Murrumba Downs.
4. Regional Council and the RDA support the establishment of a community owned sustainability centre at Samford Commons which focusses on both businesses and communities.

5. Regional Council and RDA integrate their economic development strategy and digital strategy with the sustainability strategy.

6. RDA, Regional Council and regional partners facilitate the conduct of quarterly Sustainability Forums which integrate business sustainability and community sustainability.

7. **Final note**

   Proposed actions regarding the items above, the consultancy brief overall and any other emerging issues or ideas will be included in the final Moreton Bay Sustainable Business Strategy to be presented and delivered to the committee of RDA Moreton Bay on 17 May 2013.

Howard Nielsen

NACC Sustainability-People

26 April 2013