

# **Sustainable Choice Northern Rivers Sustainable Procurement Forum**

Cabarita Beach Bowls and Sports Club, Bogangar, 25 May 2016

## **Evaluation Report**

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**Date of report:** June 2016

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### Acknowledgements

The Sustainable Choice program gratefully acknowledges the support and contribution of Tweed Shire Council for hosting the event and to the following presenters for their time and considerable efforts:

- Ms Debbie Firestone, Tweed Shire Council
- Ms Liz Collyer, Tweed Shire Council
- Ms Lyn Blain, Canterbury-Bankstown Council
- Mr David Peterson, Wollongong City Council
- Mr Michael Robinson, LGP
- Dr Suzanne Grob, Procureability
- Mr Damien Rigby, Fulton Hogan

Thanks are also extended to Local Government Procurement (LGP) for promoting the forum and to forum participants for making the event such an engaging and productive experience.

## Executive Summary

On 25 May 2016 at the Cabarita Beach Bowls and Sports Club in Bogangar, the Sustainable Choice program held a forum for councils to present and explore strategies, innovation, resources and case studies to promote sensible, sustainable procurement.

Presentations from the Sustainable Choice Program Manager, Local Government Procurement (LGP), Tweed Shire Council, Wollongong City Council, Canterbury-Bankstown Council and industry representatives were delivered to 13 Local Government participants. A trade show, a 'meet the suppliers' facilitated discussion and networking session further engaged and connected participants.

The content, structure, duration, high calibre of presenters and the contribution of participants ensured that the event was a resounding success. This was evident in participant feedback, with an evaluation revealing that, overall, 100% of participants considered it good or excellent. The Sustainable Choice program team will use lessons learned and participant feedback to guide and inform future events.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

This report assesses the outcomes of the forum against the program objectives. It also allows the program team to build on future activities and to provide analysis and feedback to the Sustainable Choice partnership (OEH and LGNSW) and program members and suppliers.

## **2. Background**

The Sustainable Choice program is a partnership between Local Government NSW and NSW OEH. It commenced in 2006 with the aim of facilitating NSW councils to increase the proportion of products and services procured that meet defined environmental and ethical criteria. It does so by:

- a) providing guidance and capacity building activities;
- b) supporting and assisting councils to implement sustainable procurement practices;
- c) improving internal procurement processes and systems; and
- d) providing networking opportunities to share knowledge and information.

Since commencement, program membership has grown annually and currently has 86 local council members. The number of suppliers included on the sustainable products and services database has also grown and is currently 360.

## **3. The Forum**

### **3.1 Setting**

Date: Wednesday 25 May, 2016  
Time: 9.15am – 2.30pm  
Venue: Cabarita Beach Bowls and Sports Club, Cabarita Road, Bogangar

### **3.2 Objectives**

- a) Provide information, awareness and connectivity between:
  - i) councils; and
  - ii) councils and industry.
- b) Showcase sustainable products and services, including local/regional options where possible.
- c) Assist councils and industry to better understand the sustainability drivers and needs, expectations and barriers of each other.
- d) Promote council case studies to enhance learning by sharing the experiences and insights of practitioners.

### 3.3 Structure

The forum comprised a half-day event that was centred on:

- a) Keynote presentations from the program manager, councils and industry representatives.
- b) A tradeshow showcasing the sustainable products of Sustainable Choice suppliers.
- c) A facilitated ‘meet the suppliers’ discussion and networking session where tradeshow representatives presented and discussed their sustainable products with participants.
- d) A networking lunch for participants, presenters and tradeshow representatives.

The forum was conducted in accordance with the [LGNSW Principles and Guidelines for Event Sustainability](#).

A copy of the program is annexed and marked “A”.

### 3.4 Audience and attendance

The forum targeted Local Government staff involved in procurement, engineering, asset management, environmental management and sustainability.

Invitations were sent to all NSW councils. The event was promoted in the Sustainable Choice Newsletter, Local Government NSW weekly and the LGP Newsletter. The event was also promoted on the [LGNSW website](#).

Thirty people participated in the event across 15 different organisations, including representatives from eight councils and six Sustainable Choice suppliers (Table 1). There was also one representative from LGP and two from Sustainable Choice.

**Table 1. Forum participants (n=30) categorised by organisation type.**

<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>
Councils	Industry	Other

### 3.5 Presentations

Presentations were delivered by eight speakers. Details of presenters and an overview of their presentation are set out in order of appearance below. Copies of relevant PowerPoint slides (in pdf format) are available upon request from Sustainable Choice ([sustainablechoice@lgnsw.org.au](mailto:sustainablechoice@lgnsw.org.au)).

