

Interactive Seminar – EA National Sustainability Strategy Update

Held on Monday 5th October, this seminar offered an update on the progress of Engineers Australia's National Sustainability Strategy. David Rice (FIEAust CPEng), a Sustainable Transport Consultant with over 40 years' experience featured as the night's speaker, inviting attendees to contribute their ideas to furthering Engineers Australia's national sustainability agenda. David was one of the organisers and presenters for the initial round of consultation workshops held in WA in 2013.

Attendees spanned a wide range of disciplines, from electrical to chemical to coastal engineering, which sparked stimulating discussion and demonstrated the commitment of the whole EA WA Division to achieving sustainability. All present were unified in the belief that real sustainability can only be achieved through practical, measurable processes and with a focus on social impacts.

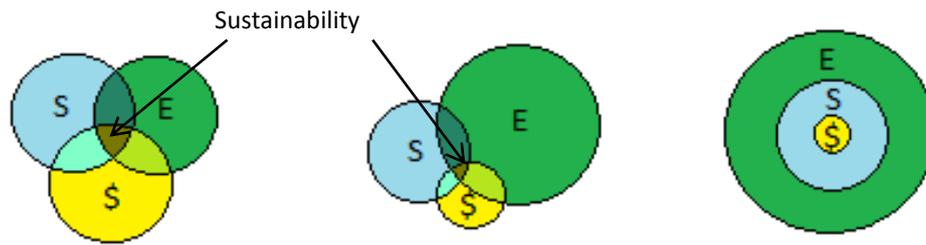
David began with a summary of what has already been accomplished in the implementation of the EA Sustainability Strategy and where we are now. Summary provided below, please refer to David's power point presentation for full details.:

- i.) Initial round of consultation workshops held in WA in Perth and Bunbury in 2013 to review IE Aust national sustainability policy and strategy.
- ii.) Followup workshop is now scheduled for November 2015 in Sydney to expand input beyond initial WA based workshops.
- iii.) IE Aust has rolled out the policy to state divisions requesting them to actively work to implement the policy at the state divisional level and below.
- iv.) WA Division management engaged with SENG WA chapter committee to work together to achieve the national agenda.
- v.) Since then the WA Division with SENG WA has worked together through the Learned Societies Advisory Council (LSAC) and directly with individual WA chapters of societies, panels and groups to identify relevant sustainable engineering related activities in WA Division with a view to improving coordination and review of progress against the implementation of the national sustainability agenda in WA Division.
- vi.) Key first SENG WA function to help drive this process was this interactive seminar with David Rice to establish where we are in implementing the national sustainability strategy in WA Division, where we want to go and how we can best use our available resources to get there.

We then looked forwards, with David asking the question: where do we want to be? And what can the EA WA Division do to get there?

How Best to Understand and Promote Sustainable Engineering?

The following simple Venn diagrams for Environment (E), Society (S), and Economic (\$) aspects were explored by the attendees as to their relative merits and drawbacks in conveying the importance of Sustainable Engineering for practising professional engineers, with David emphasising to general agreement that the third diagram best communicates the interdependence of these three aspects.



1 – Separate but overlapping aspects

2 – Separate but overlapping aspects with size reflecting importance

3 – Sustainability requires recognition that these are inter-dependent aspects, with size reflecting that S and \$ are dependent on E

Suggestions from attendees at the seminar included a change in our thought processes, with an effort to think sustainably;

- i.) by using enviro-economics, looking for energy efficiency in products as well as processes, or;
- ii.) adopting an alternate mind map where environmental, economic and social outcomes can be better adjusted and prioritised.
- iii.) Others suggested the need for education in sustainability at tertiary level engineering studies and even throughout childhood.

Attendees noted the importance of reaching out to engineers who are not members of IE Australia, as well as architects and other infrastructure professionals, and critically, engaging with stakeholders, to reach a mutual understanding and establish common goals that can be put in place for achieving sustainability not just within the engineering sector, but across the whole of society.

The seminar concluded with an attempt to rank the suggestions raised by attendees in terms of criticality and importance of each one recorded above to aid IE Aust WA Division and SENG WA to identify and allocate resources to address them in the best, logical sequence for the most efficient impact in regard to achieving the objectives discussed above.

IE Aust WA Division and SENG WA will progress the outcomes from the interactive seminar and welcome any input, comment or support that IE Aust WA Division members, SENG WA members and members of other technical societies, panels and groups in WA may wish to contribute.

Please contact either Alan Carmody, Chair of SENG WA at alan.carmody@alberfield.com.au or Susan Kreemer Pickford, IE Aust WA General Manager at skreemerpickford@engineersaustralia.org.au with any suggestions or for further details.