BSBSUS511
Develop workplace policies and procedures for sustainability

Learner Guide

Aspire

Learning Resources

BSBSUS511

Develop workplace policies and procedures for sustainability

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1

Aspire

Learning Resources

Aspire Training & Consulting apologises for any copyright infringement that may have occurred in this Learner Guide and invites copyright owners to contact us so violations may be rectified.
Every effort has been made to ensure that information within the text is accurate. Note that the writer and publisher accept no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury arising from such information.
Except where an information source is acknowledged, the names and details of individuals and organisations in examples are fictitious and have been devised for learning purposes only. Any similarity to actual people or organisations is unintentional.
All websites within the text were accessed and deemed appropriate at time of publication.
For updates to previously published errors, refer to our website.

Aspire Learning Resources
Supporting Vocational Education and Training for 30 years
1991 to 2023

Contents

Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBSUS511 Develop workplace policies and procedures for sustainability,* Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	➤ Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	➤ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	➤ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
Summaries	➤ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	➤ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
T1–T4	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
T1–T4	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T1–T4	Partnerships
	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
T1–T4	Sustainability
	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
T1–T4	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
T1–T4	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
T1–T4	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
T1–T4	Learning environments
	Cultural responsiveness
T2	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	Learning Outcomes
	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
T1–T4	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
T1	4. Children are confident and involved learners
	5. Children are effective communicators

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

1A Establish scope and objective of sustainability policies

1B Gather and analyse information

1C Develop sustainability policies

1D Incorporate implementation and continuous improvement processes

Prepare workplace sustainability policies

Services that provide early childhood education and care must provide children with learning experiences about the environment.

They need to introduce ideas and discussion that promote the sustainable use of resources and oversee the implementation of sustainable practices in programs. The development of a sustainability policy can ensure sustainable practices are embedded into an organisation's everyday systems and routines. A sustainability policy will outline your service's plan for achieving its sustainability goals.

1A Establish scope and objective of sustainability policies

Sustainability in the children's education and care industry refers to learning about the environment and how natural systems function.

Natural systems include everything needed for survival and wellbeing in the natural environment and the community.Sustainability is important for children to understand because they live in a changing world, and they need to develop knowledge, skills and values that will help them address what the future brings. Sustainability involves considering that the choices we make today can affect how well we thrive in the future. It is about making sure that the needs of the present generation do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

If we want children to have the best possible start in life, sustainability needs to be embedded in early childhood learning programs and practices. The service must demonstrate how it cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Principles of sustainability

Service policies and procedures are based on the National Quality Framework (NQF) and Early Years Learning Framework components and include environmental sustainability policies.

Laws, regulations and standards guide services and educators to include natural environments and environmental learning in daily routines and practices is an effective way to sustainability. Principles of environmental responsibility and sustainability are built into the National Quality Framework (NQF) as shown in the following table.

Requirement	Reference	Guideline
National Quality Standard (NQS)	Element 3.2.1 – Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child Element 3.2.3 – The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible	Aims to achieve indoor and outdoor environments that are environmentally sustainable through their design and facilities. Encourages educators to model sustainable practices, show appreciation for the natural environment and promote children's understanding of their responsibility to care for the environment.

The approved learning framework in the education and care industry is *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF). Learning Outcome 2 states: 'Children are connected with and contribute to the world'. This focuses on the learning children gain from the environment and communities where they belong.

The Framework includes the Principle: Sustainability. This principle has a focus on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Components of sustainability

Sustainability is often associated with environmental issues. However, there are other aspects of sustainability that are equally important.

Actions today have ecological, economic and social consequences for the future. These are referred to as the triple bottom line. This broadens the view of a business being just for profit and considers other important aspects and how they affect the organisation.

It recognises there are different types of sustainability, as outlined here.

Ecological sustainability

Ecological sustainability is based on the planet having a limited amount of non-renewable resources and ensuring we do not use these up.

Financial (or economic) sustainability

Financial sustainability involves the fair distribution of wealth. Wealth is often needed to access essential services, such as medical care and education, to ensure a good standard of living.

Social sustainability

Social sustainability refers to the needs of people and communities. This may include access to adequate housing, sanitation, food and medical care, or just general equality principles.

Policy scope and objectives

An environmental or sustainability policy demonstrates the service's commitment to reducing its ecological footprint.

This provides the framework for sustainability strategies, programs and actions that allow staff and families to understand the philosophy of the service and the programs provided for children.

A sustainability policy may have the following sustainability objectives:

➤ minimise resource use, such as paper, electricity, gas and water
➤ increase efficiency of the resources used by the service, such as energy, water and appliances
➤ reduce the use of toxic materials in equipment, furniture and cleaning products
➤ employ lifecycle management approaches, such as examining the entire lifecycle of a product (from production and distribution to consumption and disposal)
➤ comply with national and international environmental legislation and agreements
➤ implement procedures for recycling and family donations, such as reusable boxes, paper and containers
➤ undertake a review process for continuous improvement.

For sustainability policies to be successfully implemented, they need to reflect the objectives and commitment of the service, and be converted into practical strategies and actions (or procedures). Some services might choose to begin their commitment to sustainability with a simple policy and basic procedures, such as recycling office paper in the administration area and for children's art, or practical steps for switching off lights and appliances when not in use.

Understand policy requirements

Before you can begin to write the policy, you need to understand the scope by taking a number of factors into account.

The following are some other actions managers and other staff should undertake before developing a sustainability policy.

Understand current practices	Staff need to understand current sustainability practices so they can translate these into workable policies and procedures. Current organisational policies and procedures can be helpful for providing guidelines for the development of new policies, such as health and safety policies and procedures to ensure that no work takes place that puts anyone at risk.
Reflect on all operations and job tasks	A policy needs to be tailored to fit all aspects of an organisation's activities and encompass the different operational tasks undertaken by staff. This includes: ➤ educators working with children who develop and implement programs ➤ staff who perform administration tasks ➤ staff responsible for purchasing food and supplies ➤ staff who oversee waste removal or maintenance of outdoor areas.
Refer to legislation and regulations	Staff need to be familiar with environmental and sustainability legislation, regulations, codes of practice, standards and guidelines. When designing sustainability policies and procedures, bear in mind that compliance may be necessary with federal, state/territory and local government laws, by-laws, regulations and codes of practice, as well as the National Quality Standards (NQS).
Embed into the whole culture	Sustainability needs to be embedded into the culture and operations of the whole organisation and not be viewed as an add-on. This includes securing commitment to policies and procedures from management, staff, families and the local community, as well as from children.
Look for impact	A sustainability policy should have an impact on an organisation's activities, such as allowing for more efficiency in resource use, reducing waste, demonstrating responsibility for the environment and building awareness amongst staff, children and their families.
Continuous review and improvement	Policies and procedures should be examined frequently to establish if they are working and find out how they can be improved. Families and staff can be surveyed to provide information and feedback for improvements that can be applied to a review. Managers and staff also have the opportunity to use the opinions and ideas of children in this review.

Define the scope

The first step in drafting a sustainability policy is to define its scope.

Organisations that are just beginning to develop a policy usually start with small initiatives and gradually build towards bigger and more long-term programs. You may be responsible for developing an initial policy or adjusting a policy for an organisation that wants to increase its sustainability credentials.

To do this, you could ask the following questions:

> Which part of the organisation will the policy apply to? Is it for the whole organisation, one site or work area, or one team or group?
> Will it be an integrated approach including several components of sustainability (environmental, economic and social), or just an environmental approach?
> Who needs to be consulted? For example, the director, educators, auxiliary staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs?
> Are there existing policies and procedures, legislation and regulations that need to be considered as they could influence the policy?
> What targets and objectives will be set so the success of the policy can be measured? What will the time line be for planning, research, consultation and implementation?
> What are the sustainability priority areas for the organisation? How are these identified?

A critical step in defining the scope of a sustainability policy is to audit your organisation's current operations and develop an overview of the potential needs of the organisation based on this. This might involve looking at several areas with a view to minimise waste, reduce energy and water consumption, or use fewer toxins.

Environmental audit

> Water use – examining water bills
> Energy use – examining power and gas bills
> Chemical use – switching to environmentally friendly products
> Biodiversity – attracting native birds with indigenous plants and trees
> Purchasing – considering food, program and administration supplies, art supplies, etc.
> Wastage – considering types of waste produced, options for reducing it and disposal methods that minimise environmental impact
> Recycling – examining services offered by local councils and existing procedures

Example
Areas of policy scope

Green purchasing	Green purchasing means choosing to buy products that are less damaging to the environment. Green products may offer recycled content, energy efficiency, water-saving features, low contamination or toxicity, ease of recycling, minimum waste/packaging, biodegradable materials, renewable sources and minimal habitat and land degradation.
Green workplace program	A green workplace program focuses on making the workplace environmentally friendly and efficient, and changing people's behaviour; for example, encouraging minimum use of paper; re-using paper; switching computers to stand-by when not in use; switching off lights when not in the room; reducing energy consumption by not turning the heating or air-conditioning up higher than is needed; and reducing water consumption through actions such as installing dual-flush toilets.
Supply chain	Supply-chain management is about ensuring the supply chain is efficient and to ensure that all suppliers at all stages of production from the basic raw materials to the consumable product have sustainability policies in place. You can include sustainability requirements in your supplier contracts.
Product stewardship	Product stewardship is the practice of taking steps to minimise environmental impact from the production, use and disposal of a product. You can choose to purchase from suppliers or importers who manage the 'life cycle' of their products responsibly. Your service can also become a product steward.
Ethical purchasing	Ethical purchasing includes choosing products and raw materials that are produced under fair conditions and sold at a fair price. This means that there was no child labour or forced labour involved in the production process, and that workers are paid a living wage and have safe working conditions.
Social responsibility	Social responsibility refers to the service meeting the needs of families and communities that are affected by its operations. Examples includes having fair trade agreements with local farmers and suppliers and operating in a way that maintains the way of life for surrounding communities.

Example
Policy objectives

To be positioned as a leader in sustainability:

> Avoid buying products from companies or industries that exploit workers.
> Incorporate sustainable practices and culture into all levels of the organisation, such as in programs, in the food and meals area, and in the office.
> Build capacity in staff by seeking buy-in from all levels of the organisation, such as through training and sharing of ideas.
> Embed sustainability values into job descriptions for new staff.
> Allocate sufficient resources for sustainability activities for staff and children.
> Encourage individual actions to reduce the service's overall carbon footprint.

To use sustainability initiatives as business opportunities:

> Align the service with an organisation that has already established sustainability credentials.
> Promote the use of sustainable practices and the benefits to children and families.
> Sell excess fruit and vegetables grown by the children to parents for a nominal amount.

To ensure sustainability is part of the local community:

> Support and get involved in local community activities for sustainability.
> Educate others on sustainability.

To reduce operating costs and ensure growth and profitability:

> Reduce, re-use and recycle materials.
> Incorporate lifecycle analysis into decision-making processes.

To comply with relevant legislation:

> Comply with environmental legislation, agreements and standards at local and national levels.
> Incorporate legal compliance in organisational policies.

Legislation, regulations and codes of practice

Children's education and care services are governed by laws, regulations, standards and guidelines for best practice.

Sustainability policies must reflect each of these areas and not make recommendations that breach sustainability or environmental protections for any of these compliance requirements.

