



Environment and the community – true sustainability involves care for both. The process is as important as the goal of sustainability.

The East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability Toolkit comprises:

The Primer

Provides a quick-read background to sustainability issues - with an East Gippsland focus.

The Case Studies

An inspirational series of 'case study cards' that share community success stories.

The Matrix

A worksheet designed to help community groups discuss local issues, record them, identify resources, and develop action plans.

Resource List on CD

Contacts, networks, readings and online links to help communities find resources and connect with others on the issues you care about.

Using the Toolkit for best results!

A bit of background reading

We suggest you circulate copies of *The Environmental Sustainability Primer* as soon as you can, so that people in your community have time to think about what sustainability means to them.

Set aside a time to begin sustainability conversations.

The *Primer* lists nine important strategies for more inclusive conversations. (Like: allowing enough time - so everyone gets their chance to talk; making it 'nice' to be there; offering childcare; getting the timing right ... all sorts of good ideas for getting more people involved. (A Community Facilitator could help put these strategies in place.)

Get the conversation started

Roundtable introductions are always a good way to get started. Allow enough time for everyone to talk a bit about who they are and why they are there.

To focus the conversation on sustainability you could ask a couple of ice-breakers:

**Q. How would you rate the current environmental situation in your community?
... and why?**

(Using an 'environmental indicator' like this can encourage everyone to begin their part in the conversation)



**Q. Are there processes in place that invite local input?
How can we ensure that local knowledge is included in decision making?**

Capturing the Conversation

As the conversation begins to flow, the 'Matrix' can be used to jot down issues, ideas, possible solutions, good contacts and 'next steps'. The Matrix can become a great record of where your conversation started - which will help you track your progress.

Browse the Case Study Cards

Real life stories are the best inspiration. The Case Studies are bite-size chunks of information - about local stories - across a range of great initiatives. They show just how achievable some solutions can be.

Talk about the Case Studies

A culture of co-operation can't be imposed. Case studies however, can allow people to see just how rewarding (and enjoyable) solutions (and co-operation) can be.

Visioning

Think about the examples around you, spend time thinking about the possibilities for your community. What could your community look like if sustainability was a key principle?

Network

Invite other groups, experts, people with alternative views to visit and share their perspectives with you along the way

Actions

The Matrix can help you identify 'actions'. Prioritising them might be tricky. (Tip: be flexible). Begin by implementing change in a small way. Select a task that enables people to learn the skills of working together without huge risk. Once trust and confidence are established more adventurous projects can be planned for.

Reflection

Celebrate the milestones together and evaluate constructively.

What did we do well?

What would we do differently next time?

(Also consider the evaluation tools in the Resource List, like the *Ecological Footprint Calculator* (for individuals and households) and the *Planning for Sustainability Starter Guide* (for communities).

Transformation

Have we changed through this process? Has the community changed?

Repeat !