

Reviews

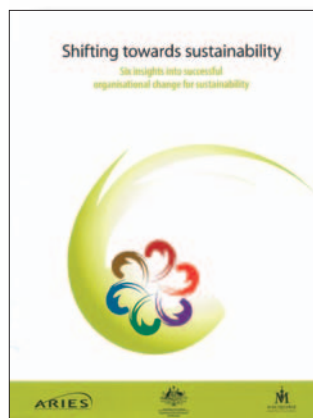
A 'How to' guide to sustainability for business

In 'Shifting towards sustainability: Six insights into successful organisational change for sustainability', SallyAnn Hunting and Daniella Tilbury have written an easy-to-read and practical guide for organisations wanting to take a more sustainable approach to business.

The free booklet is the outcome of a one-year Industry Sustainability Project, run by ARIES (Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability based at Macquarie University, Sydney) and funded by the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH).

The project involved 10 major corporate and government organisations that had already committed to making their businesses more sustainable – Amcor Australasia, BHP Billiton, National Australia Bank (NAB), DEH, Parramatta City Council, Toyota Australia, Visy Industries, Wesley Mission Sydney, Westpac and Yarra Valley Water.

The action research-based approach of the initiative empowered participants from the 10 organisations to make a clear impact



on sustainability processes and practices within their respective companies.

These impacts and outcomes are detailed in a series of case studies documented in the booklet. For example, as a result of its participation in the ARIES project, Yarra Valley Water established a Sustainability Circle of company executives to promote the integration of environmental sustainability into the business.

The publication identifies six insights into successful change for sustainability: to adapt a clear, shared vision for the future; build teams, not just champions; use critical thinking and reflection; go beyond stakeholder engagement; adopt a systematic approach; and move beyond expecting a linear path to change.

It also contains many lists of practical 'what you can do' points, making it a good starting point for any organisational representatives – human resource specialists, strategic planners and managers, executives and sustainability practitioners – thinking about the adoption of sustainability principles.

Shifting towards sustainability

Six insights into successful organisational change for sustainability
SA Hunting & D Tilbury

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Monsters – or manna from heaven?

Are genetically modified (GM) crops monsters of nature or could they provide answers to some of our most pressing environmental concerns? Will they create superweeds and run amok, or are these fears greatly exaggerated?

Microbiologist Professor Jennifer Thomson and now author of *GM Crops: The Impact and the Potential*, believes that GM crops are the key to third-world food insecurity.

As she points out, the average crop yield in the US is 10–15 tonnes per hectare, while in Africa the yield varies from about 0.5 to 3 tonnes per hectare, due to differences in soils, climate, infrastructure and technology. GM may be the 'competitive advantage' desperately needed by African farmers.

An international expert on GM crops based at the University of Cape Town, Professor Thomson takes us through the issues and concerns surrounding the development of GM crops and their impact on the environment. She explains how such

crops are developed and assessed and – to balance her arguments – discusses the likelihood of negative effects on biodiversity, pollen spread and organic farming.

Topics covered, often using case studies from developing countries, include classical plant breeding and GM technology; insect-resistant crops; herbicide-tolerant crops; virus-resistant and drought-tolerant crops; effects on biodiversity; control of pollen spread; co-existence of GM crops with conventional varieties; and horizontal gene transfer (the transfer of DNA from one species to another via non-reproductive pathways).

Professor Thomson concludes that GM crops may have tremendous potential for addressing sustainable development, particularly in poorer countries. In fact, she argues, the global community could face greater loss if some of these technologies are not adopted.

Aimed at economists, political activists, farmers, agriculturalists, environmentalists and school teachers, the book is an excel-



lent short introduction to this controversial topic and includes a useful glossary, index and reference list.

GM Crops

The Impact and the Potential
Jennifer A Thomson

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