Commonwealth Legislation	The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) is the Australian Government's major environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places – defined in the Act as matters of national environmental significance.
	The Department of the Environment is the federal body that develops and implements national policy, programs and legislation to protect and conserve Australia's environment and heritage, and to promote Australian arts and culture.
State Territory Legislation	Each state and territory have departments that deal with environmental legislation and administer environment protection policies. Examples include:
	➤ Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection: aspirelr.link/environment-protection-qld
	➤ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage aspirelr.link/nsw-environment-and-heritage
	➤ Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment aspirelr.link/tas-dpipwe
Australian and International Standards	Australian Standards are regarded as 'living' documents which reflect progress and best practice in industry.
	They reflect international standards and are considered the highest level of performance that an organisation can strive for in a particular field or topic.
	AS/NZS ISO 14001:2016 Environmental Management Systems is a key international standard. It is designed to enable organisations to develop policies and systems that take into account legislative requirements and information about significant environmental impacts. It helps organisations achieve the intended outcomes of their environmental management system, in areas including environmental performance, compliance obligations and achievement of environmental objectives.
	The Environmental Management Systems standard provides best-practice benchmarks to help organisations identify, meet and maintain their legal and moral responsibilities to the environment.
	Other key standards that relate to sustainability include:
	➤ AS ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management – Guidelines
	➤ ISO 26000 – Social Responsibility
	➤ ISO 50001 – Energy Management Systems.
	You can find more information about these standards on the International Organization for Standardization website: aspirelr.link/iso
Voluntary commitments	Organisations may opt to sign up to an existing scheme or framework that matches their objectives, such as Clean up Australia Day, Ride2Work Day, National Tree Day, Earth Hour or other initiatives.

Statutory authorities	Statutory authorities have been set up in each state and territory to manage environmental issues. For example, in Victoria the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), is an independent statutory authority that works with the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Sustainability Victoria (SV) to develop environment protection policy and legislation and to deliver programs that support the environment under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (Vic.). You can access the EPA website here: aspirelr.link/environment-protection-vic
Industry regulations and standards	Important regulations are included in the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (Vic.) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018. The NQS outlines the national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and outside school hours care services in Australia. Relevant standards are Quality area 3: Physical environment, which specifies outcomes for children; and Standard 3.2.3 – Environmentally responsible: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible. *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) is part of the NQF for early childhood education and care. Learning Outcome 2 states: 'Children are connected with and contribute to their world'.
Codes of Practice	Codes of practice are requirements that meet legislation, regulations and other government and industry policies. They address specific issues related to environmental and human health and safety risks in the workplace. They give detailed practical guidance on how to comply with requirements and obligations under Acts and regulations as well as ethical requirements. Codes are not regarded as mandatory; however, they are the minimum standards that should be followed by employers and managers. The following are examples of model codes of practice developed by Safe Work Australia: ➤ Model Code of Practice: Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination ➤ Model Code of Practice: First aid in the workplace ➤ Model Code of Practice: Hazardous manual tasks ➤ Model Code of Practice: How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace ➤ Model Code of Practice: How to safely remove asbestos ➤ Model Code of Practice: Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace ➤ Model Code of Practice: Managing the work environment and facilities ➤ Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management (Vic). You can source online information about codes of practice from the following web page: aspirelr.link/model-codes-of-practice

Local government	Local government is required to comply with federal, state and territory government laws and regulations. Councils and shires also administer their own laws and regulations relating to organisations and individuals. Organisations usually need to comply with local government requirements relating to building and planning permits, greywater and rainwater use, zoning, noise and waste disposal.

Example
Scoping a sustainability policy

Prestige Early Learning Centre is located in a regional town. It is owned by the local university and operated by a management team and staff employed by the university. The service must reflect the values and mission of the university. The university has decided to be more proactive and respond to the increasing awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. There are a number of sustainability messages and projects on sustainable practices being rolled out that demonstrate the university's commitment to improving the environment.

Management has agreed that the service should have a well-defined stance on sustainability with appropriate policies and procedures. The team decides that they need to reduce its ecological footprint and demonstrate compliance with sustainable practices. The director has heard about a program of sustainability at a recent conference that reduces the size of the organisation's environmental footprint and minimises environmental impact. Referred to as a green workplace program, it may suit the service and the work practices it undertakes. The program has the following outline.

Green purchasing	Purchasing products that are less damaging to the environment. Green products offer recycled content, energy efficiency, water-saving features, low contamination or toxicity, ease of recycling, minimum waste/packaging, biodegradable materials, renewable sources and minimal habitat and land degradation. For example, sourcing organic food from a farmers' market, recycling paper products, refusing excess packaging, and purchasing equipment with a high energy star rating.
Ethical purchasing	Choosing products and raw materials that are produced under fair conditions and sold at a fair price. This means that there was no child labour or forced labour involved in the production process, and that workers are paid a living wage and have safe working conditions.
Green workplace	Focusing on making the workplace environmentally friendly and efficient, and changing people's behaviour; for example, encouraging minimum use of paper; switching off lights when not in the room; reducing water consumption by installing dual-flush toilets, modelling energy-efficient practices to children; and implementing new practices into the program for children.

Supply chain	Ensuring the supply chain is efficient and economical, such as buying in bulk to save on transportation and packaging. Supply chain management checks that suppliers at all stages of production, from basic raw materials to consumable products, have sustainability policies in place. Sustainability requirements can be added to supplier contracts.
A lifecycle approach	Identifying and measuring the environmental impact of resources and energy used in the entire lifecycle of a product, including production, distribution, consumption and disposal. This allows a company to examine the full range of environmental and social impacts resulting from its purchase of products, and assists in choosing the least damaging route.

✎ Practice Task 1

Read the case study and answer the following questions.

Case study

You work for Kare 4 Kidz, a preschool. Your centre is part of a larger network of centres working with children from age three until they go to school. The staff consists of two educators, two assistants, the centre director and an administrative support person (which is your role).

The centre director has decided to develop a range of sustainability initiatives for the centre to manage its environmental, economic and social impact.

1. Write a brief scope statement for the proposed sustainability policy.

2. List four objectives and specific practices that would support the activities listed in question 1.

3. Draw a line to match each of the following requirements to their correct description.

   * AS/NZS ISO 14001 outlines the requirements for an effective environmental management system

                             * Commonwealth legislation

   * Detailed practical guidance on how to comply with requirements and obligations under Act and regulations

                             * Australian and international standards

   * Provides a legal framework to protect and manage internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places

                             * Codes of practice

1B Gather and analyse information

Research and gathering information is an important stage in developing a sustainability policy.

Obtaining current information about sustainability requirements is crucial if the policy is going to accurately represent the needs and goals of the service. The development of a sustainability policy will require significant research, consultation and analysis to gather the information needed to prepare the policy.

As a manager, you should source a range of internal and external information regarding current practices and organisational needs, and consult with and obtain ideas from others.

You can access internal sources of information using the staff portal/intranet, network files and policy manuals. Access external information from reliable websites such as government department and university websites or library services.

Access documentation relating to:

> relevant compliance requirements such as the National Quality Standards (NQS)
> current policies and procedures for purchasing, suppliers, recycling and energy use/reduction
> work health and safety (WHS) policies for the use, storage and disposal of toxic materials
> resource use; for example, monthly electricity or water bills
> supplies such as purchases for example, supplier invoices from play equipment, cleaning products, art supplies, paper supplies, etc.
> catalogues used for purchasing program supplies, such as art and play resources
> information from:
> Peak bodies representing early childhood such as
> Other sources of information such as:
> – non-profit and community groups, such as Clean Up Australia
> – local government websites
> – State/territory regulator websites
> – Environmental Protection Authority
> – National regulator websites, such as Safe Work Australia

Consultation process

You should consult with a range of people to obtain relevant and current information that can guide you in developing the sustainability policy.

Before beginning the consultation process, determine what information is being sought and how it will be used to develop your policy and procedures.

Questions to consider prior to consultation
➤ What is the organisation attempting to gain from consulting with stakeholders?
➤ What measures can be applied to determine whether consultation is effective?
➤ What information is best gathered from which stakeholder?
➤ How will the information from stakeholders be gathered, stored and used?
➤ Who should have access to the responses from the consultation?
➤ What feedback will be provided to the stakeholders following consultation?

After the consultation has taken place, some stakeholders will be interested in receiving a report on the outcome of the consultation process and reviewing the final policies and procedures that are to be implemented. Some stakeholders may nominate themselves or can be asked to take on certain responsibilities in terms of continuous improvements or a compliance role to ensure the policy and procedures are being followed and the targets achieved.

Identify and consult with stakeholders

A stakeholder is any individual or group with an interest or concern in the organisation.

Stakeholders can be internal (such as staff and management) or external (such as local community, families, children and consultants).

The development and implementation of a sustainability policy will affect everyone involved in the organisation (either directly or indirectly), so each group should be consulted when developing the policy or making changes to an existing one.

Each stakeholder is likely to have a different view on the implementation and continued development of sustainability policies and procedures. All views should be considered.

For example:

➤ A consultant will have knowledge about other childcare centres and their sustainability practices.
➤ Families will have an interest from the point of view of the health and education of their children.
➤ A director or manager of a service may consider the cost savings that could result from sustainable practices.

The following table outlines some of the stakeholders you could consult with for more information.

Stakeholder	Reason for consultation	Consultation options
Staff	Any new policy or a change in policy and procedures will affect staff, usually by changing or adding to their duties. It is vital that input from staff is encouraged, acknowledged and combined with input from other sources. Staff can comment on the efficiency and effectiveness of current practices. Staff may have attended conferences or be a member of a network where sustainable practices have been discussed. Some staff may have had experience in services where sustainability practices were employed. Sustainability will require changes in procedures, practices and routines; for example, an educator may have to change the delivery of programs to children.	➤ Staff meetings ➤ Intranet ➤ Surveys ➤ Emails ➤ Informal discussions ➤ Formal meetings ➤ Suggestion boxes
Families	Families use the service and are likely to be interested in how the policy will influence the care and education of their children. Some may also have an interest in the environment and sustainability, and may have a good background knowledge of practices and children's products with solid environmental credentials. You can consult with them and ask a group to contribute ideas when developing the policy.	➤ Surveys ➤ Requests for feedback and input ➤ Public presentations ➤ Newsletters ➤ Social media ➤ Online feedback and comments
Industry associations	There is a range of organisations that can provide advice and examples of what others in the industry are doing to promote sustainability in their services and programs. For example, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is an independent national authority that assists governments in implementing the National Quality Framework (NQF) for children's education and care. Its website provides links to resources and sample policies for the childhood education and care industry: aspirelr.link/acecqa	➤ Emails ➤ Phone calls ➤ Online feedback and forums

Government and environmental regulators	Government regulators provide permits and licences to operate, and regulate compliance with legislation. These entities can provide substantial information and support for improved practices and reduced environmental impact. Local government has an interest in sustainable practices and may be able to provide advice and support. Local, national and international environmental regulators provide advice on policy development and procedures; for example, EPA Victoria provides advice and conducts environmental audits.	➤ Attend government-sponsored information events ➤ Invite representatives to attend meetings ➤ Contribute ideas and discuss sustainability options
Suppliers and contractors	Suppliers can provide information on the materials, equipment and general resources used in your service so you can see how energy-efficient, environmentally compliant and sustainable they are. Many organisations in the energy sector are keen to provide options for energy-efficient solutions; for example, quality recycled toys or play equipment manufactured using eco-sensitive timber and other products.	➤ Exhibitions ➤ Seminars ➤ Industry events ➤ Questionnaires and surveys ➤ Formal meetings
Local community	Production has an impact on the immediate environment. The local community will be keen to see a reduced impact on the environment and the possible benefits to the environment as a result of improved environmental practices.	➤ Community forums ➤ Focus groups ➤ Online feedback ➤ Social media ➤ Surveys

Example

Planning to consult with stakeholders

The team working on a draft of the service's sustainability policy realises they need some help. The team brainstorms, does some research and identifies several places and people from which they can obtain information to help them finalise the policy. This is the strategy the team designs for its consultation with various stakeholders:

➤ Staff – a general staff meeting and focus groups, and an intranet survey
➤ Families – a series of meetings and discussions held in the evenings
➤ Community – informal discussions, an advertisement in the local press and a request for feedback via the service's social media network
➤ Suppliers – a short survey and discussions on the phone and face to face
➤ Local council – meeting with the environmental unit and waste management specialist

Analyse sustainability requirements

A sustainability policy is the proof that the service has made a commitment to managing its economic, environmental and social impact and that it is serious about compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Analysing the outcomes from research and consultation processes enables you to identify current and relevant information that is used for decision-making. This forms the foundation of an effective sustainability policy.

