

AUSTRALIAN LAW FIRMS JOIN FORCES TO GREEN THE LEGAL SECTOR

A new report on sustainability in the Australian legal sector, launched today in Sydney by the Australian Legal Sector Alliance, shows that Australian Law firms are reducing their environmental impact by working together to achieve change.

The report, *Legal Sector Environmental Insight: Report of AusLSA Members 2013* shows improvements in key environmental metrics across the sector, including greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use and business travel and paper consumption.

Thirty-one firms contributed to the report, with 27 choosing to publish their profiles, including nine of the 10 largest firms in Australia and five of the "Big Six".

The report reveals that electricity consumption, paper use and air travel are still the areas of greatest environmental impact for the Australian legal sector, though there have been improvements across AusLSA's member firms.

Clayton Utz partner and AusLSA director, Stuart Clark, says that being part of the AusLSA program, and reporting on key sustainability metrics each year, helps us to set goals and measure our progress.

"Since becoming an Executive Member of AusLSA in 2010, we've reduced our total carbon emissions by almost 20 per cent and our paper usage by 30 per cent" said Mr Clark.

Greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use are down eight per cent since the FY2012 reporting year across all of the reporting firms.

Average paper use is down two per cent year-on-year, to 123 kg (or nearly 25,000 pages) per person. Extrapolated across the sector of approximately 100,000 people, this amount of paper would stack 237 kilometres high.

For the group of 26 firms that reported both this year and last, emissions from air travel have decreased 12% to an average of 1.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per person. This follows several years of steep increases as a number of Australian firms increased their international presence or combined with overseas firms.

The eight Executive firms that have been reporting through AusLSA since 2010 have reduced their paper usage by over 12 per cent, and their emissions from electricity use by 19 per cent, in that time.

Mr Clark said that by continually looking at new ways to engage our people in supporting and promoting environmentally friendly workplace practices we're raising awareness that we all have a role to play in reducing our carbon footprint.

David Rennick, CEO of Maddocks law firm and a director of AusLSA, says that staff are excited to be involved in greening the organisation.

"At Maddocks, we have a really committed and enthusiastic environment committee," said Mr Rennick.

"It includes staff from a lot of different areas of the firm."

"By tapping into that enthusiasm, we've been able to make significant reductions in our firm's environmental impacts over the last few years."

"Total greenhouse gas emissions per head, as well as our emissions from business travel emissions and paper use, are all down by more than 20 per cent since 2010."

David Goener, COO of McCullough Robertson and co-chair of AusLSA, says that his firm has benefitted from working with other law firms on environmental issues.

"The great thing about AusLSA, and the thing that makes it different from other sustainability initiatives, is that it's designed for the legal sector and takes into account the way law firms operate," said Mr Goener.

“Through AusLSA, firms can share their knowledge of what works, and what doesn’t.”

“We can learn from, and with, each other.”

“In three short years, AusLSA has been successful in engaging the Australian legal sector on environmental issues and facilitating better environmental performance by Australian law firms,” he said.

“I would encourage all Australian law firms to join AusLSA and start working to improve their sustainability.”

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A copy of the Report can be downloaded at – <http://legalsectoralliance.com.au/Report2013>

ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN LEGAL SECTOR ALLIANCE

About the Australian Legal Sector Alliance

The Australian Legal Sector Alliance launched in 2011 with eight members, and has grown to 45 members. Its member firms represent nearly 20% of all Australian lawyers in private practice.

The Alliance works to help member firms to understand and improve the sustainability of their operations by providing sector-specific information and resources, as well as a platform for members to share their knowledge and experience with each other.

AusLSA currently focuses on environmental sustainability, but aims to start introducing social sustainability to its program in 2014, with the aim of having its members start reporting on their corporate social responsibility.

AusLSA recently introduced “[Green Themes](#)”, a program that encourages and assists law firms to focus on one environmental issue at a time.

AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

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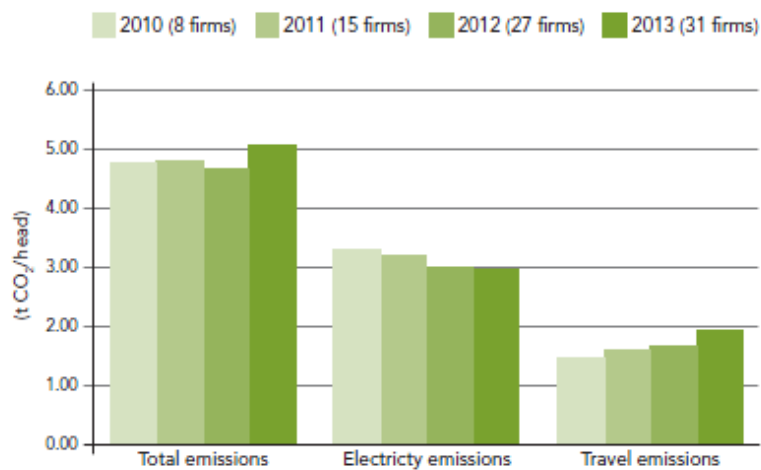
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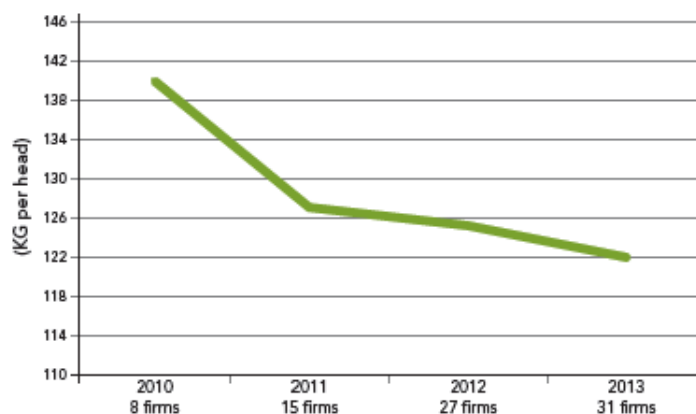
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CARBON EMISSIONS: ALL REPORTING FIRMS



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