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# Sustainability

## Investigate current practices in relation to resource usage

New South Wales has a number of laws to help protect the environment and provide guidance to business.

The [*Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act)[external link](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/legislation/Actsummaries.htm#poeo)*](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/legislation/Actsummaries.htm#poeo) is the main piece of NSW environmental legislation covering water, land, air and noise pollution and waste management. [ENV13]

Environmental sustainability is about making responsible decisions that will reduce your business' negative impact on the environment. It is not simply about reducing the amount of waste you produce or using less energy, but is concerned with developing processes that will lead to businesses becoming completely sustainable in the future. [SBC14]

As a software development company, WebDev does not produce too much pollution to the environment, so we focus on how to save energy, water and use green products first. Followings are some ideas.

* Energy conservation
* Water conservation
* Paper conservation
* New purchasing strategy
* Transport

## Set targets for improvements

The best way to obtain stakeholders support is cost saving. In most cases that save environment means save money, especial for a long term observation. Our target is to save money and save environment at the same time. To have a good performance, we need a specialist dedicated at this job for designing strategies and monitoring the performance. The target of first stage is following:

* Energy: 10% reduction
* Water: 10% reduction
* Paper: 50% reduction

## Implement performance improvement strategies

Energy conservation

* Turn off computers, lights and other devices after work
* Use LED bulbs instead of traditional bulbs
* Fixed indoor temperature at a reasonable range, not too low at summer and too high at winter. That is the major waste of office.
* Clean or replace air filters as recommended. Energy is lost when air conditioners and hot-air furnaces have to work harder to draw air through dirty filters. Cleaning a dirty air conditioner filter can save 5 percent of the energy used. That could save 175 pounds of CO2 per year.

Water conservation

* Upgrade toilets to low/high dual-flush.
* Install at least 3 star rated flow restrictors in taps.
* Check for leaks in taps, pipes and hoses every quarter.

Paper conservation

* Print when you really needed, more than 50% printing jobs are not a must. In most cases, you can read them or show them to others from computers and other electronic devices.
* Print double side if possible. That will reduce nearly 50% paper usage.
* Reuse printed papers, if you got any single side printed papers, try to print them at another side.

Purchasing strategy

* Purchasing green products first. That’s not only save our money but also encourage the green products makers.
* Replace old power-consuming products to new power-saving products. That’s save you money for a long time.

Transport

That’s not save any money for company, but save environment.

* Encourage employees ride a bike to office
* Encourage employees go to office by train or bus

## Monitor performance

Environmental sustainability is a continuous and long term job. You need develop a monitoring and measure system to keep going, or everything will back to original status sooner or later.

Get Current Status

You need to know everyday usage of power, water and papers. You can’t wait for the power bill and water bill to get the information. The bill show you the past status not current status, and it provided by month not by day. That is useless for monitoring performance in our first stage. Power and water usage can be read by a meter. Paper usage can be read from a printing control system.

Install printing control system

The printing control system should provide following functions

* Record every printing job from every printer which connected to same domain.
* Set limitation for every account.
* Provide usage report by day, week and month for every user and all users.

Compare status

* Compare current status with previous status by day or by week at first stage
* Compare current status with previous status by week or by month when the status is stable.
* The comparison result lead us what to do next. If the result is OK, just keep watching. If the result is not your expectation, that means you need take some action on it.

Find out the problem and fix it

If you find the comparison result is not your expectation. The first thing to do is to confirm that you follow the strategy. If you miss some steps, make sure you done those steps and watch the status again. If you follow the strategy and can’t have the result you expect, try to modify your strategy and watch the status until you got the good result. If you can’t have expected result for three months, try to seek help from outside consultant.

Announce status regularly

* Announce power and water usage daily or weekly. Employees can see the progress of the project and help them continuous focus on it
* Announce paper usage ranking list weekly. Employees can see everybody printing usage and who spend most papers. You don’t need to say anything. Employees will control their paper usage at a reasonable level.

## Reference

[ENV13] NSW Government Environment & Heritage, [E*nvironmental legislation and compliance*](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/environlegiscompliance.htm), 2013

[SBC14] Small Biz Connect, [*Environmental Sustainability*](http://toolkit.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/part/17/86/371), 2014