

# University Green Guide

## COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability is a key principle in the development of the Saigon South Campus as a green campus. RMIT University has a longstanding commitment to the environment and to sustainable development including:

- 1994 – Adoption of an Environment Policy
- 1995 – Signatory to Taillories Declaration
- 1999 – Signatory to The Universities of Australia Ecological Development Charter
- 2002 - Bioclimatic design standards
- Member - Australian Campuses Towards Sustainability

The policy adopted by RMIT University includes the following principles:

- Minimise consumption of water, energy, paper and other natural resources and manufactured products;
- Promote the maximum recycling and re-use of goods and materials used by and within the University;
- Design and manage building to maximise the use of natural sources of heating and lighting and to promote the use in buildings of flooring and other materials of maximum durability and minimum environmental impact
- Where generation of waste is unavoidable, ensure that all waste is disposed of regularly in a safe and efficient manner, consistent with best international practice.

## WHY SHOULD WE TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE ENERGY AND RESOURCE CONSUMPTION?

We all have an impact on our natural environment – through the energy we use for lighting, air-conditioning, using a computer and office equipment, the way we get to and from work, and the water we use.

We can make a difference by taking simple and easy steps. This University Green Guide has been developed to help you take those steps and create a more sustainable environment.

It is our **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY** to be a leader in the field of sustainable development in Vietnam. We can do this by informing our staff and students on environmental issues, minimising the impact of our operations, and engaging the community in our environmental programs and initiatives.

It is good **BUSINESS PRACTICE** as reducing energy and water consumption on a per head basis, operating efficient buildings, and reducing waste not only improves the environment but helps reduce our running costs.

It improves our CORPORATE IMAGE and in the long term will contribute to giving the University an edge over its competitors.

The three principles of The University Green Guide are:

REDUCE

REUSE

RECYCLE

The following are suggestions for helping to improve the environment by saving resources. If you have any suggestions on what else can be done please provide feedback to [green@rmit.edu.vn](mailto:green@rmit.edu.vn)

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October 2008



## ENERGY

In 2008 RMIT Vietnam will consume more than 2,800,000 kws of electricity (Saigon South 2.3 million KWH and Hanoi .5 million KWH) at a cost of nearly USD 200,000. As the University continues to grow, the amount of resources consumed also increases. We cannot reduce our overall consumption of electricity however we can reduce the per head consumption.

### WHAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS DONE:

- All lights in teaching areas and most offices have individual controls
- All lighting and air conditioning is programmed through the Building Management System software
- Lights in teaching rooms are set to turn off after 2 hours of operation
- Energy efficient lighting has been installed
- Rooms on the northern side have graduated lux levels increasing the further you are from the windows
- All rooms, both teaching and staff offices have significant areas of glass – clear, opaque and colored – which allow natural light to filter into the circulation corridors and the internal spaces.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

- Use natural light wherever possible.
- Turn off lights when you are not in the room,
- Turn off equipment (computers, monitors, printers, photocopiers) when you are not using them.
- Deactivate your screen saver – general research suggests that screensavers use energy rather than save it.
- Dress for the environment
- Wash your coffee cup in cold water
- Use the stairs – it is also good for your health

### **WATER**

In 2008 the Saigon South site will use in excess of 32,000 m<sup>3</sup> or 32,000,000 litres of town water, at a cost of USD 12,000. Water in Building 1 Hanoi is not charged separately and Building 2 use is nominal at about 13,000 litres a month.

Even in a country such as Vietnam which has significant rainfall during the wet season, water is a valuable resource. Reducing water usage helps reduce energy consumption used in treating and pumping water through and around the site and buildings.

As the University continues to grow we will not be able to reduce our overall consumption of water, however we can reduce the per head consumption.

### **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS DONE:**

Saigon South has its own water treatment plant where grey water is treated and used for irrigation of ground and gardens. . This reduces the demand for town water during the dry season. All water is tested regularly to ensure that it complies with recognised standards for use. No waste water is discharged into the local drainage system

The irrigation system is centrally programmed and has sensors so that the system will not engage if there has been recent rainfall.

Taps in wash basins are water efficient.