Analysing requires that you critically examine the data and information gathered to understand what it all means and how it can be applied to the task at hand. From this step, you will be able to identify the organisation's requirements and determine exactly what content needs to be documented in the sustainability policy.

Analyse sustainability requirements	➤ Read, review and interpret existing policies, and documents to determine the potential sustainability requirements for the organisation.
	➤ Identify the needs and interests of stakeholders and how their needs can be accommodated.
	➤ Look for trends and issues for the organisation in the areas of financial, social and environmental performance, compliance and non-compliance.
	➤ Consider legislative and regulatory requirements, standards and codes of practice that affect sustainable practices.
	➤ Seek feedback and further advice from stakeholders about the requirements to be included in the policy.

✎ Practice Task 2

1. Make a list of the internal and external sources you will research and analyse when developing the sustainability policy for Kare 4 Kidz from Practice Task 1.

2. Identify three possible stakeholders that should be consulted in the Kare 4 Kidz sustainability policy and explain why they should be included.

1C Develop sustainability policies

A policy is a statement of intent. The scope, structure and inclusions of the policy must be relevant to the current needs in relation to its internal and external sustainability requirements.

A sustainability policy is a formal document that reflects the organisation's commitment to sustainability. Like all policies, it does not need to be complicated. A simple one-page document is generally sufficient.

You can find many samples of sustainability policy documents online and from other services. You will always need to contextualise any sample or template.

The following questions can help you to develop an effective policy and procedure. The questions are divided into five areas of consideration.

Commitment, integration and relevance	➤ Is the policy aligned to the services philosophy, values and beliefs and activities? ➤ Is the policy appropriate to the size of the operation and to the current or future issues, needs and risks in the workplace?
Compliance	➤ Does the policy express a commitment to legislative/regulatory compliance? ➤ Are the relevant legislation and regulations referenced in the policy? ➤ Does the policy express a commitment to other non–legally binding criteria such as Australian Standards, approved codes of practice, guidance material as well as other industry or internal standards and government requirements?
Accountability	➤ Does the policy address accountability in: ➤ Capacity to assign, delegate, deliver and review the required commitments? ➤ Assigning accountability, including roles and responsibilities to relevant people? ➤ Is the policy reviewed periodically so it remains relevant if standards, regulations change?
Consultation and communication	➤ Does the policy and procedure promote the principles of consultation with all relevant stakeholders? ➤ Is the policy communicated and made available to all relevant stakeholders?
Prevention	➤ Does the policy and procedure adopt a preventative approach such as to avoid pollution to waterways or adding to landfill?

Example
Components of a sustainability policy

Components of the sustainability policy
Scope statement outlining the key personnel, issues and context
Purpose statement explaining the over-arching intent
Compliance with specific legal requirements such as Acts and regulations
Voluntary or industry-required compliance with codes of practice and performance indicators
Objectives that establish the agreed outcomes the organisation hopes to achieve as a result of implementation
Performance indicators that explain the metrics that will be used to measure and review the sustainability performance, including the basis for how the objectives will be evaluated
Activities and strategies that will be implemented to achieve the objectives and the time frames and associated costs for implementing these activities
Key roles and responsibilities required to carry out key tasks and duties associated with the policy
Common sustainability issues that the organisation is managing such as finding new suppliers
Recordkeeping processes that explain how the policy will be stored and where it can be found
Review and improvement processes that explain how the policy will be reviewed and improved over time and who is responsible for carrying out these tasks

Consider the costs

A cost–benefit analysis can be conducted to assess whether the sustainability strategies outlined in the policy are economically worthwhile.

By translating the costs and benefits into a monetary value, a more informed judgment can be made.

For example, estimating the cost of installing a water tank and plumbing to capture water from the roof should consider the cost of current water bills. Some of the practices and infrastructure required to set up and enable sustainable practices could be 'cost neutral' (i.e. expenditure is balanced by the money saved, or no expenditure is required, such as in relation to staff skills and knowledge).

Time lines must be realistic and not so long term that they are ineffective. Some initiatives can be implemented quickly, such as sourcing environmentally friendly

cleaning products. Investigating the lifecycle of toys or furniture will take longer to gather the required information to be able to fully identify the benefits of new products.

A CBA requires you to complete three key steps.

1 Workplace issue is raised with team leader.

2 Quantify all of the positive factors that are considered benefits, including the revenue and savings that can be generated by the resource acquisition.

3 Calculate and compare the difference between the two sums.
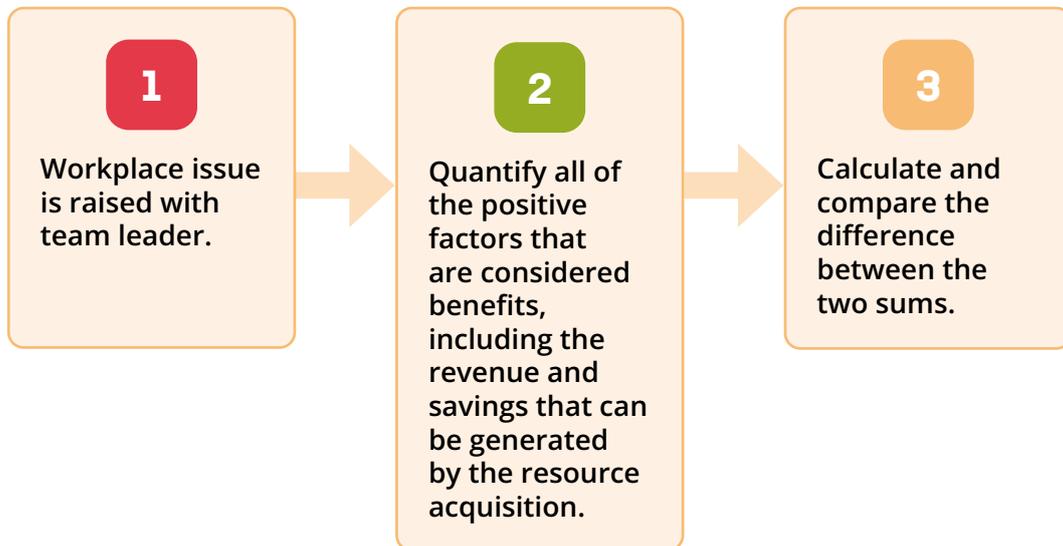
The difference between the two will show whether the strategies are financially beneficial. If the value of the benefits outweighs the value of the costs, the strategies and resource purchases will most likely be of value to the organisation.

There are essentially three types of savings that can be made from a sustainability strategy.

Direct savings	Quantitative savings directly attributed to the strategy. For example, reduced administration or purchasing costs or supplies.
Costing avoidance	Spending that is no longer needed as a result of implementing the strategy. For example, the service no longer has to pay fees for an existing resource such as removal of food waste bins.
Intangible benefits	Qualitative benefits as a result of implementing the strategy. For example, staff can spend more time on planning and preparing programs rather than maintaining the play area.

Consider the time lines

There may be a number of ideas put forward, and not all can be included in the policy.

When preparing the policy, you need to consider:

> what options will bring the most benefits for minimising resource and energy use

> the likely impact on the environment, the organisation and stakeholders such as the children

- the time frame needed to put them into practice; for example, some strategies may need to be implemented over a longer period due to the cost and infrastructure required for them to work, such as solar power or the lifecycle of furniture
- the cost of implementation.

Initiating a large number of objectives at once can be overwhelming and confusing to staff, families and other stakeholders. For example, parents may expect a detailed outline of the benefits to their children. Conversely, implementing a small number of objectives – especially if they are minor ones – may cause people to question the organisation's commitment to sustainability.

Gain agreement

You need to follow on from the range of consultation and communication previously undertaken to gain agreement from each of the parties concerned.

The aim is to create a sense of ownership among stakeholders by getting them to recognise the value of the sustainability policy to the future of the service and benefit of the children. There may be resistance from some families or staff who may see the policy in terms of additional workload. You will need to reinforce the message and benefits and rely on the research and information you gathered to support your arguments.

Possible issues that may arise	Addressing the issues
- Unexpected results occurring due to unforeseen circumstances - Insufficient information and communication to stakeholders - Insufficient data to conclude whether the policy or procedure has been successful as a result of poor or non-existent performance indicators - Lack of commitment or enthusiasm from staff - Current performance not coping with external changes - Change in legislation or regulations - Unable to obtain agreement	- Scoping new policy options and obtaining relevant information - Consulting with stakeholders and considering new options - Analysing and evaluating options for the new policy and determining targets - Making recommendations on the new policy - Planning the implementation - Developing new procedures - Communicating the policy to relevant entities - Implementing the policy - Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the performance of the organisation based on the new policy

Agreements should be tabled at a management meeting or full staff meeting, and agreement documented in the minutes as proof of acceptance and support of the policy and commitment to its implementation. Once all key stakeholders have agreed to the method of implementation, and their roles, responsibilities and goals, the implementation process can begin.

It is a good idea to set key performance indicators while negotiating agreement on implementation.

Document the policy

All content of a policy must be documented in a clear and professional format so that all readers can access, read and understand the requirements.

Another common mistake made when writing a policy is using legal jargon and copying legislative provisions from the Act and regulations, word for word. Policies should be contextualised to represent the unique conditions and needs of the workplace and give enough information to workers and managers about the internal rules and standards that must be adhered to.

Key tips for documenting an effective policy:

➤ Write the policy in plain English and consider the language and literacy levels of your audience.

➤ Ensure objectives are clear so any reader can understand the intended outcomes that need to be achieved.

➤ Be straight to the point and use clear and concise language.

➤ Avoid legal jargon, complex language and long paragraphs.

➤ Aim to communicate as simply and effectively as possible, as appropriate for the intended audience.

➤ Do not try to cover every possible interpretation and issue, nor should you try to accommodate all exceptions, which can complicate its understanding.

➤ If an action is mandatory, use the word 'must'. If the action is recommended, use 'recommended'.

➤ Use the present tense and active voice where possible.

➤ Avoid gender-specific pronouns: for example, use 'they' instead of 'he or she'.

➤ Where acronyms are considered helpful, give the full term/title before using the acronym: for example, use environmental management system (EMS).

Example
Draft sustainability policy statement

An organisation's workplace sustainability policy statement may look similar to the following.

Kare 4 Kidz Sustainability Policy

Our aim is to be an environmentally aware centre that is committed to reducing its ecological footprint and is respected in the community for its efforts in sustainability. We highly value the natural environment and are committed to sound environmental practices in our daily operations.