Presenter: Ms Liz **Collyer**, Director of Corporate Services, Tweed Shire Council

Ms Collyer welcomed participants to the forum, discussed the nature and importance of sustainability in general and specifically in procurement and delivered an Acknowledgement of Country.

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Presenter: Debbie **Firestone**, Tweed Shire Council  
Title: **Sustainable Procurement in Construction Contracts**

Debbie contextualised the event by delivering a presentation on an initiative of Tweed Shire Council, known as Kingscliff North Holiday Park. The initiative involved a complete upgrade of the site to become a four star standard holiday park. This involved complete demolition of the existing structure and careful considerations were made around landscaping, water, waste water, and energy efficiency to make sure sustainability factors were met. Locally supplied materials were also heavily weighted in the contract specification to avoid transportation and to support local industries.

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Presenter: Dr Suzanne **Grob**, Procureability  
Title: **Embedding Sustainability in the Procurement Process**

Dr Suzanne Grob presented on how to embed sustainability in the procurement process. The presentation touched on how to include weighting criteria for sustainability in the tendering process. A group activity was included, whereby participants worked on the example of purchasing library desks. Groups were asked to represent a particular council and identify the top five sustainability factors important to that council. Following this they were to allocate a tender percentage weighting amongst these criteria. Suzanne also talked about how to best manage a contract and the different levels of supplier engagement required.

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Presenter: Lyn **Blain**, Canterbury-Bankstown Council  
Title: **Case Study – Canterbury-Bankstown Council – Sustainable Procurement Initiatives**

Lyn provided a presentation reflecting her work in sustainable procurement at both Marrickville Council and Canterbury-Bankstown Council. Lyn created a new Sustainability Policy and associated procedures and guidelines at Marrickville Council. Once they were approved, they were all published on the intranet to be easily accessible for all staff. The outcome has resulted

in a procurement system that embeds sustainability factors into procurement decisions very effectively. Most importantly sustainable procurement has now become part of the organisation's culture. Lyn also explained she is implementing a similar approach at Canterbury-Bankstown Council where she is now working. Due to the learning experience from Marrickville Council, this process has taken considerably less time. Lyn is currently awaiting formal approval in order to be able to fully implement the new system.

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Presenters: David **Peterson**, Wollongong City Council  
Title: **Case Study – Wollongong City Council – Procurement of a Green Cleaning Contractor**

David from Wollongong City Council gave a presentation on the Green Cleaning Contract project which won them the 2015 Sustainable Procurement Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards. David explained how the cleaning services contract came up for renewal which provided the opportunity to identify and document the specifications to both meet the demands of the operation of the building and to bring them into line with best practise sustainable cleaning services.

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Presenter: Damien **Rigby**, Fulton Hogan  
Title: **Asphalt – The environmental evolution**

Damien's presentation looked at the evolution of manufacturing in the asphalt industry – going from the predominant use of non-renewable materials, to now the extensive use of recycled materials in asphalt production. The presentation included examples of research and development in this area, technology used in today's asphalt plants, the use of recycled materials and the development of other sustainable bitumen based products, designed to provide long term environmental and fiscal sustainability.

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Presenter: Michael **Robinson**, Local Government Procurement (LGP)  
Title: **Sustainability in local government – What's in it for me?**

Michael talked about how and why LGP support sustainable procurement and how LGP aspires to lead by incorporating social, environmental and economic considerations into their operations. Some of their initiatives include looking into tagging sustainable suppliers on LGP contracts and providing free tender training for Indigenous and social enterprises.

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Presenter: Tania **Lalor**, Local Government NSW  
Title: **Sustainable Choice Program Update, Sustainable Choice Database & Meet the Suppliers.**

Tania provided an overview of the Sustainable Choice Program, including services offered and resources available. Tania also provided a detailed overview of the Sustainable Choice Sustainable Products and Services Database, including what it is, its benefits, how to find it and how to use it. Tania also highlighted that a project to enhance the database is currently underway.

### **3.6 Speed date a Sustainable Choice supplier**

To promote networking and information exchange, a fun and engaging facilitated discussion and networking session was held between participants and tradeshow representatives. Participants were divided into six groups that rotated around each of the trade stalls in turn. Representatives provided participants with details of their products, including sustainability measures, their application and how they can be utilised by councils. Participants then had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss their individual council's needs.

