

AUSLSA: 2013 IN REVIEW

PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGY

The AusLSA strategy outlines the following goals:

1. Expand the network
2. Promote Sustainability Reporting
3. Improve Sustainability Performance
4. Organisational Resilience

The achievements of AusLSA during 2013 are outlined below aligned to our strategic objectives.

EXPAND THE NETWORK

During 2013, AusLSA increased membership by 7% (from 43 to 46 Members). Pleasingly retention of members from FY2013 to FY 2014 was strong with 97% of General Members and 100% of Executive Members renewing their membership. The one member that did not renew contacted AusLSA to explain the decision and restate their support for the organisation.

	2011	2012	2013	Year 1 target	Year 2 target	Year 3 target
Membership	30	43	46			50
Top 10	7 (70%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)			
Top 20	12 (60%)	15 (75%)	16 (80%)	50% of top 20	80% of top 20	
Top 50	26 (52%)	33 (66%)	36 (72%)		50% of top 50	
Top 100	29 (29%)	39 (39%)	42 (42%)		20% of top 100	
Entire sector (No. solicitors)	7000-8000 (12-15%)	9500 - 10000 (17 - 18 %)	10,420 (20 %)			30% Sector

Through Membership

AusLSA provided more opportunities for staff from Member firms to network in 2013. Sustainability Champions Networks have been established in each capital city facilitating increased communication between members. The meetings have proved to be highly valued by the membership, attracting more participants from within the membership and also serving to attract new members.

Through Communication

AusLSA launched a new web platform at the beginning of 2013 which has facilitated better communication with AusLSA contacts, including differentiating between member and non-member contacts thereby increasing the value of membership. Email campaigns, web content and blog/discussion forums can all be personalised and delivered to different groups of contacts.

The website also provides a more professional interface and functionality for membership renewals and applications, event registration and member self-administration. The web stats (Appendix 1) show a significant increase in visits to the new website following launch.

Through the sector

Partnership with Law in Order to complete a Courts Sustainability Practices project (commenced by AusLSA interns in previous years) is helping to define the need, value and interest in sustainability within the courts, including the possibility of establishing a separate courts sustainability network.

Through the region

AusLSA visited Hong Kong during 2013 and identified that there was both interest in legal sector sustainability there and a gap in the market. The Legal Sector Alliance of England & Wales has since taken the lead on expanding LSA into Asia.

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PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

31 AusLSA Members (67% of members) submitted their environmental profile to AusLSA for FY2013, an increase of 15% (4 firms) since FY2012. Twenty-seven of those chose to publish their footprint (an increase from 24 last year). Another 2 firms indicated that they prepared reports but did not submit.

The published report was printed in substantial numbers this year for the first time in response to people's interest in receiving a hardcopy. The services of a copywriter and a new designer enhanced the effective communication of the report's messages and increased the professionalism of the final product.

FY2013 was the second year that the Greenstone reporting tool was used by AusLSA and included improvements made in response to a user survey conducted in 2012. Training, mentoring and assistance was offered to all members for FY2013 reporting with little take-up, perhaps indicating that users find the reporting process straightforward. A user survey was distributed again this year but only completed by 2 people.

Expanding scope

Work has commenced on developing proposals for expanding the agenda of AusLSA to include social sustainability considerations. A consultation process with members will be conducted.

Best Practice

The Law Firm Sustainability Network was launched in the USA and has a focus on promoting and benchmarking sustainability best practice. AusLSA would like to include more structured approaches to best practice and has initiated discussions with the LFSN on opportunities to collaborate.

IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE

Publication of environmental profiles is almost certainly an important consideration for law firms to address their environmental impacts. AusLSA reports have revealed some significant improvements (most notably electricity and paper use). Travel continues to be a challenge, but there are indications amongst the Executive Firms (and the results of a few individual members) that firms are starting to take greater steps to reduce the costs of travel (environmental as well as economic).