We will do this by:

➤ ensuring sustainability is an integral part of our business plans

➤ complying with all relevant legislation and regulations

➤ applying sustainable solutions to all work practices in order to minimise waste, energy and water use, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions

➤ improving our purchase of products by investigating their sustainability

➤ purchasing recycled and environmentally friendly products where it is safe and hygienic to do so

➤ enacting the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' to minimise waste generation

➤ entering strategic partnerships with sustainable organisations

➤ ensuring all staff are aware of and trained in sustainability practices

➤ continually reviewing and improving sustainability initiatives

➤ encouraging an environmentally responsible culture.

Every staff member, contractor, supplier and visitor must comply with this policy.

✎ Practice Task 3

1. Draw a line to match each term about sustainability policy inclusions to its definition.

* Activities, time frames and costs

* The agreed outcomes that the organisation hopes to achieve as a result of implementing the policy

* Record keeping, review and improvement processes

* The metrics used to measure and review the sustainability performance of the organisation, including the basis for how the objectives will be evaluated

* Objectives

* The strategies that will be implemented to achieve the objectives and the time frames and associated costs for implementing these activities

* Performance indicators

* Key personnel who are required to carry out tasks and take ownership of specific requirements of the policy

* Roles and responsibilities

* How the policy will be stored, reviewed and improved over time to ensure it remains current with the needs and environment of the organisation

2. Explain five principles you need to follow when writing a policy.

1D Incorporate implementation and continuous improvement processes

A sustainability policy needs to be supported by clear plans for implementation.

A key step in the successful integration and performance of the policy is to document the details of the implementation process. An advantage of doing this is that each activity can be evaluated and, more importantly, compared with each other in their demands and expectations. There may well be areas of synergy that will allow you to save time, money or human resources. Areas of conflict could include time lines, or demands on staff.

The information below outlines the key activities that form part of the implementation process.

Description of initiative	Give a clear description, including what the initiative should accomplish and how it integrates with the organisation's strategic planning.
Targets and time lines	Set clear, understandable goals that are measurable and realistic so everyone is able to be committed and achieve the targets. Detail how these will be set and measured, including review time lines. Targets may include: ➤ dates for implementation and milestones ➤ deliverables, including progress reports ➤ standards and performance, including KPIs ➤ review dates. Time lines include dates for: ➤ project start ➤ implementation of communication strategy ➤ target dates for achievements ➤ training schedules.
Resources	Determine resource requirements (physical, human and financial) and the type, style, quantity and time required. Securing agreement on resource requirements will lead to ownership and commitment for acquisition of the necessary resources. Document the: ➤ quantity and specification of resources required ➤ staff/contractors needed: where and when ➤ funding options ➤ date resources are needed ➤ potential suppliers.

Implementation approach and impact	Identify which areas will be affected and how this will be addressed. For example, downtime for equipment changeover could offer an opportunity for staff training.
	Give details on training that will be needed and which staff will need to attend.
	Identify the resource requirements for implementation.
Promotion and communication	Give an overview of how the initiative will be presented and promoted to stakeholder groups, including the workforce. You will need to get agreement early to allow planning and lead time to produce the required communications, follow up arrangements and secure commitment from departments; for example, human resources.
	Determine the options for communicating with external stakeholders and promoting the organisation. Agreement will enable public relations staff to plan communications, capitalise on opportunities and secure commitment to the policies.
	Here are the communication options that need to be determined:
	> What needs to be communicated when and to whom
	> Methods of communication
	> Timetable for communications and follow-up
	> Procedure for handling inquiries
	> How the organisation will measure effectiveness of communication, awareness and targets achieved.
Staff training	Determine the knowledge and skills shortfalls and plan a training program to remedy these gaps. Agreeing on the training needs with an internal training specialist or external provider enables the commitment and lead time to develop materials and training schedules.
	You will need to determine:
	> the number of people to be trained, on what tasks, and by when
	> the method for delivering training
	> who will carry out the training
	> the materials/resources required
	> a schedule of training dates.
Responsibility, monitoring and reporting	Detail who will be responsible for reporting on the implementation of the different aspects of the initiative. Outline the monitoring process and the reports that will be generated.
	Secure written agreement on:
	> who is responsible for what task over what time frame
	> methods of reporting and time lines for reporting
	> processes for dealing with issues.
Review and improvement	Give a review time line and process for reviewing and making improvements to the policy. A general review period would range from two to five years. The managers of the service should be involved in all policy review processes.

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement (CI) literally means 'change for the better'. CI should be included as part of the planning and development stage of the sustainability policy. A policy that is current today may be redundant in two years' time due to changes in the regulatory environment and the internal context.

One of the most commonly used CI theories is Deming's cycle, more commonly known as the 'plan, do, check, act' (PDCA) cycle. Deming created the cycle in the 1950s.

The cycle involves the following:

> Plan – Determine the organisation's operating environment, needs and sustainability issues. Develop an effective policy that explains the scope, objectives and actions to improve and maintain sustainability performance.
> Do – Implement the policy, with the knowledge that you will not achieve 100-per-cent success and certain areas will need to be improved.
> Check – Collect verifiable data and assess the organisation's sustainability performance. Compare what should be happening with what is happening.
> Act – Identify the key learnings from the evaluation process and decide how sustainability can be improved. Update the policy accordingly. Implement corrective actions to reverse a negative trend or remove a root cause that is stifling performance. Communicate the changes to stakeholders.

Begin the cycle again if the change did not work or there are factors in the organisation's external or internal environments that affect the policy.
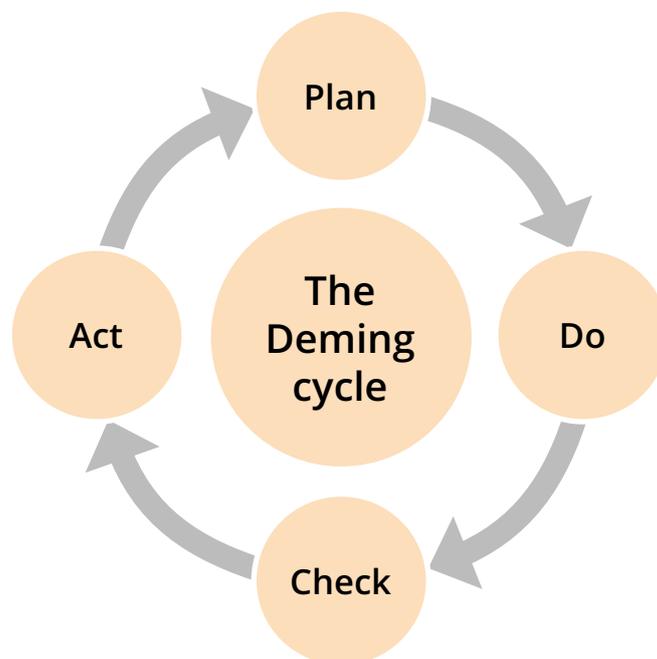
When the management team of Kare 4 Kidz agreed to develop a workplace sustainability policy, they also agreed to develop a statement outlining their commitment to sustainability and supporting the environment.

Frank and Steph draft a sustainability practice statement that encourages the following activities to ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into daily routines.

Sustainable practice	Ideas for incorporating into daily routines
Recycling	‣ Recycling paper and rubbish ‣ Using recycled water
Gardening	‣ Planting vegetables, herbs and fruits ‣ Establishing a worm farm ‣ Giving food scraps to worms or the service's animals ‣ Educating children and getting them to participate in 'garden to plate' activities ‣ Educating children about seed sprouting, weeding, vegetable gardens, cooking, etc.
Energy conservation	‣ Turning off lights and switches when not in use
Water conservation	‣ Using half flush on the toilet ‣ Turning off the water when not in use ‣ Encouraging shorter showers ‣ Turning off the tap when brushing teeth
Natural resources and equipment	‣ Caring for pets ‣ Reusing natural materials – trees, blocks, boxes, etc. ‣ Educating children in the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps ‣ Educating children in how to care for pets, and letting them actively participate in caring for the service's pets

✎ Practice Task 4

1. Which of the following elements need to be part of the implementation plan? Select all that apply.

☐ Costs and benefits

☐ Consulting with stakeholders

☐ Implementation approach and impact

☐ Promotion, communication and staff training

☐ Responsibility, monitoring and reporting

2. Draw a line to match each term about the PDCA CI cycle to its definition.

* Act

* Check

* Plan

* Do

* Develop an effective policy that explains the scope, objectives and actions to improve and maintain sustainability performance.

* Implement the policy, with the knowledge that you will not achieve 100-per-cent success and certain areas will need to be improved.

* Collect verifiable data and assess the organisation's sustainability performance. Compare what should be happening with what is happening.

* Identify the key learnings from the evaluation process and decide how sustainability can be improved. Update the policy accordingly.

Summary

> Sustainability is important for children to understand because they live in a changing world, and they need to develop knowledge, skills and values that will help them address what the future brings.
> Sustainability involves considering that the choices we make today can affect how well we thrive in the future.
> Organisational policies provide the framework for developing strategies, programs and actions for sustainability.
> For policies to be successful, the broad scope and objectives must be clearly defined at the start of the development process.
> Obtaining current information about organisational sustainability requirements is crucial for the policy to accurately represent the organisation's needs and goals.
> Gathering information involves research and analysis.
> You must also consult with relevant personnel who are involved in the day-to-day operations and planning aspects of the organisation.
> There is no single structure or format for a sustainability policy. The document must accurately reflect the unique needs of the organisation.
> A sustainability policy needs to be supported by clear plans for implementing options that help the organisation achieve the overall goals in the policy statement.
> A policy that is current today may be redundant in two years' time due to changes in the regulatory environment and the internal context.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Prepare workplace sustainability policies

Part A

1. Identify each of the following pieces of information for the development of a policy as either an internal or external source.

* Guidance materials published by the Environment Protection Authority

* Internal source of information

* National Quality Standards (NQS), Standard 3.2.3 – Environmentally responsible: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible

* Internal source of information

* Existing organisational strategies, policies and procedures

* Internal source of information

* Outcomes of a consultation process with the management team

* External source of information

* Research conducted by a peak industry body

* External source of information

* Australian Standards and codes of practice

* External source of information

* Invoices and utility bills showing resource usage

* External source of information

2. Describe an appropriate consultation method and process that can be used to gather information about policy inclusions.

3. Give three examples of analysing insights from research and consultation for a sustainability policy.

4. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

    a. Record keeping processes are an essential element of an effective sustainability policy.   * Yes   * No

    b. Time frames and costs of strategies should be considered when planning and developing a sustainability policy.   * Yes   * No

    c. CI and review processes must be included as part of writing and implementing a sustainability policy.   * Yes   * No

    d. A successful implementation process must include modifications to ensure the policy is current.   * Yes   * No

5. Describe at least two pieces of legislation, codes of practice and Australian or international standards that affect your current or chosen industry in relation to sustainability.

6. Briefly describe the main features of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth).

7. Explain the information you need and the benefit of a CBA when planning to implement a sustainability strategy.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> ### Case study
>
> Just Starting Out Childcare, with its head office in Perth, begins the implementation of its sustainability policy for environmental practices. The aim is to reduce energy use and minimise waste at the head office and in their 12 centres across Australia. The policy stipulates that wherever possible, recyclable or renewable materials are to be used and that purchasing is to use only environmentally friendly suppliers. A waste reduction program aims to increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.
>
> The first stage of policy implementation includes the following environmental initiatives at each of the childcare centres:
>
> > a 150 kilolitre water tank that captures rainwater, which is then used to flush toilets
> >
> > recycling of printer ink cartridges, use of keep cups, and collection points for paints and other art materials
> >
> > low-power LCD and LED monitor systems and wired keyboards/mouses to reduce battery waste
> >
> > purchase and supply of environmentally friendly products for cleaning
> >
> > sourcing products from suppliers who can guarantee minimal environmental impact of producing their products.
>
> It is noted that the policy has a beneficial side effect: anecdotal reports suggest that people are also aiming to reduce their energy use and carbon footprint at home.