### **3.7 Tradeshow**

The forum included provision for six Sustainable Choice supplier stalls. Invitations to participate were extended to all Sustainable Choice suppliers via email. Stalls were allocated on a first-in, first-served basis. The following organisations participated:

- a) Moodie Outdoor Products
- b) Cardia Bioplastics
- c) Eco Sustainable House
- d) Fulton Hogan
- e) True Blue Chemicals
- f) Downer

## **4. Evaluation**

A pre and post forum evaluation was conducted to assess performance against the event objectives and to gain insights and develop opportunities for enhancing future events.

### **4.1 Method**

The evaluation comprised a self-administered paper based questionnaire provided to all participants from councils. Respondents completed the pre forum evaluation at the commencement of the event and the post forum evaluation on its conclusion.

Data was entered into MS Excel 2010 software which performed all calculations and produced relevant plots.

### **4.2 Results and discussion**

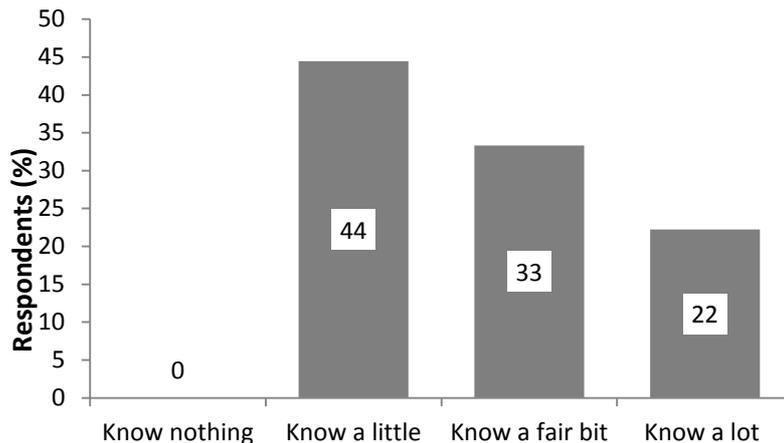
#### **a) Response rate**

The response rate was good. Sixty nine per cent (9 of the 13 Local Government respondents) completed the pre and post forum questionnaires.

**b) Pre-forum evaluation**

Level of understanding of sustainable procurement

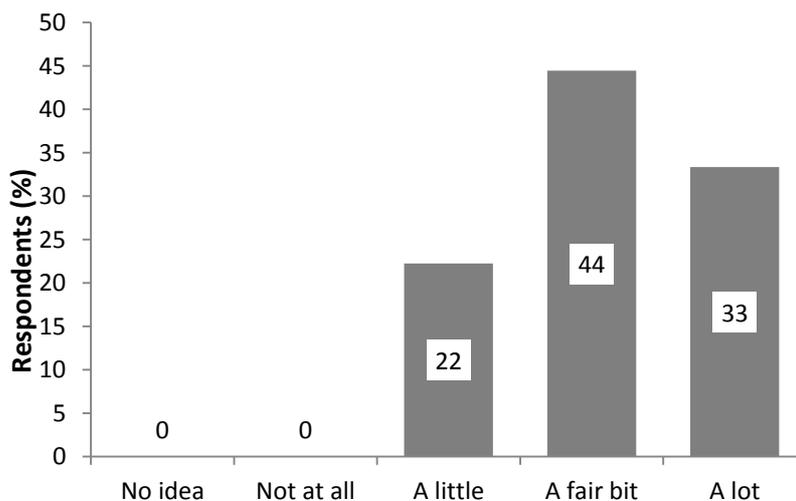
Question 1 surveyed the respondents' level of understanding of sustainable procurement. Just over half of respondents (55%) considered they had a good or very good knowledge, while the remainder considered they knew only a little (Fig. 1). The forum therefore attracted a good blend of participants in need of capacity in sustainable procurement and those who could share the benefit of their knowledge and experience.



**Fig. 1.** Per cent response of respondents (*n* = 9) to the question: ‘How would you describe your present level of understanding of sustainable procurement?’.

