

Case study – Baptist Community Services – NSW & ACT



Passionate about people and our environment

Jodie Rutherford is first to recognise the irony. As the Sustainability and Environmental Manager for Baptist Community Services – NSW & ACT (BCS) her ultimate aim is to get sustainability so embedded at BCS that she makes herself redundant.

‘Once sustainability becomes business as usual at BCS my position should not even exist,’ she says.

BCS is a not-for-profit Christian care organisation that has been serving people living with disabilities and disadvantage for over 60 years. It employs more than 3700 staff, operates 2000 aged care beds and serves 14,000 community care clients.

Rutherford says thinking about how to make such an organisation more sustainable was overwhelming, so BCS joined the Sustainability Advantage Program in 2008. At the time, BCS was planning the most extensive building program in its history and wanted to ensure sustainable development became part of its future.

‘We did not know where to start,’ says Rutherford. ‘The catalyst was that we decided our two new developments had to be energy-efficient, with better water and waste management. We then realised we needed to change our whole organisation ►

In brief

Baptist Community Services – NSW & ACT (BCS) is a not-for-profit Christian care organisation that serves some of society’s most vulnerable people. BCS joined the Sustainability Advantage Program to integrate more sustainable practices into the BCS operation, with a focus on four areas: resources, people, buildings, and supply chain.

With ambitious expectations for its 22 sites, BCS developed plans to reduce its use of resources such as fossil fuels and water by two per cent each year until 2020; cut consumption of paper; reduce the amount of waste going to landfill; and replace its use of toxic cleaning materials with natural products.

While spreading the sustainability message among its employees and clients, BCS:

- saved more than 92,000 megawatts of electricity in 2010
- expects to save \$500,000 on energy a year at its new facility at Kellyville
- cut electricity use by more than five per cent at Kularoo Centre for Aged Care in Forster
- cut electricity use by almost four per cent at Warabrook Centre for Aged Care in Newcastle
- implemented energy and water saving projects worth more than \$330,000.



- ▶ because we could not have a flagship, state-of-the-art building and pay no attention to sustainability elsewhere.'

BCS used the Sustainability Advantage Program to produce a strategy that covered four different areas of the BCS business – people, resources, buildings, and supply chain.

The BSC headline goals are ambitious. It wants to reduce the use of fossil fuels and cut potable water use by two per cent a year to 2020; and divert 50 per cent of non-contaminated waste from landfill.

BCS operates many buildings that are over 30 years old. Most have been retro-fitted with energy efficient lighting and electricity sub-metering to reduce energy consumption. Sub-metering allows BSC to use software to measure energy use in individual areas of a building in real time, monitor patterns of consumption, and identify areas to improve. This will help BCS set new energy-use-per-day benchmarks. Electricity consumption reports are available on their website, with hourly data, power factor and CO₂ reporting for all major sites.

Its new building at Kellyville BCS expects to save \$500,000 a year, at current energy costs, after investing \$4.5 million in a gas-boosted micro turbine plant that will provide heating, cooling and hot water, and generate a significant amount of renewable energy.

Elsewhere, BCS has introduced many environmental measures, including new laundry processes to reduce water and power usage; energy-efficient lighting; light sensors in corridors and staff areas; water-efficient tap ware and toilets; rainwater tanks; solar hot water systems; and power factor correction to reduce energy demand.

The further BCS looked, the more changes it made. The organisation reduced travel by

using web conferencing. Replacing face-to-face meetings has minimised air and road travel, especially in regional areas. This improves work-life balance for staff, and cuts accommodation and travel costs. BCS also changed its company vehicle fleet from six-cylinder to more fuel-efficient two-cylinder cars.

While revamping business practices was relatively straightforward for BCS, helping its community clients, who live in their own homes, was more difficult. BCS field workers visited people to help them understand how they could save money by being more sustainable at home.

BCS extended this outreach to its Food 4 Life program, a network of six shops where clients can buy nutritional food at cheap prices. BCS trained its shop assistants in basic energy and water efficiency so they could advise clients on how to reduce their electricity and water bills.

'Many of our clients are older, disadvantaged and sometimes socially isolated, such as widows or single parents,' says Rutherford. 'They are people who sometimes fall through the cracks. For me, these were great projects to work on. Apart from making changes to our organisation, we could help change the lives of people who depend on us.'

Your next step

To find out how your business can join the Sustainability Advantage Program, contact the team:

Email sustainbus@environment.nsw.gov.au
Call 02 8837 6000
Visit environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/sustainabilityadvantage.htm