1. What issues are likely to have been considered in defining the scope of the policy?

2. Draw a line to match each aspect of sustainability to the environmental activities that Just Starting Out Childcare will employ in its policy KE10.

* Minimising energy resource use

* A 150 kilolitre water tank that captures rainwater, which is then used to flush toilets

* Employing lifecycle management approaches

* Recycling of printer ink cartridges, use of keep cups, and collection points for paints and other art materials

* Minimising water resource use

* Low-power LCD and LED monitor systems and wired keyboards/mouses to reduce battery waste

* Toxic chemical use

* Purchase and supply of environmentally friendly products for cleaning

* Reducing toxic material from entering the waterways and landfill

* Sourcing products from suppliers that can guarantee minimal environmental impact of producing their products

3. Identify at least two performance indicators for their sustainability policy.

4. Draw a line to match each step of a policy implementation process with its example.

*   Time lines

*   Securing agreement with the designated persons or areas on who is responsible and what is required to be done

*   Resources

*   Measures to gauge the progress and improvement of the implementation process

*   Responsibilities and tasks

*   Determining resource requirements (physical, human and financial) and the type, style, quantity and time required

*   Continuous improvement

*   Determining dates with realistic time lines

*   Performance indicators

*   Change for the better

5. List three responsibilities of staff as part of the policy.

Implement sustainability policies

When implementing a policy, stakeholders must understand their requirements. Some people will be useful for the development of procedures because they have intimate knowledge and skills they can apply to practices in an early childhood setting.

Tracking continuous improvement initiatives requires that on-going records are kept that show how improvements in processes and developments have contributed to new and improved practices.

2A Present policies and implementation processes to stakeholders

Communicating and promoting the workplace sustainability policy to all stakeholders, as well as to the general community, means that everyone becomes aware of the implementation process and expected outcomes of the policy.

Although key stakeholders will have been involved at the draft stage, a prepared and considered communication approach will ensure that all those involved understand what the sustainability policy is trying to achieve and the specific actions the organisation is going to take.

Communication approaches

The sustainability policy must include how the service is going to raise awareness of its sustainability aims.

There must be a communication strategy that provides for information sessions to ensure that all staff and relevant parties, such as contractors and suppliers, are aware of the policy and the commitment of the organisation to achieving the targets it has set.

Consider the following options:

> Publish an environmental policy statement on the intranet or service website.
> Develop and publish an environmental improvement plan.
> Ensure objectives and targets are widely communicated and included in performance management processes where appropriate.
> Provide regular feedback on environmental targets and objectives.
> Document sustainability procedures so they are part of the formal workplace policy and procedures manual.
> Include sustainability policies and procedures in the induction program.
> Formally document reporting requirements for compliance with legislation, regulations or accreditation programs.
> Ensure external reporting requirements are assigned to appropriate staff and followed up.
> Regularly communicate at all levels to maintain awareness of the policy.

Ways to present information

The first rule of communicating is to identify the audience and its needs.

Your audience could be your educators, team leaders and supervisors. The most appropriate communication method and content can vary significantly between these groups.

The following information provides an outline of some of the different strategies that can be used to communicate with stakeholders.

Induction sessions

Ensure that information about the policy is included in induction sessions for new staff.

Information sessions and presentations

Arrange staff information sessions and presentations to discuss the benefits to the service and different people's responsibilities. Provide the opportunity for feedback, making sure part-time and casual employees are included.

Explanatory steps

Explain the steps to be taken to minimise resource use, reduce the use of toxic materials and employ lifecycle management. Present these steps using notices, posters and flyers. Use pictures, photographs and graphics to ensure everyone understands the procedures.

Intranet

Place articles and alerts or news on the intranet.

Newsletters

Place articles in the service newsletter and distribute it to full-time and casual staff, families, contractors and suppliers, and other people who support the service.

videos

Make a short video explaining the purpose of the policy and provide some examples. This can include filming areas of the service that will change.

Team meetings

Run team meetings at which managers provide the opportunity for team members to raise issues and concerns.

Experts

Arrange for an environmental expert to talk to staff and families about the areas the policy will cover.

Communicating information

The first rule of communicating is to identify the audience and its needs.

Your role is to clearly explain the policies and implementation processes that will be used.

Required information may include:

➤ the specific outcomes expected in the policy, such as the goals and measures that will be used to check if the outcomes have been met
➤ the range of activities to be undertaken to achieve the goals
➤ the responsibilities and who is assigned to each task
➤ any interrelationships or communications required with external stakeholders to inform and update them with information.

A helpful strategy is to prepare some key points beforehand – particularly when addressing more than one person. Sort the information you want to present, divide it into logical sections and make it as clear and specific as you can. Be sure of your material and give examples where appropriate. Strive for confidence in your delivery. Here are some strategies to help you adapt your communication style to the different stakeholder group and ensure that the message is communicated effectively.

Understand the audience	➤ What does your audience already know? ➤ What is the demographic profile and how will this affect understanding? ➤ Will they understand jargon and technical terminology? ➤ Do they have any needs to be addressed, such as a hearing or visual impairment?
Plan methods	➤ Will it be spoken or written? ➤ Will be formal or informal? ➤ What are the main points? ➤ What media will you use? ➤ Will diagrams and visual aids help comprehension? ➤ Is the environment too noisy? ➤ Do you need a private area?
Communicate clearly	➤ Repeat and restate in verbal communication. ➤ Use plain language in written communication. ➤ Make eye contact in verbal communication. ➤ Use sequence signal words such as first, second, then – when giving or writing instructions. ➤ Use appropriate tone, pitch and intonation. ➤ Consider your pace when speaking – not too fast or too slow. ➤ Be conscious of which words/parts of the communication you emphasise.
Check for understanding	➤ Ask direct questions to ensure the audience understands the message you are communicating. ➤ Take into account language and literacy skills of the audience to ensure they understand the whole message. ➤ Listen actively. ➤ Consider body language – nonverbal communication accounts for up to 70 per cent of meaning in spoken interactions.

Example
Promotional activities for releasing a sustainability policy

Over the last three months Frank and Steph have spent time consulting with staff, external stakeholders and families to ensure they have a workable and ecological sustainability policy that can be implemented into their centre. Now that the policy has been finalised and approved by the board of management, the next step is to ensure that all of the stakeholders are aware of the policy and its implementation date. To do this, they need to decide on the best and most ecologically sound way to disseminate the information. For each of the different stakeholders, they decide to use several different approaches to promote their workplace sustainability policy.

For internal stakeholders such as staff they use the following strategies:

➤ Hold a staff meeting to update staff on the policy, providing staff with a hard-copy policy and placing a soft copy on the intranet for them to access as required.

➤ Follow up the staff meeting with an email containing the minutes of the meeting with a link to the policy.

➤ Provide all new and incoming staff with a copy of the policy and discuss the sustainability policy and related initiatives during their induction.

➤ Place posters in the staffroom and toilets to remind staff of the importance of sustainability and their role in contributing to the outcomes.

For external stakeholders, such as families, they use the following strategies:

➤ Arrange a formal policy launch, providing a lunch and children's activities developed around the sustainability theme. Invite the local newspaper to attend to capture the day's events.

➤ Provide a 'sustainability policy release' link on the service's home page, which takes users to a page dedicated to the policy. The webpage will include the initiatives that are to be implemented, the anticipated outcomes, a statement from the directors about the policy and quotes from the children explaining the sustainable activities they enjoy.

➤ Send an email announcing the sustainability policy to all families along with information in the newsletter promoting the benefits of the policy and the program initiatives.

✏️ Practice Task 5

1. Which of the following are ways to communicate information to stakeholders? Select all that apply.

   ☐ Provide regular feedback on environmental targets and objectives.

   ☐ Include sustainability policies and procedures in the induction program.

   ☐ Ask families to choose the sustainable activities they would like for their children.

   ☐ Communicate information on a need to know basis.

   ☐ Ensure objectives and targets are widely communicated.

2. Which of the following strategies are things to consider when communicating with stakeholders? Select all that apply.

   ☐ Always use technical terms and jargon

   ☐ Speak from the heart

   ☐ Know your audience

   ☐ Confirm understanding from audience

   ☐ Use plain language

2B Provide resources to support policy implementation

A range of resources will support achievement of the agreed objectives.

A resource is something that is of value to a person or organisation that helps in the achievement of their goals.

Every policy relies on the right types and quantities of resources to ensure staff can effectively implement strategies. To achieve the agreed sustainability objectives, a resource plan will be needed to outline the resource requirements. Resources may be restricted by the availability of staff, the needs of the children, budgets and time lines. Obtaining accurate information about internal resources is crucial. It not only requires research and analysis, but also consultation.

The four main types of resources needed to fulfil the day-to-day requirements of a sustainability strategy are described below.

Human resources	➤ Subject matter experts (SMEs) ➤ Staff with specific or specialised skills ➤ Administration staff ➤ Owners of the business ➤ Team leaders ➤ Families ➤ Support staff ➤ Contractors, builders and frontline workers ➤ Children
Physical resources	➤ Tools and equipment ➤ Facilities and buildings ➤ Infrastructure ➤ Materials and consumables
Financial resources	➤ Money from the budget to purchase or acquire information, people, physical equipment or systems ➤ Funds from fundraising activities and donations
Systems resources	➤ Software applications such as for designing, spreadsheets, video conferencing and publishing newsletters, etc.

Identifying key people

Decisions affecting budgets, resourcing, the effects on staffing will be more accurate when the right people are involved.

Many large companies, and many smaller ones, have specialist groups and/or divisions you may need to consult with. People in these areas can advise you on company policies, procedures, safety issues and legislative requirements.

They can also help in planning your resources and may even offer some creative solutions if your budget is tight. In smaller organisations you may rely on the skills and knowledge of staff, families and other experts as required. For example:

> staff may have had experience from a previous work role or training

> industry experts or consultants can provide examples of the work they have done with other services and provide staff training or expert opinions and advice.

> External specialists and consultants may be available guide the implementation process.

> families may be keen to be involved because of an interest they have in sustainability and may even volunteer their time to draft or edit documents

> organisations that support the industry, such as ACECQA, can provide information on the compliance guidelines

> regulations and legislation needs to be considered to make sure that programs conserve and protect the environment, such as local council approvals for building new structures.

You may find it useful to identify the key people for each strategy or policy initiative, and consider drawing up a table like the following example.

Strategy/ initiative	Target	Persons responsible/ affected
Reduce water usage	Reduce water usage by 10 per cent	Lead teachers and children - Using leftover drinking water to water plants and garden
Reduce paper purchase and wastage	Reduce paper purchase by 50 per cent	Office staff – Re-use paper and print double-sided Team leaders and children – Minimise paper usage, and re-use materials for arts and craft
Reduce electrical usage	Reduce electrical usage by 10 per cent	Team leaders and educators – Turn off lights and other appliances before leaving a room, utilising natural light as much as possible
Reduce food wastage	Reduce food wastage by 15 per cent	Cooks – Reduce amount cooked to reduce wastage Educators – Supervise serving of food Children – Deliver scraps to worm farms and compost

Collate all of the resources into a segment of the implementation plan or a specific resource plan. You will need to document the type of resource, quantities, time lines for when they are needed and costs.