### **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WILL DO:**

- Conduct regular energy audits to identify areas for improvement
- Buy electrical equipment with energy efficient ratings.
- Buy multi-use equipment e.g. printers
- Ensure new facilities incorporate energy saving systems and equipment.
- Benchmark consumption against Australian universities
- Work with service providers to reduce electricity consumption.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

- Don't leave taps running
- Report leaking taps to Property Services - [propertyservices@rmit.edu.vn](mailto:propertyservices@rmit.edu.vn)
- Treat water as a rare commodity

### **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WILL DO:**

- Conduct regular water audits to identify areas for improvement
- Ensure new facilities incorporate water wise fixtures
- Benchmark consumption against Australian universities
- Work with service providers to reduce water consumption

## **PAPER**

The forecast for printing paper purchases in 2008 is more than 7,600 reams (Saigon South 6,000 reams and Hanoi 1,600 reams) or 3,800,000 sheets of A4, A3 and A1 paper at a cost of nearly USD 23,000. If placed end to end the paper would stretch from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi.

One tonne of paper requires the equivalent of 24 trees to produce and occupies approximately one cubic metre of land fill when dumped. We buy 19 tonnes of paper a year which means that 456 trees are required. The University buys paper manufactured from farmed timber. The environmental impacts of the life cycle of paper include – production of raw materials (logging of forests), production of paper (energy and water consumption, use of chemicals and generation of waste) and disposal (greenhouse gas emissions from dumping in landfill and loss of biodiversity in creating landfill sites).

### **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS DONE:**

- Commenced a program of buying duplex printers and photocopiers.
- Commenced a white paper recycling program.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

#### **THE BEST ACTION IS TO USE LESS PAPER**

- Think before you print a document or email – after you have printed the document what will you do with it.
- Think before you photocopy a document.
- Reuse paper that is only printed on one side for notes, printing or photocopying.
- Print double sided to save paper.

- Check the format of the document to maximize the words per page.
- Use email as much as possible rather than fax or letter
- Circulate reports rather than printing multiple copies
- Use laptops and projectors at meeting to display minutes, and alleviate the need to print them out

### **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WILL DO:**

- Measure paper use to identify savings
- Purchase paper with a recycled content
- Involve students and staff in programs for the reduction in paper use
- Only buy printers and photocopiers that have duplex capability
- Ensure recycling bins are accessible
- Work with service providers to reduce amount of paper going to waste

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

One of the biggest threats to the environment is the loss of biodiversity through the amount of space used for landfill. The Saigon South generates approximately 480 tonnes of general waste each year. We should all take action to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by thinking about how we can reduce, reuse, and recycle.

### **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS DONE:**

- Included waste reduction conditions in contracts for onsite service providers e.g. food and beverage suppliers
- Include provisions for removal and recycling of waste products from certain suppliers in purchase contracts e.g. IT equipment
- Require food and beverage providers to recycle plastic bottles, cans and glass bottles
- Recycle all cardboard

- Purchase refilled toner cartridges and return all empty cartridges to suppliers
- Food scraps from food and beverage suppliers given to local farmers.
- Donated outdated computers and text books to local universities
- All green rubbish composted on site and returned to gardens
- Used construction materials as onsite landfill for future buildings

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

- Reduce consumption of paper
- Use reusable cutlery and crockery
- Think about packaging before you buy
- Ask providers/suppliers to provide recyclable or reusable utensils and packaging

- Involve students and staff in programs for the reduction of waste to landfill
- Ensure recycling bins are accessible
- Prefer suppliers who have environmental management plans or systems
- Work with service providers to reduce amount of waste material going to landfill
- Buy products that have reduced or no packaging
- If possible benchmark waste output against Australian universities

**WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WILL DO:**

- Measure the amount of waste produced to identify areas for improvement

**PURCHASING**

Green purchasing is buying products and/or services that have a reduced impact on the environment either in production, manufacture, distribution, use or disposal.

The introduction of green purchasing plan at this stage is problematical in Vietnam because of the lack of appropriate materials available in country and the relative cost of importing green products.

**WHAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS DONE:**

- Required providers such as those providing landscape, pest control, housekeeping and food and beverage services, to use biodegradable materials and chemicals that do not impact on human health.
- Purchased white paper produced by companies with Environmental Management Systems and using sustainable raw materials

**WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WILL DO:**

- Prefer suppliers who have environmental management plans or systems
- Buy products that have reduced or no packaging
- Incorporate longevity, reusability and recyclability in purchasing practices
- Purchase energy efficient machines
- Consider whether the purchase of an item is really required – Does the item really need to be purchased or can something else be reused?