

UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures

Profile

The Institute for Sustainable Futures was established in 1996 as a flagship research institute of the University of Technology Sydney. With a mission to create change towards sustainable futures through independent, project-based research, the Institute for Sustainable Futures helps its clients translate sustainability principles into action using a variety of approaches. The Institute is located on the University of Technology Sydney's Broadway campus and employs 30 staff.

Initiatives

Vision

The initiatives established are coherent with the Institute's vision and values

Planning

A special in-house project team was established to coordinate environmental initiatives. Its aim is to create a healthy working environment, minimise resource use, maximise recycling and minimise energy and water use.

The Institute's environmental impact was assessed prior to commencement of the program through research, consultation and student projects, mainly by Institute staff and UTS students.

Implementation

Staff are briefed on the program's progress at weekly operations meetings. The following strategies have been implemented at the Institute's Broadway office:

- The installation of a worm farm allows staff to recycle their food scraps;
- A weekly energy usage report monitored by power meters, is made available to staff.;
- Lights were installed at each workstation so that they only need to be turned on when a staff member is at his or her desk;
- All lighting automatically switches off at 5pm and needs to be restarted manually;
- All printing defaults to double-sided;
- Staff either walk or use buses, trains or bikes in preference of taxis or private cars;
- Bike parking and shower/locker facilities make it easy and convenient for staff to travel to and from work on a bicycle. An office bike is available to staff for short trips;



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Greening your workplace

“All printing defaults to double-sided.”

- Staff are issued with TravelTen bus tickets for business trips around the Sydney CBD;
- Any necessary air travel is offset by purchasing carbon credits.

The Institute's office features a number of sustainable fit-outs including:

- The kitchen flooring is 65% post consumer recycled cork that was sourced from Australian charities;
- The partitions and chair upholstery are made from 100% post consumer and post industrial recycled polyester;
- The walls and ceiling are painted with water-based environmentally friendly, low odour paint that is 99.5% solvent free;
- Cleaners use natural, highly biodegradable cleaning products with minimal environmental and health impacts;

For more of the Institute's office fit-out features visit <http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/everydayactions/officffitout.html>

A worm farm is used to recycle organic lunch waste



Results and Benefits

Institute employees take pride in working in a workplace that has a lower overall footprint than most organisations.

Challenges

The Institute's program implementation was not without challenges. Not all materials selected for the office fit-out performed as the project team desired, in particular the kitchen floors and counter tops. Metering the office proved difficult and the UTS maintenance system initially was not fully geared to supporting green initiatives, although this is being changed now.

There are not enough shower and locker spaces for cyclists and not all staff who can, are willing to cycle through Sydney as they are daunted by the traffic. Although paper is recycled, and food waste fed to the worm farm, other waste is not collected on a segregated basis, although UTS facilities management has assured the Institute that the current waste contractor segregates all waste and achieves a least 85% recovery of recyclables.

Future

The Institute will continue to work with its partners to monitor and improve on workplace sustainability in environmental and social fields.



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