Example
Resource plan template

Objectives

Objective #1

Objective #2

Objective #3

Acquisition strategy

Resource	Acquisition method	Supplier details	Acquisition date

Time lines

Resource	Order date	Estimated receipt date	Allocation date

Acquire physical resources and services

As a person with responsibility for implementing policies, you need to ensure that staff and other stakeholders have access to the necessary resources so that sustainability outcomes can be achieved.

Resource acquisition in many organisations must be done in line with defined procurement and acquisition policies, practices and procedures, which may consider the aspects shown below.

Guidelines for acquiring resources are generally well-documented and are part of the standard procedures that all staff must follow. This might be employing or contracted people with particular skills or buying physical resources required to carry out some changes to the building or garden such as equipment and tools.

Your service may have practices that must be followed for purchases.

Refer to the organisation's purchasing policies and procedures:

➤ Does the organisation order in advance and store items, or 'just-in-time ordering'?

➤ Does the organisation buy in bulk?

➤ Does the organisation have a procedure for obtaining quotes?

➤ Can staff order resources or must an order go through a manager or admin person?

➤ Is purchasing done by a tender arrangement?

➤ Do you need to understand an inventory system to know if something is in stock?

➤ Are there policies about the type of item purchased, such as only buying recycled paper or Australian-made goods?

➤ Are there procedures for when the item arrives to ensure the required quantity has arrived and that it is in good order?

➤ Who is responsible for specific purchasing procedures?

Example
Purchasing environmentally friendly products

For an organisation with a policy that focuses on purchasing green cleaning products. The person who is responsible for purchasing products may want to determine and measure the degree to which the products meet the relevant sustainability issues that have been identified as being important to the service. They might develop a checklist such as this:

☑ The location or travel miles from production to sales

☑ The energy rating of the products

☑ The greenhouse gas emission rating of the products

☑ The recyclability of the products

☑ The safe use for children

☑ The effect on the environment

☑ The amount of packaging used

☑ The supplier's commitment to sustainability, such as water and energy used to manufacture and deliver goods

Implementation procedures

A procedure can be written in a step-by-step format, can involve pictures and diagrams to describe the instructions or a checklist of tasks in the order they should be completed.

It may be presented as part of a manual with other procedures or it may be a stand-alone document. The language used should be written in a style that is appropriate to the reader. The existing knowledge of the audience also needs to

be considered. For example, consider whether the procedures need to be used by people outside of the industry. They may not have an understanding of the acronyms used in the early learning industry.

Procedures may include a list of resources that need to be gathered before commencing the task and an estimate of the approximate time it may take to complete the task. Some procedures require that the policies they relate to are listed. For example, a procedure for 'green purchasing' may need to refer to a financing policy as well as a sustainability policy. It may also include compliance requirements for meeting the regulator, legislative requirements or local council laws and approvals.

Support implementation of sustainability processes

To successfully carry out their responsibilities, staff and families need support.

The level of support that you can offer your team members will vary depending on their needs, preferences, performance and level of challenge.

Providing supervisory support is key to ensuring staff are working effectively and supporting the sustainability initiatives of the organisation.

Supervision involves:

> Conducting physical site/job inspections and observing tasks completed or in progress
> Making yourself available at the ground level to provide input into activities and correct issues as they occur
> Monitoring the health and safety of everyone who come into contact with the area in the service where work is being undertaken

Staff and families involved in the implementation, should be given regular opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge to support sustainability policies and strategies. Some training may be formal and require that it be paid for while other training might involve the transferring of knowledge and skills between people or different services. Such as one service provides advice to another service who is ready to implement their sustainability strategies.

Training opportunities may involve:

> Online training
> External study using professional courses and education
> One-to-one on-the-job training
> Group discussions

Address implementation barriers

During the initial planning stages for the implementation of sustainability policies and strategies, identify and plan for barriers to change.

Regardless of the amount of consultation and information provided, some stakeholders may be resistant to changes that come about as a result of sustainability activities. For example, staff may be resentful of any tasks they see

as being additional to their regular activities. This may show itself as tasks not being completed at all or in the time frame allocated, a reluctance to participate, attend meetings or join in discussions.

Some of the barriers to change might be the result of:

> unexpected results occurring due to unforeseen circumstances
> Lack of understanding of why change is needed and its impact
> Lack of employee involvement in the change process
> Insufficient information and communication to stakeholders
> Insufficient data to conclude whether the policy or procedure has been successful as a result of poor or non-existent performance indicators
> Lack of resources including money for purchases
> Changes in legislation or regulations
> Unable to obtain agreement

Some of the skills and strategies that can be used to overcome barriers to change in a group of stakeholders is listed below:

Recognition and rewards

Recognition, acknowledgments or rewards gives those directly involved and affected by change a sense of achievement and incentive to continue with the practices. Everyone likes to know their efforts are valued. This might be by promoting the new initiative and identifying the contribution of people via a newsletter, personal email, in a meeting or on the webpage.

Dealing with conflict and negotiation

Conflict can be positive and even actively encouraged to shake up the current state. However, if conflict is not managed, the change will not be successfully implemented. This may require people being encouraged to listen to others and go along with the majority wishes of the community. Key negotiation skills include appropriate assertiveness and active listening.

Offering support

The people involved in implementing the strategies need to be given adequate support in the form of:

> Time allowance to investigate and research ideas and options
> Training to learn new information and skills
> Sufficient resources to do the job.

Seeking and monitoring progress

Surveys can identify attitudes and issues that underpin barriers and help identify ways of addressing them.

🖉 Practice Task 6

1. List two things you can do to ensure resources are identified and purchased in line with workplace policies and procedures.

2. List three strategies that could be used to support team members to address barriers to change.

2C Track continuous improvements in sustainability

Long-term continuous improvement should be a key step in the review of environmental policies.

To increase resource efficiency and effectiveness in the service, a monitoring process needs to be implemented. This provides stakeholders the opportunity to generate and provide ideas for improvement by reflecting on what worked well and what could be improved. This useful information can be incorporated into the systems and procedures that will improve resource efficiency over time.

Measurable changes in resource consumption are likely to take some time to show, perhaps years rather than days or weeks. For example, a reduction in general waste and food waste may show up in a few weeks. However, recouping the cost of water tanks and other infrastructure may take years as the costs of water bills decrease and water-saving practices make their mark.

When assigning responsibilities and activities to be undertaken, it is important to indicate who is responsible for tracking sustainability improvements and recording achievements and other outcomes. Capturing data is an essential aspect of the monitoring and review process for continuous improvement.

Records on continuous improvement will show:

> compliance with legislation and triple bottom line reporting
> achievement of the goals and targets set by the service and how this was achieved (e.g. reduction in water usage)
> achievement of targets or KPIs by staff, parents and others so recognition can be given where it is due.

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is not about fixing problems as they arise but creating an environment in which reflection and improvement is encouraged.

Continuous improvement processes are always embedded to identify and look for improvements.

Five steps of continuous improvement

1 **Commitment and policy**

This is a prerequisite for the organisation as a whole to commit to achieving sustainability goals. The development of the sustainability policy needs to incorporate a commitment from the management team, research on sustainability, advice from experts and input from stakeholders.

There should be a process in place to regularly revise the policy in light of the organisation's environmental achievements.

Five steps of continuous improvement

2 **Planning**

Evaluate how well your planning processes worked, and areas that could be improved in future planning activities.

Consider the following:

> Was there sufficient consultation?
> Were more physical resources needed?
> Was more time needed?
> Did you have access to all relevant legislation and industry standards?
> Did you do sufficient research on the current impact of the organisation on the environment?
> Did you obtain agreement from stakeholders and set realistic targets?
> Was the implementation time frame realistic?

3 **Implementation**

Monitor and review the implementation strategies. A key component of implementation is the communication strategies used with all stakeholders.

Consider the following:

> Did you use a range of communication strategies?
> Which ones were most successful?
> Did you gain commitment from everyone?
> Was everyone aware of the expectations on them, and the need to comply with the initiatives and meet the targets set for the organisation and individuals?
> Did people receive training when needed?
> Were new procedures developed and disseminated?
> What difficulties did you encounter?
> Were they resolved or are they still present?

4 **Measurement and evaluation**

The results of the new policy, strategies and associated procedures must be monitored on an ongoing basis. Progress can only be assessed through measurement.

Measuring improvements in sustainable performance creates accountability in the workplace and provides motivation and a sense of achievement among workers when goals are realised.

Because sustainability is a continuous process, progress must be measured in order to determine whether targets are being achieved and to ascertain where the organisation is in relation to its goals. It is also important to measure change in order to evaluate your sustainability strategies.

Seeking feedback from stakeholders is critical as it can provide valuable information on implementation difficulties. Measurements obtained and feedback should be analysed and evaluated against the targets and outcomes that were set, and the changes achieved made evident for all to appreciate.

Five steps of continuous improvement

5

Review and improvement

Formal reviews should be undertaken according to the review timetable included in the initial policy development and announcement.

A review is effectively an audit of the policy outcomes against the policy targets. A review may be initiated outside the scheduled review timetable if there are non-compliance reports and there is an evident failure to meet targets.

The outcome of a review or audit should identify where improvement can be made through the adjustment of existing policies or development of new policies. Strategies and procedures can also be identified as areas requiring improvement.

Example
Implementing a continuous improvement plan

Although reports for each of the strategies targeted by the sustainability policy will be provided over time, Frank and Steph arrange with the people assigned responsibility to achieve particular targets to report to the monthly staff meetings. The agenda for the meetings is in three parts:

➤ Analyse any data that has been gathered during the period with a comparison against the previous month.

➤ Provide an opportunity for staff to identify issues or actions that could be modified or improved in order to better achieve the targets.

➤ Consider any new ideas that would contribute to the centre being more ecologically sustainable.

All parts of the agenda items are to be discussed openly, with suggestions for improvement to be considered. Follow-up action or further investigation is the responsibility of Frank and Steph in consultation with the people who have raised suggestions. Proposed changes to procedures, purchasing of more efficient equipment or other improvement options will be identified by Frank and Steph, and then actioned and communicated via the manager to staff.

Timing of the reviews

A thorough CI process will help identify the effectiveness and efficiency of the changes that have occurred as a result of implementing the sustainability policies and strategies.

As with any CI of a system or process, the program should be cyclical – meaning that it is an ongoing commitment to making products, services and systems better.

For a CI process to be meaningful, it should provide for regular reviews such as the schedule detailed in the table below.

Review	Timing
1	3 months post-implementation
2	6 months post-implementation
3	12 months post-implementation
4	3 years post-implementation
5	5 years post-implementation

Review and recording processes

Everyone who has been allocated tasks and responsibilities can provide feedback on the process and offer ideas to help improve the procedures and outcomes.

Systems for collecting, reviewing and recording information will depend on the size and capacity of the organisation. This may be the responsibility of all staff or there may be a single person responsible for putting together the documentation and collecting information from everyone.

Recording systems may need to meet external and internal requirements, such as regulatory requirements for policies to confirm they are accessible and stored securely.

Some services have a set format with templates and pro forma documents to record continuous improvement information and establish consistency and quality control over documents that may be needed to be referred to as evidence. For example, a service may keep a record of the following:

> measures of environmental performance, such as kilowatt hours of energy consumed, expenditure on waste disposal and reams of paper purchased

> reports of environmental strategies and initiatives used with the children, such as works done to playground planting, composting and sources of water

> assessment of environmental policies and strategies, and suggested improvements that could be made

> comments, suggestions and responses – including complaints – from internal and external stakeholders such as families and the local community.

