

SUSTAINABILITY

IPAA Special Interest Group

Sustainability – what is it?

Sustainable development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Brundtland Commission
1987 the United Nations Commission
on Environment and Development

Sustainability – what is it?

In the ACT, sustainability is about how we meet the needs of people today without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is an approach to decision making that recognises that social, economic and environmental issues are interconnected and decisions must incorporate each of these aspects if they are to be good decisions in the longer term.

Towards a Sustainable ACT: A Discussion Paper

Sustainability – what is it?

Meeting the needs of current and future generations through simultaneous environmental, social and economic improvement

WA Sustainability Strategy

Sustainability – what is it?

Sustainable development provides a framework for redefining and redirecting our economies to enable all people to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life, while ensuring that the natural systems, resources and diversity upon which they depend are maintained and enhanced both for their benefit and for that of future generations.

UK Sustainable Development Commission

Sustainability – related concepts

- Triple Bottom Line reporting
- Ecological sustainability
- Sustainable development

Sustainability – how to achieve it?

The concept of sustainability is simple but implementation is difficult....ascribing meaning to sustainability [is] similar to trying to analyse the meaning of love or hope. ...Sustainability is a 'fuzzy' concept when analysed by itself. It begins to make sense when it is applied to specific issues, such as land management, energy, settlements, projects or specific communities.

Sustainability – some issues?

- how to **integrate** social, economic and environmental considerations in decision making?
- what should be included in the social aspects of sustainability?
- how not to get swamped by the environmental aspects?
- measuring achievements?
- relationship between sustainability (broadly) and TBL / sustainability reporting?

Sustainability in the public sector – how others are doing it?

WA Sustainability framework consists of:

- seven foundation principles and four process principles
- six visions for WA's sustainability
- six goals for Government and forty-two priority areas
- sustainability assessment

Sustainability in the public sector – how others are doing it?

Sustainability ACT has

- eight guiding principles
- a vision statement
- three key goals with multiple sustainability dimensions for each
- a series of primary and secondary indicators

Sustainability – decision making

Agenda 21 -

Chapter 8 - Integrated decision-making

- addresses the fact that the prevailing systems for decision-making in many countries tend to separate economic, social and environmental factors at the policy, planning and management levels
- calls on governments to review decision making to improve integration

Sustainability – decision making

Rio Tinto – Hammersley Iron

Key aspects:

- define decision to be made & base information
- interview stakeholders
- prioritise sustainability factors & measure KPIs
- populate scorecards from information analysed
- make decision and plan based upon results

Key findings:

- time consuming
- too resource intensive to use for all business decision
- fine balance between stakeholder involvement and creating unfillable expectations

Sustainability – decision making

WA Sustainability Strategy – sustainability assessment

Sustainability assessment is an integrative, whole of government approach to decision-making that gives equal and upfront consideration to environmental, social and economic factors. It is an innovative and important means of ensuring the government's activities are sustainable.

Impact assessment – managing the negatives

Sustainability assessment – maximising the positives

Sustainability – decision making

Sustainability ACT – approaches to decision making

Guiding principles for decision-making:

- use resources prudently
- work in partnership with the community
- focus where the ACT has capacity to influence
- focus where risks and stakes are highest
- follow a continuous improvement path in relation to an agreed vision

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Proposed areas of focus:

- explore how the public sector can integrate social, economic and environmental considerations into decision making and reporting
- provide a forum to share and promote good practice in relation to implementing sustainability
- examine how sustainability is being implemented in the public sector in other Australian and international jurisdictions

Sustainability SIG

- what should we focus on?
- how should we operate?
- volunteers for small organising group?
- other issues?

Sustainability – some useful websites

Western Australian Sustainability site

<http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/>

ACT Sustainability site

<http://www.sustainability.act.gov.au/>

UK Sustainable Development Commission

<http://www.sd-commission.gov.uk/>

CSIRO Sustainability Network

<http://www.bml.csiro.au/sustnet.htm>

Manchester Metropolitan University sustainability info

<http://www.docm.mmu.ac.uk/aric/eae/Sustainability/sustainability.html>

International Institute for Sustainable Development

<http://iisd1.iisd.ca/>

Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS

<http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/>