

Projects Insights

17 September 2010

Green light for AGIC's sustainability rating scheme

By Anne Davis and Alex Meguid.

Key Points:

AGIC is now promoting ground-breaking projects which will provide practical tools for those involved in infrastructure and sustainability.

The Australian Green Infrastructure Council's (**AGIC**) Sustainability Rating Scheme has been given the green light with government funding secured for the authorship of 20 of the scheme's subcategories.

The scheme, which is the first initiative of its type in the world, will provide a nationally recognised industry language for sustainability and metrics which incorporate social, economic and environmental sustainability principles. In so doing, the scheme will place Australia at the forefront of the movement towards sustainable infrastructure.

While it is expected that it will be 15 months before the scheme is up and running, AGIC is now in the process of promoting its other ground-breaking projects which are set to provide practical tools for those involved in infrastructure and sustainability.

Authorship kicked off by NSW Government

The NSW Department for the Environment and Climate Change took an early lead by providing funding for the Climate Change Vulnerability sub-category. Authorship of this sub-category is now complete and the lessons learned from its authorship are already providing valuable guidance for the sub-categories which have progressed to the authorship phase.

Federal funding for sustainability rating scheme

The recent allocation of \$400,000 by the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Penny Wong and \$100,000 by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Anthony Albanese, has allowed AGIC to ramp up the authorship of the sustainability rating scheme. The scheme consists of a voluntary rating tool covering seven sustainability categories comprising a total of 27 subcategories:

1.	Project Management & Governance	1.1 Purchase & Procurement 1.2 Reporting & Responsibilities 1.3 Climate Change Vulnerability 1.4 Making Decisions 1.5 Knowledge Sharing & Capacity Building
2.	Economic Performance	2.1 Value for Money

		<p>2.2 Due Diligence</p> <p>2.3 Economic Life</p>
3.	Using Resources	<p>3.1 Energy Use</p> <p>3.2 Water</p> <p>3.3 Material Selection & Use</p>
4.	Emissions, Pollution & Waste	<p>4.1 Greenhouse Gas Management</p> <p>4.2 Discharges to Air, Water & Land</p> <p>4.3 Land Management</p> <p>4.4 Waste Management</p>
5.	Biodiversity	<p>5.1 Functioning Ecosystems</p> <p>5.2 Enhanced Biodiversity</p>
6.	People & Place	<p>6.1 Health, Wellbeing, Safety</p> <p>6.2 Natural & Cultural Heritage Values</p> <p>6.3 Participatory Processes</p> <p>6.4 Positive Legacy for Current & Future Generations</p> <p>6.5 Enhanced Urban & Landscape Design & Aesthetics</p> <p>6.6 Knowledge Sharing, Shared Intellectual</p>
7.	Workforce	<p>7.1 Safety, Health & Wellbeing of Workforce</p> <p>7.2 Capacity Building</p> <p>7.3 Increased Knowledge of Applied Sustainability</p> <p>7.4 Equity</p>

Having succeeded in securing State Government funding for the climate change vulnerability sub-category, and federal government funding for 19 sub-categories in categories 1, 3, 4,5 and 6, AGIC is now optimistically refocusing on the State Governments. Support for the authorship of the final two categories, economic performance and workforce, which between them comprise seven sub-categories, is firmly in AGIC's sights.

Quick check tool goes live

In a determined effort to provide practical solutions to its members, in August **AGIC launched its quick check tool on the AGIC website**. Quick check is designed to assist the appraisal of sustainability considerations in both potential projects and existing infrastructure. Until AGIC's sustainability rating scheme is fully developed, quick check will assist members to plan ahead by highlighting numerous sustainability considerations.

Using quick check, in about an hour a sustainability practitioner can complete the checklist and create a report to reflect how any given project is performing (or will perform) across each of the sustainability focus areas.

Knowledge hub to be launched at annual conference

The knowledge hub project is set to be launched at AGIC's national conference to be held in Brisbane on 26 October 2010. AGIC has decided to make the knowledge tool available to all stakeholders, not just AGIC members. The knowledge hub will act as an indexed repository containing:

- project case studies of innovation and technological developments;
- specific sustainability initiatives including new checklists and tools; and
- research papers and technical studies including conference papers and reports.

It is intended that the knowledge hub will promote discussion on best-practice sustainability initiatives.

Never short of ideas, AGIC has a wiki-style forum on the sustainability rating scheme and an online forum facilitating discussion on wider issues in sustainable infrastructure in the pipeline.

Get on board

The outlook for the sustainability rating scheme is strong, with AGIC on track to set an international precedent with its scheme. It is not too late get involved in this ground-breaking work. Later this year, AGIC will be seeking project nominations from within the infrastructure industry to trial the draft scheme, providing a unique opportunity to be part of the scheme's development.

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http://www.claytonutz.com/publications/newsletters/projects_insights/20100917/green_light_for_agics_sustainability_rating_scheme.page.