



# Driving change from within

## Lessons and successes of staff engagement (2013 – now)

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# Context: Drivers



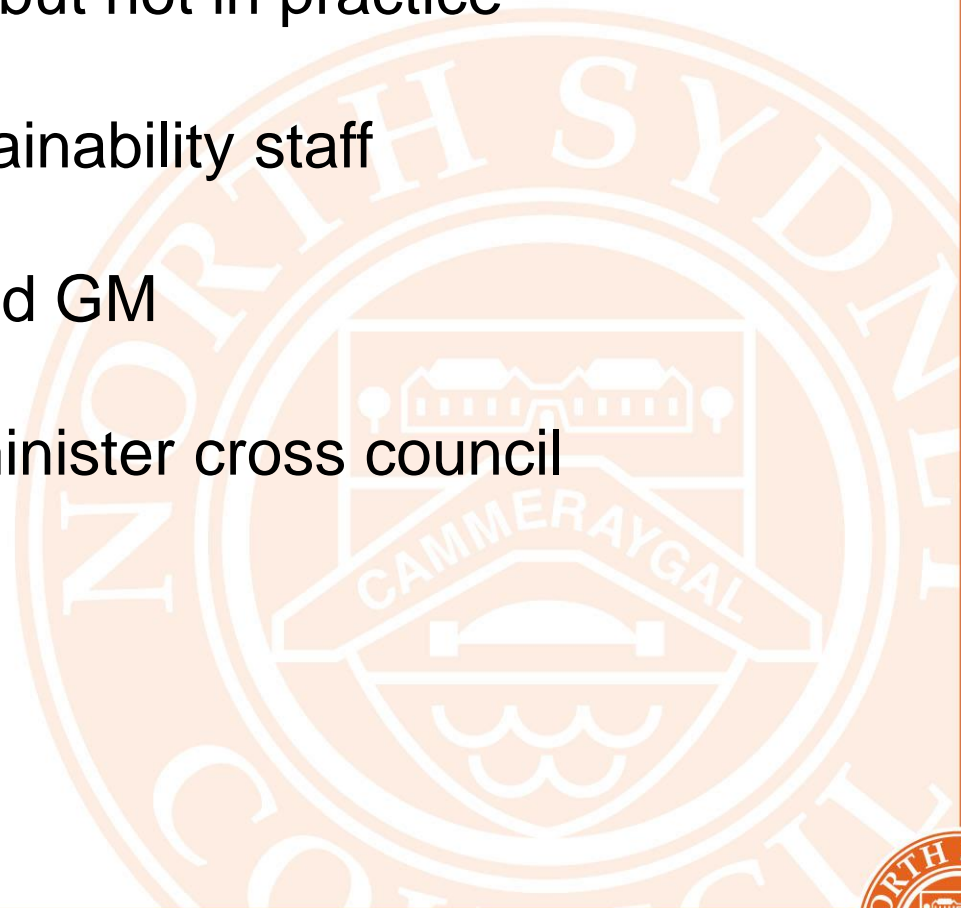
- Long history of political support
- Embedded in position descriptions and performance review process
- Embedded in Community Strategic Plan
- Embedded in core values
- Staff are already highly engaged in other cross council initiatives, esp health related



# Context: Barriers



- Embedded in policy but not in practice
- Seen as role of sustainability staff
- Change of Mayor and GM
- Time needed to administer cross council engagement



# Process

“Collaborating for sustainability” guide:

[http://www.enablingchange.com.au/Collaborating\\_for\\_Sustainability\\_1.pdf](http://www.enablingchange.com.au/Collaborating_for_Sustainability_1.pdf)



7 critical success factors for collaborative networks:

1. Executive support
2. Network coordination
3. A topic that people are interested in
4. Investing in social capital
5. Taking action
6. Keeping it interesting
7. Building participation

## COLLABORATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

[www.sustainablecouncilsnetwork.org.au](http://www.sustainablecouncilsnetwork.org.au)

IDEAS, TOOLS &  
LESSONS FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT



A guide based on the experiences of the CEEchange Program, which was assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

# Process



- MANEX support to establish “Green Team”: May 2013
- Call for “Green Team” members
  - 26 members from all divisions
  - admin building, library, depots
  - mix of senior and junior staff
- Members survey
- LGNSW Training: May & June 2013
  - Senior Managers/ Leadership team
  - Outdoor/Operations
  - Indoor Project management staff
  - Cross Council “Green Team”



