

Sustainability in healthcare

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Leadership in environmental sustainability in health recognised

The Department's Sustainability Unit was recognised for its leadership on environmental sustainability across the health sector, by being awarded in the Environmental Sustainability category in the Institute of Public Administration Australia (Victoria) Leadership in the Public Sector Awards 2014 on 19 February 2015.

Melbourne Health was also a finalist, and recognised for their 'Think Green' Strategy to develop a culture of caring for the environment within Parkville and the State, proven and enhanced by a program of 'Think Green' initiatives and communication and engagement with their people, suppliers and visitors.

Monash Health & Melbourne Health programs recognised

On 20 March 2015 the Minister for Health addressed the Australian Nurses and Midwifery Federation Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference at Melbourne Town Hall. The Minister recognised Monash Health's commingled and stainless steel single use instrument recycling programs and the Melbourne Health 2014 spring clean as great examples of programs led by staff to address sustainability. Further information on the programs is available from natalie.james2@monashhealth.org and monika.page@mh.org.au.

Online sustainability in healthcare forum

The online sustainability in healthcare forum is now live. Passwords and usernames have been sent to all nominated sustainability, waste, energy and water contacts, as well as other health service staff who have an interest in sustainability in healthcare.

Health services are encouraged to contribute to discussions and share information on any sustainability topic, for example: sharing health services' environmental public reports, promoting initiatives you have implemented and/or using your peers' knowledge and expertise to solve common problems.

If you are not currently registered or unable to access the forum, please email sarah.bending@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

Environmental data management system (EDMS)

In August 2014 the department initiated the implementation process for the new environmental data management system (EDMS).

Metropolitan and major regional health services have been trained in how to use the system, and four of them have now gone live (which means energy and water data is beginning to be loaded to the system directly from retailers). The other health services will go live shortly.

Data migration for Phase 2 (Gippsland) health services commenced in late March. It is expected that all Phase 2 health services will go-live by the end of June 2015. It is expected that Phase 3 (Loddon Mallee) health services will commence migration to the EDMS in July 2015.

Further information and a factsheet have been developed and are available on the department's website <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/sustainability/data-management.htm>.

Alexandra District Health longitudinal study

In June 2010 the department engaged Woods Bagot to undertake a longitudinal study of the Alexandra District Hospital. The study aims to quantify improved performance – through measuring staff productivity, patient outcomes and building efficiency – that was anticipated from building a more sustainable hospital compared to the existing hospital.

The study included an evaluation of the old Alexandra District Hospital and post-occupancy evaluations of the new hospital at 6-months, 12-months and 18-months. The evaluations involved indoor-environment quality testing, staff and patient surveys and an analysis of de-identified staff leave data and patient outcomes.

As a stand-alone study it is impossible to draw an unequivocal conclusion that a healthy building does lead to increased staff productivity and improved patient outcomes, but the evidence compellingly supports this argument. The department is in the process of preparing a summary of the study for publication on its website. Further information is available from tiernan.humphrys@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

Cogeneration

There is an Energy Services Agreement (ESA) between the State of Victoria, represented by the Minister for Health, and Momentum Energy Pty Ltd (Momentum) for the supply of cogenerated electricity, steam, gas and facility management services to five Category 1 hospitals: The Alfred, St Vincent's, Dandenong, Geelong and Royal Melbourne (which in turn supplies the Royal Women's with energy received under the arrangement). The total amount of cogeneration across the five hospitals is 36 megawatts, which exports excess electricity to the grid, as well as providing security of supply to the hospitals in the event of loss of grid power. The cogeneration plant have been operational since 1995.

The department is finalising the engagement of consultants to advise on the most appropriate solution for providing electricity, thermal energy (i.e. steam) and energy security of supply when the ESA expires on 30 June 2020. This could involve, for example, installation of similar sized or base-load cogeneration plant, or the decommissioning of the cogeneration plant and purchasing electricity from the grid with new infrastructure, such as diesel generators and additional electricity feeds, providing security of supply. The project will consider the technical, operational, environmental and commercial implications of the various options. Further information is available from tiernan.humphrys@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

Departmental e-mail addresses

On 1 January 2015, the Victorian Government established the Department of Health & Human Services, bringing together the former Department of Health, Department of Human Services and Sport and Recreation Victoria. As a result departmental email addresses have changed from firstname.surname@health.vic.gov.au to firstname.surname@dhhs.vic.gov.au. The old email addresses still work but it is recommended that you update your contacts list.

Further information

For further information on sustainability in health care please visit www.health.vic.gov.au/sustainability/. The department's Capital Projects & Service Planning website has been updated and can be found at www.capital.health.vic.gov.au. The guidelines for sustainability in health care capital works are available in the 'Asset property management and operations' section. The environmental sustainability team in the department can be contacted at:

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