

Green Skills in Short Supply in Australian Workplaces

Most workplaces offer no green skills training, monitoring or reporting.

The Green Steps Australian Workplaces Survey has found that most workplaces offer no green skills or sustainability training for staff, do not review staff on environmental performance nor address sustainability during induction. However almost all see themselves as “environmentally aware” and a strong majority favour green-skilled candidates when hiring.

The Green Steps Australian Workplace Survey was completed online by 79 organisations in private, government and non-profit sectors together employing over 50,000 people between September 1 and October 6, 2009.

“This is not good news,” says Green Steps Manager, Mark Boulet. “The workplace is the frontline when it comes to sustainability – it is as important as what we do in our homes. If Australia wants to save water, cut carbon emissions and reduce our impact we need employees everywhere to be green skilled.”

Among the survey’s findings:

51% of workplaces offered **no sustainability training** for existing staff;
61% of workplaces offered **no sustainability training or briefings** for staff as part of the induction process;
86% **did not deal with sustainability** or environmental performance in performance reviews;

This contrasts with other findings including: **90% of respondents felt their workplace to be at least “somewhat” environmentally aware**. Despite the lack of training on offer candidates with green skills such as energy / waste / water auditing and reduction skills were in demand – **71% of respondents would favour** such a candidate all other things being equal.

“There’s a contradiction,” says Boulet “Employers want green skills but aren’t investing in this capacity in their work-force. Rather than simply relying on a small number of sustainability specialists, Green Steps wants to see a workforce with ordinary every day workers who go about their every day jobs knowing how sustainability fits into this and what they could do to reduce their impact.. We call them ‘green implants’. We’re going to need millions of them if we are to make a difference.”

"There was a time when information technology skills were for specialists - today we all use computers. Likewise we need green skills to be a part of everyone's CV."

About Green Steps

Developed by the Monash Sustainability Institute, Green Steps is a pioneering, hands-on sustainability education and leadership program that empowers participants with the skills to drive environmentally sustainable practices within organisations and the wider community.

More than 500 people have completed Green Steps, which recently won the 2009 Banksia Environmental Awards' education prize. The program has partnered more than 300 companies and organisations Australia-wide, using a combination of training, work-based placements and projects to turn workplaces green.

Green Steps @ Work is available to people already in the workforce in an intensive four day format with an in-built workplace project. The workplace benefits include the capacity to collect eco-footprint data, develop energy efficiency, implement carbon reduction or waste minimisation action plans and instigate staff behaviour change programs.

Workplace Interns: Green Steps training is also offered to university students in a longer format, including a short-term workplace internship from which companies and organisations around Australia have benefited. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students do the training, which is available through partnerships with universities across Australia."

Media enquiries: Green Steps alumni, program managers and company partners are available for interview via Debra Maynard of Hootville Communications on 02 9665 7182 or 0407 299 007.



MONASH University
Monash Sustainability Institute