Personal impact on council's sustainable procurement processes

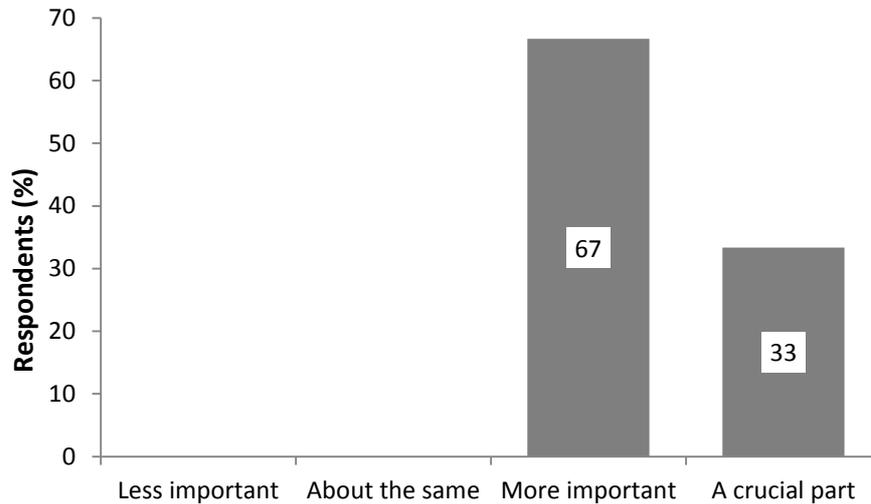
Question 2 delved into how much respondents thought their role contributed to their council's sustainable procurement processes. Encouragingly, 100% of respondents said they made some contribution (Fig. 2), which demonstrates the forum had engaged ‘decision influencers’. Thirty three per cent noted they contributed a lot, 44% indicated a fair bit and 22% said a little.



**Fig. 2.** Percent response of respondents (*n* = 9) to the question: ‘At the moment, how much does your job impact on council's sustainable procurement processes?’.

Sustainable procurement over the next five years

Figure 3 shows the views of respondents to question 3 inquiring about their views on how sustainable procurement will develop in the workplace. Respondents believed that it would be either more important (67%) or a crucial part (33%), demonstrating the importance of programs such as Sustainable Choice.



**Fig. 3.** Percent response of respondents (*n* = 9) to the question: *'When thinking about sustainable procurement and council, do you feel that over the next five years sustainable procurement in your work will become...'*.

Advice on sustainable procurement

Respondents were asked how they would secure sustainable procurement advice. The following responses were received:

- The Sustainable Choice team, Local Government Procurement
- Sustainable Procurement Group
- Senior Contracts Engineer or Sustainability Program Leader
- Internet
- Other Councils, Sustainable Choice, Env Choice
- Sustainable Procurement Policy

**a) Post-forum evaluation**

The first section of the evaluation asked respondents to separately rate five elements of the forum namely its information/content, session structure, quality of group interaction, venue/catering and facilitation/presenters. All respondents gave ratings of good or excellent (Fig. 4). Content rated most highly, with 67% of respondents considering it excellent. This was followed by Structure and Facilitation/presenters with 56% of respondents considering them excellent.

Qualitative elements of the forum

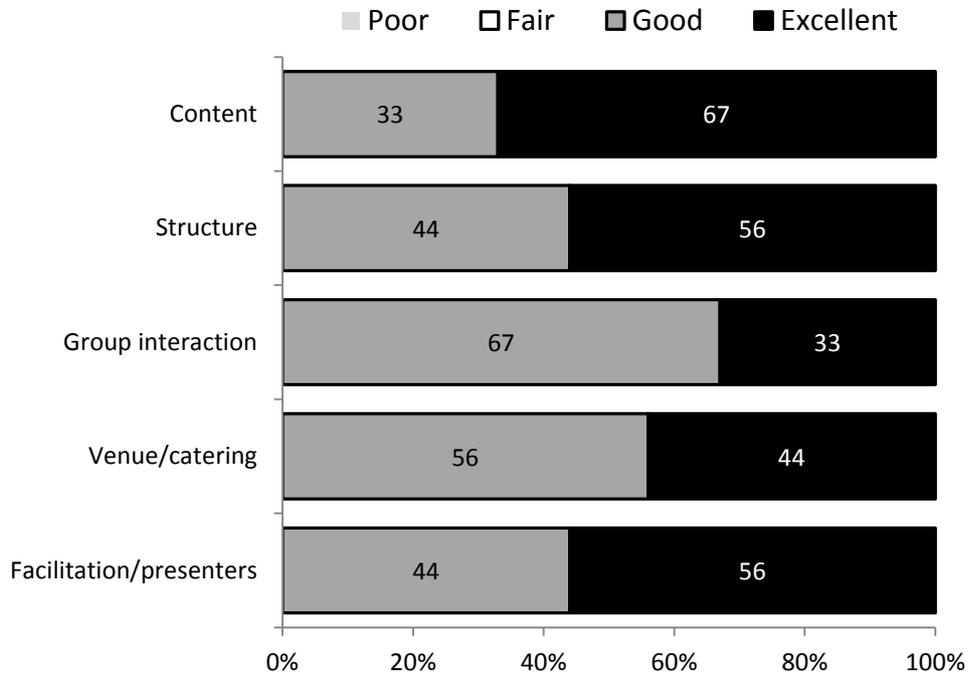


Fig. 4. . 100% stacked column chart of responses (n = 9) addressing quality of elements of the forum.