Executive Members	2013	2012	2011	2010	2012 - 2013	2011 - 2013	2010 - 2013
Number of firms	8	8	8	8			
Total Emissions	26793	28446	28020	25633	-5.8%	-4.4%	-4.5%
Total Emissions / Head	5.12	5.34	5.06	4.74	-4.0%	1.2%	8.1%
Electricity / Head	2.66	2.98	3.18	3.28	-10.8%	-16.3%	-19.0%
Travel / Head	2.21	2.35	1.88	1.45	-6%	17.5%	52.4%
Paper / Head	123	125	128	140	-1.6%	-4%	-12.3%

All Reporting Members	2013	2012	2011	2010	2012 - 2013	2011 - 2013	2010 - 2013
Number of firms	31	27	15	8			
Total Emissions	86316	59429	39095	25633			
Total Emissions / Head	5.03	4.63	4.78	4.74	9%	5%	6%
Electricity / Head	2.92	2.97	3.19	3.28	-2%	-8%	-10%
Travel / Head	1.93	1.65	1.59	1.45	17%	21%	32%
Paper / Head	122	125	127	140	-2%	-5%	-14%

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Communications

In 2013 AusLSA distributed 12 emails (excluding invitations to events) to a mailing list of nearly 800 contacts. Each email was opened by approx. 250 recipients (above average rates for mass email campaigns) and approx. 50 people clicked through (well above average rates).

During 2013, AusLSA launched the GreenThemes program, a website and communication campaign that provides suggestions and inspiration for law firms in-house sustainability programs.

The Staff Engagement Toolkit was also released. Adapted from a LSA(UK) resource, this website provides a process and ideas to assist with engaging staff at law firms on sustainability issues.

Events

There were 294 registrations at 18 events for AusLSA events in 2013 by 159 individual people (up from 257 registrations at 13 events last year). Of these:

- 34 people were from Executive Member firms
- 71 were from General Member firms
- 17 from non-member law firms
- Remainder from Honorary Members and Supporting organisations.

2013 Events		Registrations
Intro to CSR	Melbourne	11
	Sydney	9
	Brisbane	11
Global Benchmarking	Sydney	7
Melbourne SCN	11 April	10
	17 July	13
	9 October	11
Perth SCN	11 July	18
	18 November	10
Sydney SCN	23 July	16
	22 October	11
Brisbane SCN	30 August	13
	21 November	15
Webinar Federal Government Procurement Guidelines	2 October	20
AusLSA Symposium	17 October	45
2013 Report Launch	Sydney, 11 November	41
	Melbourne, 13 November	21
AEMS Refresher Workshop	26 November	9

ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

Considerable work has been undertaken this year to improve the financial systems at AusLSA. The adoption of a financial policy and procedure and closer alignment between budgets and ledgers has improved the clarity of AusLSA's financial situation.

The collation of an Operation Manual detailing the systems and processes used to manage the business of AusLSA has been commenced in response to the identification of key personnel risk.

While it was decided that it was not appropriate for AusLSA to provide suppliers with AusLSA membership or a supplier network, encouraging project partnerships and/or sponsorships between AusLSA and relevant suppliers was endorsed. The first project partnership is underway with Law In Order; the completion of the Courts procedure project.

AusLSA: 2014, the year ahead

The greatest change for 2014 and hence a priority project will be the development and introduction of social sustainability into the AusLSA program.

The existing program of events, communication and reporting will also continue to be improved. Identified objectives for 2014 include:

- Better forward planning for AusLSA Events and inclusion of more case-study presentation from Member firms
- Expansion of GreenThemes communications and program engagement
- Greater exploitation of sponsorship and project partnering opportunities
- Development of sustainability best practice guidelines in conjunction with LFSN
- Further improvements of the AusLSA Reporting framework
- Exploration of platforms and programs for sustainability procurement
- Working with the courts to establish a courts sustainability network