



ACT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2011

SUSTAINABILITY STORIES

Small changes: big sustainability gains



Dickson Motor Vehicle Registry



Dame Pattie Menzies Building



ACTSmart Business and Office waste sorting bins at Dame Pattie Menzies House (Photo courtesy of ACT Government)

Improving sustainability is achievable in the workplace. Changes can be made by replacing old systems with more efficient technologies and making small adjustments to the way we function in workplace buildings. Both are equally important in reducing costs and increasing building sustainability. These are the kinds of changes happening at Dickson in two ACT government buildings; the Dickson Motor Vehicle Registry and the nearby Dame Pattie Menzies House.

At the Dickson Motor Vehicle Registry, a comprehensive heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) upgrade gave a good base for achieving improvements. However, having staff involved in a *Sustainability Working Group* and providing information about waste and recycling through the Officesmart program has also been really important in making progress. The new HVAC system has been complemented with more efficient lighting in the building and motion sensors to control lighting in toilets and stairwells. As a result of the combined improvements electricity consumption has been reduced by 19%, gas use has reduced by 44% and waste to landfill reduced by 33%.

At the Dame Pattie Menzies Building many small, low cost changes have been made, such as altering climate control temperatures and reprogramming lighting and hot water boilers. Other actions have included computerised timer switches for lighting and improving waste recycling. Water usage is better managed by regulating garden watering and introducing water saving shower heads. Involvement of staff, providing awareness programs and use of regular sustainability reminders, are some of the most important aspects of the program.

These small changes have led to both sustainability results and economic benefits. A 29% decrease in energy consumption and savings of \$60,730 over a five year period. The building has also had its NABERS (National Australian Built Environment Rating System) rating upgraded from its 2005 rating of 3 to 4.5.

The success of these two initiatives shows that with organisational commitment, planning, some investment of funds, as well as having staff on board to support change and take action, real progress in workplace sustainability can be achieved.

By implementing the changes above both buildings have reduced their green house gas emissions. Staff awareness of sustainability actions can also be taken to other areas of their lives such as in their homes.

For more information on improving energy efficiency in buildings and other ways to improve the sustainability of your home or workplace see the ACT Government ACTSmart website, <http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au/home>

