



## **Employers back green implants in transition to low-carbon economy**

Australian workplaces are being infiltrated by a growing number of 'green implants' – everyday workers getting practical training in sustainability – to improve environmental performance and reduce carbon emissions well ahead of an emissions trading scheme.

The workers are not part of the Rudd government's 'green jobs revolution', nor are their jobs focused solely on environmental concerns. Instead they are everyday workers in a variety of jobs who have developed the skills to change the way workplaces run and adapt to low-carbon requirements.

Chris Martin, a facilities and administration manager at non-profit pharmacy group, **UFS Dispensaries**, is a prime example: "No one was looking at sustainability at UFS and I wanted to take it on. I got support from my CEO to do training and I am now using the environmental auditing and change management skills I learnt to improve our environmental performance," says Martin.

Martin has conducted energy, waste and water audits, established a green team among his colleagues and begun implementing workplace sustainability including paperless faxing, a recycling program at 15 sites, 100% pulped paper and energy-efficient lighting. The lighting alone is expected to save \$8,000 a year and reduce carbon emissions by 71 tonnes annually in its first phase.

Other companies and organisations getting carbon savvy with the help of 'green implants' and interns trained by the Monash Sustainability Institute's Green Steps program include: **National Australia Bank**, for reviewing its building energy use policy; **VicSuper** for helping to deliver workplace behaviour change; energy distributor **Jemena**, which sought specialist input for meeting its natural gas combustion emissions reporting requirements under the federal government's new National Greenhouse Emissions Reporting Scheme; and Fortune 500 environmental consultancy, **Aecom**, which has put environmental change management consultants through the practical Green Steps training.

More than 450 people have completed the Green Steps program, 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.

"We know that workplaces want to be sustainable," says Mark Boulet, manager of Green Steps. "It's one thing for 'experts' or regulators to come in and tell everyone what to do, but for real change, the skills and attitudes need to come from the inside."

As emissions trading schemes and higher energy costs start to bite, Boulet sees Green Steps alumni as critical if Australian businesses are to meet environmental targets set by government or their boards.

"The forecast is for a critical shortage of green skills," he says. "Green ambitions are one thing but we need more workers with the practical know-how to get us there. That's why we need to expand our work."

**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.

### **About Green Steps**

The Green Steps @ Work program is available to people already in the workforce in an intensive two-and-a-half-day format with an in-built workplace project. The cost is \$1,750 with cheaper rates for non-profit organisations. 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 at Monash University and through partnerships with Griffith University (Qld), Macquarie University (NSW), Australian National University (ACT), Flinders University (SA) and Curtin University (WA). Internships run for a minimum of 12 days and cost as little as \$1500 for non-government organisations and public schools.