# A name and a mascot

- Eastern Water Dragons
- Natives of North Sydney, classified as locally threatened
- Slogan: “Sustain, Survive, Thrive”
- Logo developed by a Water Dragon member



# Recycle Right Challenge

- New consistent bin stickers
- Posters in the kitchens
- Tips in staff news & Intranet
- Bin audits (1 pre & 2 during)
- Celebration and Recognition
- Lots of award categories
- GM handed out awards



# Successes

- Staff now get it right 90% of the time (50% baseline)
- 4 teams had 0% contamination!
- Recycling set up in all staff areas in Council
- Unearthed new waste champions
- Created new recycling norm at Council
- Raised profile of the Water Dragons team
- Opened communication channel



# Composting (2013-)



- Previous attempts failed due to complaints
- Staff survey – clean & no smells
- Compost bin: easy to use and maintain
- Compost champions: 1 per day (incl Director COS!)
- Piloted on 1 floor first
- Staff composting workshops
- Now in Admin building, library and both depots
- >600kg/yr compost used in parks & gardens



# Staff news articles (2013-)



- Normalises sustainable work practices
- Highlight staff demonstrating sustainability values



# Staff workshops (2014-)

- “Waste not” movie screening (20 attended)
- Composting workshops (49)
- Natural cleaning workshops (18)
- Plastic free kitchen (15)
- Green walls and roofs (38)
- Furoshiki (18)
- Bees wax wrap making (16)
- Tees to totes (8)
- Native Christmas Wreath making (20)



# Staff tours (2015-)



- Recycling centre
- Coal Loader Sustainability centre
- Trip to the tip (2015 and 2018)

## Results:

- Cross council networking
- Introduced staff to Coal Loader
- Better understanding of waste mgt



# Plastic free July (2015-)



- Provided Keep Cup, water bottle, lunch box and banner bag for making the pledge
- Tips in staff newsletter, intranet and emails
- Celebration morning tea

## Results:

- Ideas shared between participants
- List of take away stores developed that accept lunch box and keep cups
- Staff are ready and on board for plastics ban



# Staff veggie patch (2016)



- Veggie patch established next to lunch room
- Uses Council generated compost
- Produce used by staff and in workshops
- GM comes in on weekends to raid the garden!



# Procurement (2017)



- Sustainable Procurement training with staff
- Embedded in Council's procurement policy and manual
- Mandatory Sustainability criteria tenders
- Winner of Local Government Sustainable Procurement Award!



# Name the water dragon (2018)

- 42 submissions
- Winner: Wally (potentially short for "Valentina")



# Induction Program (2018)



- Sustainability induction module for all new staff
- Videos from GM, outdoor and indoor staff
- Water bottle, keep cup, lunch box and bag

**KEN GOULDTHORP**  
GENERAL MANAGER



Sustainability is everybody's responsibility at North Sydney Council - True or False?

☒ True

☐ False

PREVIOUS QUESTION

NEXT QUESTION

5 Questions remaining

Who are the Water Dragons?

- ☐ The Sustainability unit at North Sydney Council
- ☒ Staff from all areas of Council who are interested in making Council more sustainable
- ☐ People who like reptiles
- ☐ People who like to go swimming

PREVIOUS QUESTION

NEXT QUESTION

3 Questions remaining



# Return and Earn (2019)



- Established by Parks staff
- Approx \$1000/yr to be donated to charity (“60¢ in 60 seconds!”)
- *“Hi Team, Glad to report our first load of rubbish has been processed for charity and our recycling point is looking better than ever with our new collection bags.”*



# Lessons learnt



- Importance of visible GM support
- Systems need to be easy
- Celebrations and awards help normalise behaviour

- Work with your organisation's culture – we like competitions (and food!)
- Communicate regularly to normalise sustainability



# Lessons learnt



- Don't forget about the depot!
- Focus on actions not meetings
- Choose your battles
- Adapt and keep it fresh



THANK  
You!

# Questions?

## Contact:

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# Green Christmas (2014-)



- Recycled paper decoration for Customer Service
- Upcycled “kerbside bed slats” Christmas Tree
- Furoshiki Christmas wrapping

## Results:

- Promoted Water Dragons to wider community
- Great feedback from staff and community
- Continued building sustainability norm at Council

