

Employment in the environment: *Methods, Measurements and Messages*

Inquiry into employment in the environment sector

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage

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Foreword

The title of this report, , *Methods, Measurements and Messages*, encapsulates what is needed next for Australian businesses, consumers, organisations and governments to implement the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD). The inquiry has found that there is a need for better methods for implementing ESD principles, more refined measuring tools and greater information dissemination to promote the messages of ESD.

Future growth in environmental employment is likely to be through integrating ESD principles across industry. While there will always be a need for environmental specialists, more efficient business practices and better environmental management may have the effect of lessening the need for a work force specialised in environmental remediation work. Very simply, if we stop causing the environmental problems then we will have less need for people to work at the ‘repair solutions’.

This is not to imply that implementing the principles of ESD will result in a net employment drop. It is the conclusion of this Committee that the real growth for environmental employment, and the real gain for Australia, lies in integrating environmental management across all levels of industry. All jobs and businesses must take on an environmental responsibility and become ‘green jobs’ and ‘green businesses’.

Consequently, the report has investigated how to promote the implementation of ESD and how to integrate environmental responsibility across areas of the workforce and into the daily lives of Australians.

The inquiry has revealed a strong commitment to the principles of ESD. What is lacking are the practical strategies to transform commitment and rhetoric to actions and outcomes. The recommendations of this report are targeted at developing practical strategies, in order to harness a commitment to ESD, and increasing awareness, in order to increase the momentum of change.

The drivers of ESD are various and the Committee is aware that no one driver, in isolation, will achieve the implementation of ESD principles. This report targets the methods of ESD - how these principles can be incorporated into business operations, policy decision making, and consumer choices.

Measurements are also important. We need to measure progress, assess outcomes, re-evaluate our directions and anticipate market needs. To achieve this, we need the tools, the data and the systems that enable robust, consistent and meaningful reporting. These tools need to be appropriate to the needs of corporations, governments, small to medium enterprises and consumers.

Above all we need to promote the messages of ESD and provide greater information in the market place to encourage informed choices. As governments, industries, organisations, employers and employees, and as consumers, indirectly or directly, we participate in decisions relating to supply chain management, consumer purchases, energy consumption and investment decisions. Industry and the Australian Government in particular have a vital role to provide leadership in these areas.

This report comes nearly a decade after the 1994 report *Working in the Environment*. The 1994 report considered defined industries within the environment sector and investigated growth opportunities that would lead to further employment. In 2003, this current report is indicative of the changed context of the environment sector and particularly its integration into the broader business community.

It is the expectation of the Committee that the recommendations proposed here will initiate the development of a series of practical methods and measuring tools to implement the principles of ESD and promote the messages of ESD.

In another decade, when someone asks about employment in the environment sector, it is hoped that the response will be:

The environment is everyone's business and everyone's job is a green job.

Bruce Billson MP
Committee Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair	Mr Bruce Billson MP	
Deputy Chair	Ms Jennie George MP	
Members	Mr Phillip Barresi MP	Hon Duncan Kerr MP
	Mr John Cobb MP	Mr Peter Lindsay MP
	Mr Greg Hunt MP	Ms Kirsten Livermore MP
	Mr Harry Jenkins MP	Mr Stewart McArthur MP

Committee Secretariat

Secretary	Dr Anna Dacre
Research Officers	Ms Rebecca Gordon (until 22/08/03) Mr Anthony Overs
Administrative Officers	Mrs Marlene Dundas Ms Jeannie Brooks



Terms of reference

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage is to inquire into:

- The current contribution of environmental goods and services to employment in Australia;
- The future potential growth, including barriers and opportunities for growth, of environmental goods and services and impact on employment;
- Current status and future requirements for an appropriately skilled workforce;
- Appropriate policy measure that could encourage the further development of the environmental goods and services sector; and
- Information and reporting systems that would support the uptake of environmental goods and services to enhance overall business performance and development of the sector.



List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
ACRE	Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Renewable Energy
AEAC	Australian Environment Activity Classification
AELA	Australian Environmental Labelling Association
AGO	Australian Greenhouse Office
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investment Commission
ASX	Australian Stock Exchange
CCF	Civil Contractors Federation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage
DEST	Department of Education Science and Training
EBA	Environment Business Australia
EFP	Environmentally friendly products
EIA	Environment Institute of Australia
EIAA	Environment Industry Action Agenda
EIANZ	Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
EIDN	Environment Industry Development Network
EPBC	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>

ERO	Environmental Resource Officer
ESD	Ecologically sustainable development
FSR Act	<i>Financial Services Reform Act 2000</i>
GEN	Global ecolabelling network
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
ICA	Institute of Chartered Accountants
IMS	Integrated Management System
IEAust	Institution of Engineers Australia
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ISR	Department of Industry Science and Resources
ITR	Department of Industry Tourism and Resources
MEJN	Melbourne Environmental Jobs Network
MRET	Mandatory Renewable Energy Target
NAFI	National Association of Forest Industries
NEEC	National Environmental Education Council
NISI	National Industry Skills Initiative
NGO	Non-government organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORER	Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator
PDS	Product disclosure statement
PMSEIC	Prime Minister's Science Engineering and Innovation Council
REAA	Renewable Energy Action Agenda
REC	Renewable Energy Certificate
REEF	Renewable Energy Equity Fund
SEDA	Sustainable Energy Development Authority
SIRIS	Sustainable Investment Research Institute
SME	Small to medium enterprise
SoE	State of the Environment