Figure 5 summates results across the 5 questions above and reveals that overall 100% rated the forum positively.

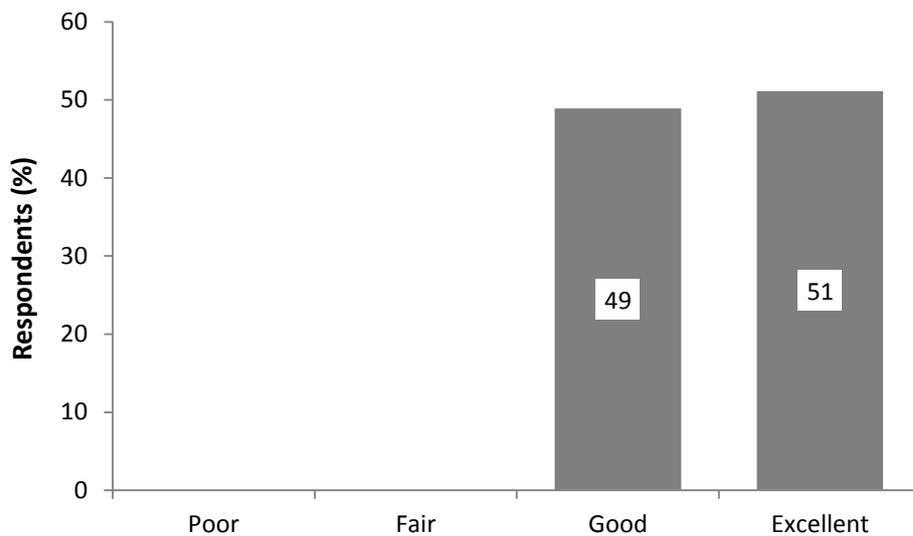


Fig. 5. Per cent of responses (n = 9) summated across all qualitative elements of the forum.

Most enjoyed / useful elements of the forum

An open question asked respondents to list those aspects of the forum they most like and/or found useful. Results are detailed in Table 2 below:

**Table 2. Respondent comments on forum elements they most liked and/or found useful and why.**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Why it was liked / useful</b>
Networking to meet others	Point of contact at council.
Case studies	To see what others are doing.
Industry presentation – Fulton Hogan	
Case studies – Tweed Shire Council and Wollongong City Council	Good but could have been better with good, bad and ugly and what we have learnt.
All the presenters	They were very interesting and good to get different perspectives.
Fulton Hogan/Materials	Money saved
Downer EDI/Materials	Money saved
Reviewing Procurement spend	To dedicate limited resources to gain best economic and environmental impact.
Review whether the Sustainable Procurement strategy is working.	
Networking with suppliers	
Positive case studies	

Comments generally

Respondents were invited to comment or make suggestions generally in relation to the forum and these are listed below:

- Not that familiar with the Sustainable Choice website. Maybe include features about resources in the newsletter to remind me to look.
- Look forward to the next one.
- Have more case studies with bad outcomes to learn from mistakes and share so not repeated.
- More regular sessions around NSW.

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The forum evaluation provided an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the success of the forum. Results revealed an overwhelmingly positive response to the forum and this will assist Sustainable Choice to enhance and further tailor future events to the needs of members. Forum objectives were achieved (Table 3). Results also support the importance and value of holding forums in instilling sustainability objectives into the procurement practices of councils and industry.

**Table 3. Assessment of achievement of Forum objectives.**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
1	Provide information, awareness and connectivity between:	
	i) councils; and	✓
	ii) councils and industry.	✓
2	Showcase sustainable products and services, including local/regional options where possible.	✓
3	Assist councils and industry to better understand the sustainability drivers and needs, expectations and barriers of each other.	✓
4	Promote council case studies to enhance learning by sharing the experiences and insights of practitioners	✓

## 5. Conclusions

The Northern Rivers Sustainable Procurement Forum conducted at Cabarita Beach Bowls and Sports Club in Bogangar on 25 May 2016 attracted 30 participants representing 15 different organisations. Participants possessed a range of understanding of sustainable procurement from a little to a fair bit. One hundred per cent said they were able to influence their council's procurement practices, which is important because all participants considered that sustainable procurement will become more significant over the next five years. The forum's content, structure, facilitation and presenters rated very favourably in the forum evaluation.

