

Case Study
Environmental Management Strategy - Healthier Environment, Healthier People
Austin Health (Australia)

GGHH Agenda Goals

- Leadership

Hospital Goal

- To provide an environmentally sustainable framework that links policy, systems, reporting and responsibilities within our overall management structure and functional responsibilities.

Progress Achieved

Austin Health has achieved a holistic and organizational wide approach to environmental management.

The Issue

Austin Health is committed to becoming a sustainable organisation through minimising our environmental impact. We have built on the fundamental principle of our Environment Policy; to promote environmentally sustainable work place practices and operations within Austin Health by adopting and implementing resource efficiency and waste minimisation strategies.

To achieve this objective Austin Health developed its first three year Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) in 2009. Achievements in the following areas have included:

Energy

- Preventative maintenance schedule to ensure optimum building or equipment efficiency
- Programmed Building Management Systems where possible to match occupancy
- Implemented a LED lighting installation program

Waste

- Consolidated to a single waste service provider and implemented waste data collection process
- Implemented a waste segregation program in Food Services
- Increased recycling initiatives through the installation recycling compactors at Austin and Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital

Water

- In compliance with AS1851 reduced fire testing to monthly where appropriate
- Installed reverse osmosis waste water capture for toilet flushing
- Installed rain water tanks for gardens and grounds maintenance
- Improved lead time on rectification works for reported leaks

Greening

- Developed a gardens and grounds master plan to increase garden spaces across Austin Health
- Developed alliances with “greening” organisations
- Conducted a travel survey, analysed fleet data and commenced an electric vehicle trial

Change management

- Implementation of a resource efficiency and waste minimisation education strategy / behaviour change campaign for all staff across Austin Health.

Governance

- Developed environment and waste minimisation policies
- Developed a waste procedure manual

Compliance

- Maintained compliance with environmental legislation and reporting requirements – National Energy Reporting Scheme and National Pollutant Inventory

To continue this success a new four year EMS has recently been developed which incorporates the Global Green and Healthy Hospitals (GGHH) Agenda Goals.

Sustainability Strategy Implemented

By adapting the GGHH Agenda Goals Austin Health has achieved a holistic and organizational wide approach to environmental management. This included capturing the sustainable work already being undertaken by departments not considered in the original scope of the previous EMS.

Implementation process

A gap analysis was conducted based on the GGHH Agenda Goals, with a number of consultation workshops for employees to provide input. Of the suggested actions identified from the gap analysis a priority matrix was applied and a ‘plan on a page’ was developed.

The EMS gained Austin Health management approval in December 2013. Actions were then assigned to responsible departments and individuals with action plan and reporting templates issued.

Tracking Progress

The progress of the EMS will be reviewed bi-monthly by the Austin Health Environment Committee. An action for each year of the strategy will be implemented in each of the ten areas, this equates to 37 actions over four years (as some actions will run over multiple years).

Progress in implementing the EMS will be reported annually to the Austin Health Board. Performance progress and key achievements will be reported publicly through the annual Austin Health Sustainability Report

Challenges and lessons learned

The consultation process, which invited all staff to participate, allowed for many new ideas and opportunities to be incorporated into the EMS.

Assigning actions to responsible departments and individuals is beginning to embed sustainability into core business practice and become part of the everyday activities within the organisation, not simply seen as a role of the two dedicated sustainability officers.

The challenge in setting goals and actions over a four year period in a public hospital setting includes the variability of available funding and resources over the timeframe of implementation. In some cases this reality has resulted in a broad goal being set and provision made for annual review. Additionally, through the life of the EMS it is also expected that the health service will expand.

There is a local governance requirement to have an EMS; however it is not mandated to ensure compliance. Austin Health is committed to improving environmental sustainability and the health and wellbeing of staff and local communities within health system infrastructure and performance. This commitment is documented in our environmental management strategy.

Next Steps

The next steps are to monitor the progress implementation of each action through the bi-monthly review of the Environment Committee. The actions can be managed in a number of formats however; the team is investigating utilising existing document control software programs currently used to track progress of other organisational strategic goals

Demographic information

Austin Health is a long established major academic public health service providing healthcare, health professional education and health research.

Located in north east Melbourne, Australia; we provide a comprehensive range of acute, subacute and mental health services, specialist clinics and outreach services to our local community.

Austin Health is also the state-wide provider of a range of specialist services. Operating 980 beds, Austin Health employs over 8,000 staff across multiple sites and provided care to over 90,000 in-patients in the 2012/13 financial year.

“Austin Health is very proud of the pioneering work that we have done in environmental sustainability in recent years and, particularly over the last three years since we launched the Environmental Management Strategy.”

Austin Health CEO, Dr Brendan Murphy

Links

- <http://www.austin.org.au/>

- <http://www.austin.org.au/about-us/publications/>
- <http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/Details.aspx?ProductID=1600801>
- <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-measurement/national-greenhouse-and-energy-reporting>
- <http://www.npi.gov.au/about-npi/nepm-variation>
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/sustainability/programs.htm>