SRI	Socially responsible investment
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TBL	Triple bottom line
WIOA	Water Industry Operators Association

List of recommendations

2 Understanding the Environment Industry

Recommendation 131

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provide the additional funding required to enable the Australian Bureau of Statistics to collect and make available ongoing and trend data on the environment industry in Australia.

3 Industry - Leading Ecologically Sustainable Development

Recommendation 253

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government establish a centralised site for collating and making available comparative company triple bottom line reports and environmental performance reports.

Recommendation 356

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- Develop, as part of the small to medium enterprises set of environmental tools, an adaptable software package that would facilitate assessment and reporting; and
- Develop a set of measuring tools, appropriate to small to medium enterprises, to introduce companies to basic environmental performance assessment and reporting.

Recommendation 466

The Committee recommends that the Australian Securities and Investment Commission:

- Develop standardised terminologies and methodologies, which can be used by the investment community and consumers, to measure and verify the claims made in relation to socially responsible investment;
- Undertake an awareness raising program to increase consumer understanding of the range of socially responsible investments, and the methodologies and terminologies associated with them; and
- Develop guidelines to assist industry in preparing product disclosure statements and to enhance consumer understanding of product disclosure statements.

4 Government - Leading Ecologically Sustainable Development**Recommendation 573**

The Committee recommends that:

- The Australian Government commit to achieving full compliance for reporting on ecologically sustainable development from all Australian Government departments and agencies by 2005;
- The Australian Public Service Commission report annually on the ecologically sustainable development compliance and reporting levels of Australian Government departments and agencies; and
- Ecologically sustainable development performance and reporting compliance be a key performance indicator for Senior Commonwealth agency and department staff.

Recommendation 679

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government make mandatory the use of Environmental Purchasing Guidelines for the procurement decisions of all Australian Government departments and agencies.

5 Marketing the Environment Industry

Recommendation 7103

The Committee recommends that:

- The Australian Government Departments of Environment and Heritage and Industry, Tourism and Resources work with industry groups, such as the Environment Industry Development Network, to establish a single online consolidated database of Australian environmental goods and services. The database should

- ⇒ include information on new technologies, tailored solutions and environmental innovations; and

- ⇒ incorporate appropriate filters (such as listing referees, examples of usage or warranty information) to verify the information listed; and

- The Australian Government Department of Industry Tourism and Resources establish an environmental technology verification program in Australia, to be run in conjunction with the online database of environmental goods and services.

Recommendation 8105

The Committee recommends that Standards Australia pursue with the International Standards Association the establishment of minimum benchmark standards across all areas of the ISO 14000 series.

Recommendation 9115

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- Develop a national policy for the environmental labelling of consumer goods;

- Ensure the establishment of a national environmental labelling program that is widely recognised, consistent and meaningful to both producers and consumers; and

- Undertake a national campaign to raise awareness of environmental labelling.

6 Marketing Renewable Energy

Recommendation 10128

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- Retain the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target;
- Substantially increase the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target as part of a multifaceted approach to increase market demand for and supply of renewable energy; and
- Implement a timely review of the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target for beyond 2010 with a view to furthering the uptake of renewable energy in Australia.

Recommendation 11138

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government through the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target pursues the mandatory disclosure for all electricity retailers of:

- Relative sources of supplied energy;
- Associated greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Advice on how consumers can increase their purchase of Green Power.

Recommendation 12139

The Committee recommends that:

- It be made mandatory for all Australian Government departments and agencies to purchase, where available, a minimum of 5 per cent Green Power by 2005; and
- This minimum is increased to 10 per cent Green Power by 2007.

7 Educating and Accrediting the Workforce

Recommendation 13152

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education, Science and Training and the National Environmental Education Council:

- Assess the extent to which specific training in environmental awareness and reporting is included in all business, commerce, management, administration and related degrees; and
- Undertake to achieve the inclusion of environmental awareness and training in all business management courses.

Recommendation 14162

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, in association with the National Environmental Education Council:

- Undertake a review to assess current environmental skills and broad industry needs in relation to environment training, and workforce entry opportunities; and
- Develop a set of actions to ensure an adequately skilled future workforce and appropriate training facilities to meet future needs.

Recommendation 15163

The Committee recommends that the Australian National Training Authority develop a program of environmental apprenticeships or traineeships to provide follow-on opportunities for youth completing the Green Corps or similar program.

Recommendation 16166

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government departments of Education, Science and Training, and Environment and Heritage:

- Work with the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand to establish a certification scheme for environmental professionals; and
- Assist the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand to identify Commonwealth grant programs.

