

Case study – Oak Flats Bowling & Recreational Club



The local club: not your usual green champion

An Illawarra bowling club is not the place you expect to be a hotbed of environmental activism. Then again, it's rare any organisation's CEO is also the sustainability champion, that two Board Directors sit on its sustainability team, or its monthly Eco-Report is compiled by the Finance and Compliance Manager.

Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club is not your usual community club. Over the past two years the Shellharbour club has thrown itself into the Sustainability Advantage Program with the type of gusto and standout results that have helped it to build a reputation as a regional sustainability star.

The Club operates not one, but three interdependent green strategies – a Sustainability Action Plan, a Resource Efficiency Action Plan and a Staff Engagement Action Plan.

'Being more sustainable has helped boost the community's awareness of the Club as a good citizen because we are charged with managing a community asset and our reputation depends on getting it right,' says Matt O'Hara, Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club CEO.

'We subscribe to triple bottom line reporting, meaning people, planet and profit. Our Board is comfortable with our level of ►

In brief

Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club at Shellharbour won the Clubs category of the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Award in 2010 and 2011 – having been runner-up in 2009. Since committing to a sustainable future, the club has:

- cut almost 20 per cent from its electricity budget following a retrofit of lighting and a staff pledge to reduce electricity
- reduced water use by 28 per cent or 3720 litres per day
- reduced waste by 51 per cent for a saving of \$11,000 a year
- granted \$1500 of incentives to employees towards home sustainability projects as recognition of their commitment to reduce energy use at home
- eliminated all products sold in duplicate forms which have one-use packaging, for example, beer supplied in kegs and sold in glass is not also sold in glass bottles.



- ▶ profit, so anything else we can invest in aims to make the business more sustainable.'

In recent times Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club has undertaken many initiatives to cut its energy and water usage, and reduce the waste it generates for landfill – with exceptional results. Consider this for an innovative agenda of sustainability action...

Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club spends \$5000 on sustainability training for employees each year and a further \$6000 is available to implement worthwhile ideas. The Club also maintains a separate annual sustainability fund of over \$35,000.

The Club spent \$5000 to establish a community garden. Its fresh produce is used in the Club's brasserie and the chef is creating a low food miles menu.

Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club invested \$10,000 retro-fitting lights, which will save 100,000 kilowatts of electricity per year – 10 per cent of the Club's bill. The Club budgeted for a \$12,000 increase in electricity costs for the period June-December 2010 due to a rise in tariffs, but instead recorded a \$2000 decrease – a \$14,000 turnaround in actual versus expected costs.

Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club also installed sky lights, rainwater tanks, a synthetic bowling green, and used worm farming to reduce food waste to zero.

The 60,000 litre water tanks boosted the Club's supply for toilet flushing, washing machines and garden irrigation, and helped Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club to cut water consumption by 28 per cent since 2007.

Negotiating with suppliers to provide minimal packaging and less frequent deliveries with bulk purchases has helped the Club save \$11,000 a year by decreasing its total waste to landfill.

Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club has a well-established greenhouse gas inventory for its five major sources of emissions – natural gas, the car fleet, electricity, waste, and water. The inventory extends to all operations associated with the Club, and emission trends are reported to the Board of Directors monthly via the Eco-Report.

There's also a staff pledge day, with strong incentives for employees to link workplace sustainability with sustainable behaviour at home.

Not content to rest on these achievements, Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club is pursuing further sustainability gains by reaching out to partners, including the Conservation Volunteers Australia and TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute.

It all makes O'Hara one very happy CEO.

'The thing which makes this club special is that it is genuinely at the heart of its community,' he says. 'This is a social outlet. People come here to enjoy themselves.

'But we realise life is not just about having a good time today. We want to make sure our kids have a world to grow up in which is as good as what we have now.'

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