Resource use and consumption patterns can be plotted on graphs and tables or entered on a spreadsheet. This will show gains or losses over time and can compare the current situation against the target and previous month's achievements, with improvements highlighted. The sources of the data may come from reviewing documentation, such as invoices for fuel consumption, electricity

bills, purchase orders indicating those from 'green' suppliers, bills for waste disposal and water accounts. The key people collecting the data may be best placed to organise their research and evaluate the findings.

Example
Internal compliance review report

The table below is a sample compliance review report on the service administration area/office waste procedures.

Policy target	Priority (H/M/L)	Progress	Analysis	Actions required	Person/s responsible
Removal of rubbish bins from individual offices and desks	Medium	Completed	Has led to an immediate reduction in plastic rubbish bag usage	Monitor office area to ensure no rubbish bins are used	Administration assistant (W Peters)
Recycle dumpster ordered and installed	High	Completed	Recycle company issued 'Green workplace' certificate to the organisation; dumpster adequate for use	No action required	Administration assistant (J Chang)
Paper recycling bins installed in cubicle area	High	Completed	100% of office paper recycled; employees are placing correct paper type in bins	No action required	Administration assistant (W Peters)

Policy target	Priority (H/M/L)	Progress	Analysis	Actions required	Person/s responsible
Glass and plastics recycling bin installed in tearoom	High	Completed	Incorrect items (e.g. food scraps and plastic bags) are being placed in recyclables bin; recyclable items are being placed in landfill bin	Agenda item for October sustainability committee meeting – How can we get people to sort their kitchen waste correctly?	Director (J Welch)

✏ Practice Task 7

1. Which of the following records would you need to retain when tracking sustainability performance? Select all that apply.

    ☐   Enrolment reports

    ☐   Supplier invoices

    ☐   Complaints from local residents

    ☐   Utility bills

2. Identify three strategies in relation to creating a veggie patch to encourage staff to share and record continuous improvements.

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

3. Consider the following KPI: 'All children at the centre, regardless of their scheduled attendance, will be given the opportunity to participate weekly in the garden project.'

    Describe what type of recording tool could be used to measure and evaluate progress of the implementation of this KPI.

Summary

> Sustainability policies and implementation processes must be presented using a planned communication approach that targets your key stakeholders.
> Identify the audience and its needs when considering what would be the most appropriate communication method and content.
> Keep key stakeholders informed of the outcomes of the implementation process.
> The four main types of resources needed to fulfil the requirements of day-to-day sustainability strategies are people, physical resources, finance and systems resources.
> Ensure that all stakeholders have access to the necessary resources so that planned outcomes can be achieved.
> Resources acquisition often occurs in line with procurement policies, practices and procedures.
> Throughout the implementation process, staff must be given sufficient levels of support to ensure they can meet the agreed objectives.
> An ongoing CI process makes it possible to determine whether the organisation is achieving the agreed sustainability objectives and targets.
> Continuous improvement is a five-step approach:
>   – Commitment and policy
>   – Planning
>   – Implementation
>   – Measurement and evaluation
>   – Review and improvement
> Capturing and recording data is an essential aspect of the monitoring and review process for continuous improvement.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Implement sustainability policies

Part A

1. Which of the following things must be considered when promoting a sustainability policy to a range of people? Select all that apply.

☐ The size of the group

☐ The language and information that may need to be tailored to the audience

☐ The format of the consultation and communication

☐ The use of charts and tables to represent data and research

☐ The use of a professional logo

2. Which of the following will ensure the procedure will be clearly communicated to key stakeholders? Select all that apply.

☐ Check the language, complexity and knowledge of the audience.

☐ Use face-to-face training sessions to instruct large numbers of people.

☐ Use the intranet to communicate important information, such as time lines for implementation.

☐ Practise the procedure yourself so you are familiar with what you are describing.

3. Which of the following policies and procedures relate to acquiring physical resources? Select all that apply.

☐ Preferred suppliers

☐ Inventory system to look up existing stock

☐ Checking the accuracy of deliveries

☐ Environmental standards for purchases

☐ Information privacy requirements

☐ Resource approval procedures and authorised officers

4. Which of the following statements are correct about reporting or recording processes? Select yes or no for each one.

a. Recording systems to track improvements may need to meet external requirements, such as regulatory requirements.

  * Yes   * No

b. Complaints about the implementation process don't need to be recorded or evaluated as part of continuous improvement.

  * Yes   * No

c. Templates and pro forma documents can be used to record continuous improvement information and establish consistency.

  * Yes   * No

d. Resource use and consumption patterns on graphs and tables are often misleading and can complicate the issue.

  * Yes   * No

e. The key people collecting the data may be best placed to organise their research and evaluate the findings.

  * Yes   * No

Part B

Read the following case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

An organisation has a chain of early learning centres across Australia has included several initiatives in its recently drafted sustainability policy. It identified three key areas where a more environmentally friendly approach could be implemented.

These areas and initiatives are:

Water use

➤ Each service operator will investigate and report on water use reduction options applicable to their centre (given the differing state/territory and local regulations), such as rainwater tanks, greywater diversion or treatment, dual-flush toilets and water-efficient fittings. They will submit their reports by 1 May 2021. All facilities will implement a water use reduction program by 1 July 2021.

➤ Purchasing officers will choose dishwashers and washing machines purchased after 1 January 2021 for efficient water use.

Waste reduction

> They will reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by establishing systems to better dispose of recyclable and biodegradable (compostable) waste.

> They will train educators about the benefits of reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.

> To show the total amount of waste being generated, they will collect the material disposed of over one day and categorise the types of waste produced. This will be repeated every two months to monitor change.

Green purchasing

> Suppliers used must comply with environmental guidelines.

> Recycled paper must be the only paper purchased.

> Products purchased should be from an environmentally sustainable source when possible.

> Packaging should be kept to a minimum.

> Equipment purchased from now on must have the highest energy efficiency rating.

1. Managers in several services have reported a potential lack of enthusiasm in staff for the new initiatives. Describe a method for overcoming this barrier.

2. Explain **two** strategies to support staff who need to follow the new sustainability initiatives.

3. Describe a strategy you would use to monitor and record performance in these areas to ensure the organisation regularly improves resource efficiency.

Review implementation of sustainability policies

The implementation of workplace sustainability policies and procedures should be appropriately documented. Feedback allows stakeholders to see progress and make necessary adjustments.

Records assist in identifying trends in usage and trends that help in the continuous improvement cycle.

3A Document outcomes and provide feedback to stakeholders

Documenting the outcomes of sustainability initiatives is a crucial part of the continuous improvement cycle.

Interpreting the data collected will enable the organisation to assess the success of the policy.

This information should be used to inform the continuous improvement process in terms of what has and has not worked, and what options can be considered to improve the outcomes. Evaluating the outcomes of a sustainability policy:

> recognises the achievements when objectives are met
> determines whether targets can be increased
> identifies areas of weakness and opportunities for improvement
> identifies possible adjustments to policies and procedures
> identifies possible adjustments to communications and training of staff.

Documenting outcomes requires a tracking of expenditure and savings. These records can provide a benchmark against which progress can be measured, such as:

> use of resources such as paper, water and energy
> how much the service contributes to pollution
> how it handles waste
> the basis of its purchasing decisions
> its commitment to sustainable practices.

Documenting results

Records provide data for assessing performance, identifying trends and deciding on future directions to maintain continuous improvement.

A summary of the outcomes can be documented in many different ways. Choosing the best format will depend on the organisational requirements and audience. Always make sure the language is appropriate to the context and type of report you are giving.

The format of reports varies, but graphical representations of information are often easier to comprehend; for example, a graph showing energy consumption over six months or a bar chart showing cost comparisons for green purchasing. Visual representations can effectively demonstrate progress made, but it is important that they are used to convey information rather than add visual clutter. Make sure graphs and charts are laid out logically and clearly, with legends and colour used to support the meaning.

You may be required to write a specific sustainability report, make an addition to an annual report or contribute some information to a financial report. Each of these have different format requirements with levels of formality and intended audience.

Sustainability report
Reports may be generated with regular updates to assess progress towards KPI targets for sustainability goals. This report may provide examples of how the policy is being implemented into programs.

Board reports
Reports may be provided by senior management to the board of directors. Such reports are created from a range of records and documentation, and show financial savings or expenditure arising from the sustainability policy, e.g. changes in electricity or water bills as a result of changes to recycled water and solar power.

Providing feedback

Feedback can help to identify targets that have not been met, areas of weakness and risks.

Staff and managers working to implement the sustainability initiatives should be receiving regular progress reports, but other stakeholders also need to know how the organisation is progressing towards achieving its environmental targets. Feedback may be gathered through video conferencing, sharing of document and reports via email or in meetings.

Regular updates and successful achievement of targets can be used to provide encouragement and support to maintain the momentum and commitment of all involved. This helps to indicate where improvements need to be made.

Example
Providing feedback

Frank and Steph are thinking of different ways they can provide feedback to the people in the organisation involved in implementing the policy. They want to show how the service is progressing towards achieving the sustainability policy outcomes.

They decide to develop a visual way of showing how they are tracking against targets. They draw a large thermometer and colour it to indicate the level of achievement so far and where they are aiming to be. The thermometer will be placed in the foyer near the entrance so that everyone can see the progress that has been made.

The thermometer will record the overall achievement toward completing all of the activities in the policy and they will surround the main thermometer with a number of smaller thermometers indicating how far the service has come towards achieving each of the different outcomes.

Along with the thermometers, Frank and Steph ask all the room leaders to have the children draw examples of what they have been doing in their rooms to support sustainability. Each of the rooms will create their own presentation and add it to the noticeboard around the thermometer.

✏ Practice Task 8

1. Provide an example of a type of document that can be used to provide feedback to key stakeholders.

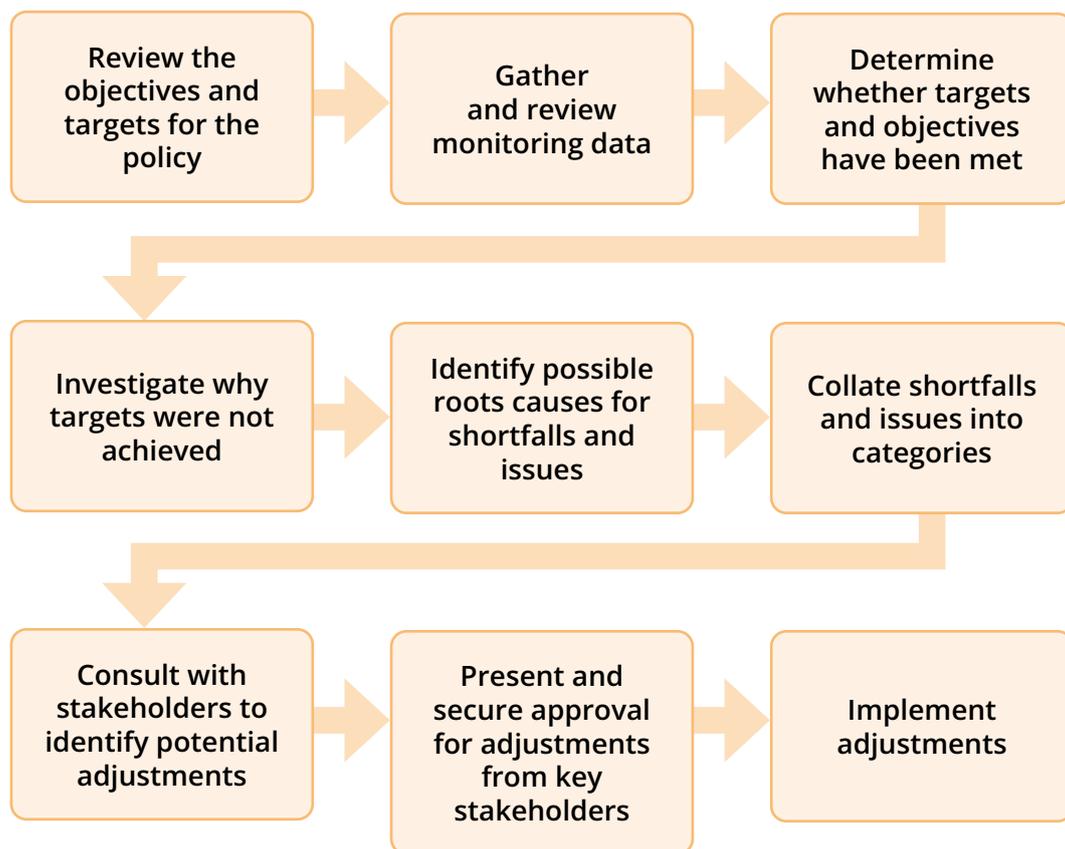2. Identify two types of information that can be documented and presented as feedback on a sustainability policy?