Presentations were delivered by eight speakers addressing a range of technical and practical elements of sustainable procurement. All respondents considered the presenters and facilitation good or excellent.

Six trade stalls demonstrating Sustainable Choice approved products enabled councils to view, touch and hear about sustainable products from the suppliers' perspectives. Networking and engagement was further facilitated via an end-of-form panel discussion, 'meet the suppliers' facilitated discussion session, and networking lunch. Group interaction was viewed as good or excellent by 100% of respondents.

The structure, content and delivery of the forum were designed to meet the forum objectives in relation to sustainable procurement including increasing information, awareness and connectivity, showcasing products and services, and understanding the needs, drivers and barriers of others. The evaluation results confirm that the forum objectives were achieved. The forum also strengthened the opportunities for collaborations between councils and between councils and suppliers in furtherance of sustainability objectives.

## 6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for future events:

1. Maintain and expand on the diversity of presentations and mix of local government and industry presenters. In particular, explore opportunities to include case studies where the outcomes have not necessarily been positive so that lessons learnt can be shared.
2. Continue targeted and broad scale marketing and promotion.
3. Expand on the provision of facilitated and unstructured sessions in the program to allow participants to explore areas of particular interest to their council.

## ANNEXURE 'A' FORUM PROGRAM

# Northern Rivers Sustainable Procurement Forum

#### DATE

Wednesday  
25 May 2016  
9.15am – 2.30pm

#### LOCATION

Cabarita Beach Bowls  
and Sports Club,  
Cabarita Road,  
Bogangar, NSW 2488

#### COST

FREE

#### CONTACT

Tania Lalor

Program Manager  
Sustainable Choice  
02 9242 4039  
lgnsw.org.au

#### Overview

Hear about and explore strategies, case studies, innovation and resources for sensible, sustainable procurement. This forum is an opportunity to discover ways to implement sustainable procurement effectively within your organisation; with a focus on implementation tools and resources, evaluating sustainability in tenders and innovative sustainable materials that are available for use in civil construction. There will also be a number of suppliers brought directly to you, showcasing technology and innovation in sustainable products and purchasing. There will be opportunities to network with your colleagues and to connect with suppliers and environmental innovators.

#### Who should attend

Engineers, Asset Managers, Civil Construction Staff, Environmental Practitioners, Procurement Officers. Councillors and Mayors are also welcome.

#### Draft Programme

- 9.15am Registration – arrival tea and coffee, networking and supplier stalls
- 9.45am Official Opening, **Liz Collyer, Director of Corporate Services, Tweed Shire Council**
- 9.55am Case Study – Sustainable Procurement in Construction Contracts, **Debbie Firestone, Tweed Shire Council**
- 10.15am Embedding Sustainability in the Procurement Process, **Dr Suzanne Grob, Procureability**
- 11.00am Case Study – City of Canterbury Council – Sustainable Procurement Implementation Initiatives, **Lyn Blain, Canterbury-Bankstown Council**
- 11.25am Morning Tea (trade show liaison with suppliers)
- 11.45am Case Study – Wollongong City Council – Procurement of a Green Cleaning Contractor, **David Peterson, Wollongong City Council**
- 12.05pm Asphalt – The environmental evolution, **Damien Rigby, Fulton Hogan**
- 12.25pm Sustainability in Local Government – What's in it for me?, **Michael Robinson, Local Government Procurement**
- 12.45pm Sustainable Choice Program Update, **Tania Lalor & Sara Lindqvist, Local Government NSW**
- 12.50pm Sustainable Choice Database & Meet the Suppliers, **Tania Lalor, Local Government NSW**
- 1.20pm Lunch – networking and supplier stalls
- 2.30pm Forum close

#### Process

The workshop consists of expert presenters, case studies and group discussions to assist participants to understand and practically apply the material presented in the forum. While the focus is on council operations, elected council representatives are also welcome to attend.

#### Facilitator

Tania Lalor, Program Manager Sustainable Choice  
02 9242 4039  
[tania.lalor@lgnsw.org.au](mailto:tania.lalor@lgnsw.org.au)

[Register here](#)

Further detail overleaf.

Sustainable Choice is a partnership between Local Government NSW and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage