

ATN Business Sense  
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Freight Week 2009 held in Melbourne and orchestrated by the irrepressible Phil Lovel had some valuable guidance on sustainability.

Under an Act of the Australian Parliament, very large businesses have to enter a Sustainability Covenant and provide leadership on environmental issues. They have to work toward low carbon outcomes and resource planning. It is a business model, not enforcement and they have to regularly update papers and be able to measure what has been done.

Another Act, The National Greenhouse Reporting Act 2007 was also explained with the need for compliance by the party with operational control. First registrations were due recently with registrants to report and publicize by 31st October 2009. A scorecard, road transport industry examples and a fact sheet are available at [www.atatruck.net.au](http://www.atatruck.net.au) and can be used to determine who has operational control. Customers may have to register under the Act and have a right to ask operators for data. It is best practice now to appoint a person responsible for environmental and sustainability policy, a sustainability manager.

As fuel consumption by transport operators is a major part of their carbon footprint reducing usage is the place to start. One way is buying new vehicles with Euro V engines. A detailed analysis may find that such purchases are self-funding. Other ways include route scheduling, frequency, timing and vehicle utilisation. The process starts with measurement and continues with reporting. Spreadsheets are fine and packages are getting better.

An obvious opportunity is driver training. Examples were given of experienced drivers who thought they knew it all and who had training and then substantially reduced consumption. Bad practices included engine idling time and over revving. In the United Kingdom telematics are used to monitor emissions which are heavily promoted for new contracts. With drivers, various size vehicles, loads, drops, routes and topography affect kilometres per litre measurement. So, the best and fairest way is to use telematics to monitor driver efficiency and that can be done by measuring engine efficiency. The results can then be put online via your internal business website. An Australian initiative to measure and manage emissions, strategies to improve efficiency and recognise environmental improvement can be found at: [www.ecostation.com.au](http://www.ecostation.com.au)

Interestingly, a study in the Netherlands found TNT's people had a larger carbon footprint than TNT. That means best practice includes helping your people reduce their personal carbon footprint. That can include an on-line noticeboard to facilitate car pooling and giving them guidance on how to personally reduce, reuse and recycle.

For the future, being environmentally sensible is good for business. Smart operators will do the right things environmentally and make it part of their business thinking. A sustainability plan should include appointing a person responsible for environmental and sustainable policy, conducting a diagnostic to collect base-line data, creating an environmental objectives plan (updated and published at least bi-monthly), establishing a team to determine if buying Euro V powered vehicles are self-funding and implementing a driver training plan to improve driver behaviour and deliver measured results. Finally, the fact that you have an Environmental Objectives or Sustainability Plan should be publicized and sold to your customers. If you don't they will soon start to ask you. Demonstrate that you are thinking 5 to 10 years ahead.

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