3B Identify trends and modify policies to promote improvement

A trend is a pattern or general direction that something is developing into.

In addition to measuring sustainability performance, you need to closely monitor records to see if any trends are emerging that need remedial action. Sustainability trends may be positive or negative and often occur due to unforeseen consequences. For example, you may find that although kitchen waste has been reduced because of the introduction of non-disposable cups, water use has increased because people need to wash the cups by hand or in the dishwasher. You may need to introduce a new policy that the dishwasher be switched on only when it is full.

To identify trends relating to sustainability issues and performance, conduct the steps shown in this flow chart.

Review the objectives and targets for the policy	→	Gather and review monitoring data	→	Determine whether targets and objectives have been met
Investigate why targets were not achieved	→	Identify possible roots causes for shortfalls and issues	→	Collate shortfalls and issues into categories
Consult with stakeholders to identify potential adjustments	→	Present and secure approval for adjustments from key stakeholders	→	Implement adjustments

Need for improvement

A key area where records may identify trends and the need for improvement is the commitment and motivation of your staff.

Implementation processes can be difficult to master due to a range of barriers in the workforce. After an initial level of enthusiasm when the policy is released, staff may become complacent and lack in their initial enthusiasm.

When targets or benchmarks are not being achieved, you need to determine remedial or corrective actions and design and implement appropriate action plans as soon as possible. This may require modifications to the workplace policy and procedures, a renewed communication and promotional strategy, or innovative ways to get staff involved.

Records can show where initial targets have been reached, but improvements still need to be made; for example, records may indicate that overall water usage has decreased during the target period, but may identify a specific area of the company where use is still higher than acceptable.

In some cases, you may find that there is insufficient data to enable a conclusion to be formed; for example, if staff are not always completing the correct form for purchasing sustainable products, it will be difficult to track the use and cost of these products.

Example
The importance of monitoring and investigating discrepancies

The initial reports Frank and Steph receive from Gillian, manager of the printing area, are very encouraging in relation to the increase in recycling of materials. In fact, there was an increase of 14.5 per cent in the amount of recyclable materials collected and a commensurate reduction in the amount of solid waste generated.

However, as the months pass, a graphical analysis shows that the amount of recycled materials is reducing and solid waste is increasing.

An investigation into the situation finds that a new employee in the printing area is stockpiling waste and recyclable materials for disposal at the start of his next shift. On Friday evenings, the cleaners are removing all the material awaiting disposal and placing it in the solid waste bins. The employee had not realised that the cleaners were throwing away recyclable materials.

The issue is highlighted at a staff meeting. An adjustment is made to procedures directing employees to remove all waste and place it into the appropriate bins at the end of their shift. Also, the cleaners are advised not to remove any items from the printing area.

Modify policy and procedures with improvements

The need to modify the sustainability policy can arise when the current policy is failing to achieve the required outcomes.

First, analyse all related policies for the workplace to see if there are conflicts between the policies; for example, a policy to achieve 80 per cent green purchasing may be in conflict with a policy to use a contracted supplier that is not green-compliant.

You may find that the policy:

> is too ambitious and consequently unrealistic – and in this case, you will need to amend it so that it more closely reflects the organisation's capabilities and financial circumstances

➤ is not ambitious enough, in that targets have been easily met before deadlines – and in this case, you may wish to develop the organisation's environmental credentials by extending targets for further improvements.

You may only need to make small changes to the policy to include extra information and procedures, such as 'Install light sensors in rooms used less often' or 'All monitors must be switched to power save when not in use'.

You will need to:

➤ scope the new policy options and obtain relevant information
➤ consult with stakeholders and consider options
➤ analyse and evaluate options for the new policy and determine targets
➤ make recommendations on the new policy
➤ plan the implementation and develop appropriate procedures
➤ communicate the new policy and procedures to relevant entities
➤ implement the policy
➤ monitor, evaluate and review the performance of the organisation based on the new policy.

Modify procedures

Consult with staff about changes to be made.

Once new procedures have been implemented, the CI cycle begins again to monitor and review the improvement. Staff who follow procedures must be consulted about potential changes, as they are the people responsible for completing the work tasks and following them.

Procedure modification may be needed for a variety of reasons, as shown in the following table.

Changes in legislation or regulations

There may be changes in legislation that require changes in compliance; for example, requirements for the storage of grey water.

Changes in targets

A new or amended policy may have changed targets for water saving as a result of the last target being easily met and achieved in a shorter period of time than expected.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluations have shown that:

➤ Targets can't be achieved with the current procedures, so must be adjusted; for example, introduce new procedures that ensure only recycled paper products are purchased and used.
➤ The time line is too short to achieve the target; for example, the reduction in energy usage has slowed as a result of winter weather and less sun for the solar panels to save energy.

New initiatives

There may be internal proposals for a new initiative; for example, the parent support group wants to start a farmers market to use and generate income from the vegetable garden.

Example

Modification of sustainability policy

Ahmed, the purchasing manager, is pleased to report to Frank, Steph and the other managers that he and his staff have achieved their target of 80 per cent green purchasing over a three month period. However, he advises them that at the beginning of each quarter there is a standing order from a large supplier that is not a green supplier – this is preventing his department from achieving an even better result. The standing order was entered into before the green purchasing policy took effect.

At a review, the managers note that the price being charged for the goods is 22.5 per cent less than any competitor. They discuss the cost difference and their need to meet environmental obligations. It is agreed to source an environmentally friendly supplier and cancel the standing order as soon as possible. The purchasing policy is adjusted to reflect this. Each manager is asked to look at their expenditure and identify where savings can be made to offset the increased cost of using an environmentally friendly supplier.

✏ Practice Task 9

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

The sustainability initiative of asking families to bring in items to re-use for arts and crafts has created problems for the Kare 4 Kidz staff. Families have been bringing in glass jars, plastic milk bottles and plastic margarine containers, among other items, but the original vision for this initiative was to use biodegradable materials.

The staff at the centre have raised the issue of receiving unsuitable materials. They are having to spend valuable time sifting through the donations to find the items they want to keep and disposing of the rest into the recycling or rubbish bins. There are too many items to store in the space they set aside for this because there is more coming into the service than is being used.

1. Suggest two things that need to be addressed in the policy to resolve these issues.

2. What is the key trend identified in this case study?

3. Prepare a list of the points that need to be addressed in the policy to resolve these problems.

4. What are two amendments could you make to the policy to provide a solution to the issues raised?

5. How will you communicate these improvements to the workforce?

Summary

> Documenting the outcomes of sustainability initiatives is a crucial part of the continuous improvement cycle.

> Analysis of data collected will enable leaders to give quality feedback to key stakeholders about the sustainability performance of the organisation.

> Outcomes can be documented using a formal sustainability report, in financial reports, an annual report that includes triple bottom line reporting, a shareholders' report, or a report for an external body such as a regulatory authority.

> The organisation's recording and reporting systems can help in identifying trends that require action and improvement.

> Regular updates can be used to report on sustainability performance and maintain stakeholder momentum and commitment.

> A trend is a pattern or general direction that something is developing into. Sustainability trends may be positive or negative and often occur due to unforeseen consequences.

> The need to modify the sustainability policy and its associated strategies can arise when the current policy is failing to achieve the required outcomes.

> Once new procedures have been implemented, the continuous improvement cycle begins again to monitor and review the improvement.

Learning Checkpoint 3
Review implementation of sustainability policies

Part A

1. Why is it important to give stakeholders feedback about the results or outcomes following the implementation of sustainability policies and procedures? What are the possible consequences if people are not informed of the results or outcomes?

2. What are the possible consequences if people are not informed of the results or outcomes?

3. Describe the steps you would take to evaluate a policy to identify trends that may require improvements.

4. Imagine you are preparing a report for senior management to document the outcomes of a workplace sustainability policy initiative that has been in place for six months. Briefly describe the structure and nature of the report and explain how you would make sure it was suitable for the audience.

5. Outline how you would proceed if your outcomes report showed that the policy needed major modification.

You have been asked to analyse records and reports showing the outcomes of a sustainability policy. You notice that progress towards the waste reduction target has slowed to such an extent that the target for the end of the two-year period will not be reached. The targeted reduction initially was as follows.

Target date	Reduction amount
June 2023	8%
December 2023	16%
June 2024	24%
December 2024	32%

For 2021, the figures are as follows.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4%	7%	9%	10%	13%	15%	16%	16%	17%	18%	18%	19%

Graphing these figures and extrapolating the trend to December 2024 suggests that at best the reduction in waste will be 24 to 25 per cent – well short of the target of 32 per cent.

6. Describe the steps you would take to address this situation.

Part B

Read the following case study, then answer the questions that follow.

<div style="background-color:#8cb63c; color:white;">

Case study

</div>

Kaja is in charge of introducing a new paper use policy for an organisation. Before introducing the policy, she asks for records on paper use for each service and location. Kaja finds records on how much paper was purchased in previous years, the cost and the brand. Kaja is able to get an estimate of paper use per person by dividing annual paper purchased by the total number of staff.

> Annual paper consumption (reams): 625
> Number of staff: 125
> Average paper use per person per annum (reams): 5

Kaja uses five reams per person as her benchmark. To assess the success of the new policy, Kaja decides she needs to keep records on the amount of paper used by her team of 14 people. Based on the benchmark of five reams per person, her team would be expected to use 70 reams of paper in a year.

Kaja is good at motivating and her team are enthusiastic. They use double-sided copying and printing whenever possible, and re-use paper to print draft copies. The team also increases its use of email and shared database decreasing the requirements for hard copies.

At the end of six months, Kaja is pleased to announce that the team has only used 30 reams of paper, which is less than half the projected usage.

The CEO decides that the company should keep more-detailed records on paper purchasing and use. Using Kaja's model, they adopt a team-based approach and future reports will be used to design strategies for particular services.

1. Describe the process Kaja followed to document paper usage.

2. How could Kaja give feedback to her staff about the outcomes of the new paper use policy?

3. Develop a new procedure that will improve record-keeping on paper purchasing and use.