



Centre for
Waste and Water
Technology,
University of NSW

Sustainability
Covenant



Sustainability Covenant

This voluntary SUSTAINABILITY COVENANT is a statutory agreement under section 49AA of the *Environment Protection Act 1970* made on the 25th day of November 2008

Between:

Environment Protection Authority (EPA Victoria) of 40 City Road Southbank in the State of Victoria
-and-

The University of New South Wales, a body corporate established pursuant to the *University of New South Wales Act 1989* (NSW), of Sydney 2052, ABN 27 195 873 179, through its Centre for Water & Waste Technology (UNSW)

In which the parties agree to:

- jointly develop sustainability science capacity within Australia to influence statutory and strategic decision-making to increase resource efficiency
- develop, support and apply sustainability science through partnerships with EPA clients to reduce the ecological impact of their products, services and the processes by which such products and services are designed and produced
- increase the capacity of the parties to influence the resource efficiency and ecological impact of communities they work with, including business, government and non-government organisations

EPA is of the opinion that this sustainability covenant is likely to be effective in increasing resource efficiency and reducing the ecological impact of the parties and their stakeholders and as such is a signatory to this sustainability covenant.

Parties to the Covenant

Centre for Water and Waste Technology, University of New South Wales

The Centre for Water and Waste Technology at UNSW is an internationally leading University Centre that provides multidisciplinary, collaborative research in water and wastewater engineering and the development of tools for environmental management and sustainability for improving the aquatic and atmospheric environments.

The Centre sources research funding from the Australian Research Council (ARC), Cooperative Research Centre's Programme (CRC) and Department of Education and Training (DEST), which is supported by national industry association funding and international competitive funding from organisation such as AWWARF, MISTRA and WERF resulting in an average annual research budget of \$1.8 million.

The Centre has extensive collaborative links with leading international research institutions in Europe, North America and Asia including Cambridge, Cranfield University, Karlsruhe, Delf University, Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control, University of Lund, CEA-CNRS, CNRS-University Aix-Marseille, Institut Universitaire Européen de la Mer-UBO Berkeley, MIT, Stanford, University of Southern California, University of Michigan, University of North Carolina, Nanyang Technological University, Shenyang University, Tohoku University and the Indian Institute of Technology.

The University of New South Wales has the following objectives for this partnership:

- to practically link sustainability assessment tools with business and statutory implementation processes
- to increase dialogue regarding the development of sustainability tools between sustainability researchers and stakeholders in industry and government
- to develop long-term research plans for the next three years and concentrate on research content and application

- to develop an innovative partnership which leverages EPA's environmental science capacity into sustainability science
- to communicate with research, government and industry stakeholders via publications and other communication channels
- to provide UNSW with an opportunity to influence development and application of life-cycle approaches in a regulatory setting whilst supporting EPA's research agenda.

EPA Victoria

EPA Victoria is a statutory body established under an Act of the Victorian Parliament in 1970 in response to community concern about pollution.

EPA's vision is *The Victorian community living sustainably.*

A community living sustainably knows the impacts of the decisions it makes and the actions it takes on the environment and:

- **efficiently** uses and renews resources.
- **understands** how what is good for the environment is good for the economy and society.
- **lives in a healthy environment** that provides clean air, water and land.
- **meets the needs of today** without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

EPA's purpose is to protect, care for and improve our environment.

EPA's values are collaboration, innovation, integrity and respect

EPA's objectives are to increase resource efficiency, tackle climate change, reduce emissions impact, enhance our reputation and benefit the economy.

EPA has committed to developing strategic science partnerships as part of its Future Science direction.

Background

EPA has a vision of the Victorian community living sustainably. The most recent estimate of Victoria's Ecological Footprint indicates that, if everyone in the world lived the way Victorians currently do, we would need nearly four planets to sustain the global community. This is clearly a long way from 'living sustainably'.

Victoria is not alone in facing this challenge. Societies all around the world are realising the need to pursue economic and social objectives within nature's limits. We need to identify new and better ways to produce the goods and services we want in order to lead the lifestyles to which we aspire.

One key to doing this is to foster and harness innovation. To this end, EPA collaborates with various segments of the Australian community, including business and industry, other government agencies, NGOs and the general public, particularly with those who are leaders in supporting innovation. It is also collaborating more with leading international organisations and experts who are contributing to the goal of achieving sustainable societies. EPA aims to bring these partners together to help build society's capacity to progress towards sustainability.

To do this, EPA is establishing mutually beneficial relationships with leading international organisations through the creation of 'Global Innovation Partnerships'. The Global Innovation Partnership with the University of NSW will position each partner as an innovative leader in driving the evolution of sustainability science within Australia and, more widely, through guiding statutory and strategic decision-making to deliver gains in resource efficiency across the life cycle. This will identify and prioritise research needs for the Victorian and Australian community, including business, government and non-government organisations

Commitments of the covenant

Through this partnership, the Centre for Water & Waste Technology at the University of New South Wales will conduct applied research to support EPA develop and apply sustainability science in its regulatory and strategic decision-making frameworks.

This partnership will contribute to EPA's direction of science underpinning our work to protect, improve and care for the environment by:

- informing decision-making
- targeting current and future priorities
- adapting to changing needs
- leading future thinking and strategy at EPA.

EPA will be supported to:

- access and influence sustainability science research
- influence strategic planning decisions
- maintain networks with international sustainability science community
- enhance current sustainability science methods
- work with clients using life-cycle approaches, including sustainability science
- inform decision-making.

Life of the covenant

This sustainability covenant will be in place for a period of three years.

Covenant reviews will take place at the end of years one and two to determine the resource requirements for following years.

Either party may choose to cancel this covenant by notice to the other.

Management of the covenant

The parties to the covenant will jointly be responsible for managing the over-arching performance of the covenant.

The parties will participate in a workshop at the start of each year of the covenant to review outcomes of the previous year and develop objectives, priorities and an action plan for the following year, to be approved at Executive level. This action plan will outline the funding allocation for the year. A report on the key outcomes of the covenant will be available on EPA's website.

More Information

In accordance with section 49AC(b) of the Act, the parties will ensure that this Covenant is readily accessible to the public and that it is published on the internet.

In accordance with section 49AC(c) of the Act, the parties authorise the copying of all or any part of the Covenant by any person who wishes to do so. The parties also authorise the use by such a person of any copies made by the person.

Glossary

Sustainability science refers to 'interactions between natural and social systems, and with how those interactions affect the challenge of sustainability'. (Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States of America, www.pnas.org/misc/sustainability.shtml)

It 'explores the long-term trends of social and environmental change that will most strongly shape the challenges and opportunities facing efforts to promote a transition toward sustainability. It analyses the relevant goals and targets for human development and environmental protection that have been sanctioned by the international community, and evaluates the indicators that have been posed to assess progress in attaining them'. (Harvard University, www.hks.harvard.edu/sust)

Contact Information

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