

the  
sustainability  
learning  
institute



*A world where innovative  
business is a driver for  
ecological sustainability and  
social responsibility.*



# the sustainability learning institute



*After a long career in "business as usual" organizations, I have seen first hand the damage that can be caused by the lack of critical thinking skills in dealing with complex issues. Thank God for the Green MBA program and the systemic thinking lab as I have found an alternative to "business as usual" and am learning the skills to make a change for the better.*

*Kim E. Holeton*

## **From 2008, Australia will have access to program material already being implemented in California, Europe, and Asia.**

The Sustainability Leadership Institute is linked to the world's only fully integrated Green MBA, now delivered by Dominican University in California. Graduates of this program already work in most forms of business: banking, retail, manufacturing, software, utilities, primary industry, construction and education.

Components of our programs are also being applied in companies and government agencies in Europe and Asia in response to the challenges of sustainable development. Green Your Management (GYM), is led in Brussels by a team working in close collaboration with members of the European Commission and leading European business enterprises.

The GYM program is also in Thailand under the auspices of the regional consultancy APM. Development of programs beyond Thailand is planned by APM for 2009.

Our programs uniquely combine theoretical background and hands-on skills essential for innovation and change towards sustainable business practice. We integrate your learning into your systems – your planning, leadership and training, HR, information handling, problem solving and innovation.

Whether we work with a cross-functional team, a business unit, whole of organisation or supply network, we make sure you can integrate your learnings with your future practices.

## **Structure**

The SLI is a collaboration between five complementary agencies:

**Systemic Development Associates** conducts staff and community capacity building programs based on systemic thinking, experiential learning and futuring practices.

**GreenYourManagement** is an International networking organisation providing a wide range of learning and consulting services to organisations seeking to enhance their sustainability performance.

**Incept Labs** is a Sydney based provider of techniques for innovation.

**Sustainable Management Solutions** is a Victorian provider of learning and change management.

**CSR Sydney** supports companies with Corporate Social Responsibility practice.

# our vision

*“a world where innovative business is a driver for ecological sustainability and social responsibility.”*



Our mission is to provide customised capacity building programs that will enhance enterprises' ability to be sustainable – environmentally, commercially and socially.

We look forward to enterprises that can accommodate and mitigate the counter-sustainable factors in their operating environment. These are many and compound each other: climate change, peak oil, energy costs, water availability, waste and emissions, resource security, social impacts and staffing issues.

## **Approach**

We facilitate learning, leadership and change by applying systemic practices to an organisation's integrated research, planning and operational activities.

Our approach can require participants to challenge some of their deepest beliefs and practices about how we make decisions, live and work.

With ratification of Kyoto and the Bali Accord, new EU import standards (REACH, RoHS), carbon trading and new national sustainability policies, Australian companies are about to enter a new era of competitive pressure.

## **Changing business imperatives**

In 2008 the strategic context of business in Australia will change forever.

With the election of the Rudd Government, Australia has signed Kyoto, is engaged in the Bali Accord, and is working on frameworks for a sustainable national future. Carbon targets, costs and trading will become part of every firm's operational framework. National sustainability strategies will impact on water, transport, and all supply network costs. Current marketing, risk management, budgeting and logistics will be transformed.

New opportunities for green business will open up, and not just in energy. Transport, finance, I.T, communications, import / export, agriculture, property, commodities – no area of wealth creation will be untouched.

Business itself will be transformed as risk and opportunity are reshaped by the new low carbon economy. We will need to accommodate global changes in climate, trading regulations and geopolitical arrangements.

*We enable companies to generate real cultural and practical changes for long term sustainability, and individuals to become hands-on change agents.*

sustainability learning

# our programs



*The systemic approach to problem solving is a critical way for green consultants to build their toolkits to take with them on any client engagement and lead clients out of confusion and into a place where we can act - knowing that improvement is the never ending goal, and that there isn't ONE answer, and then we're done. It's more a mindset of let's focus on a continuous improvement process ...and tools to get us there.*

*Kirsten Uttam*

Five foundational knowledge domains inform our approach to enhancing sustainability in enterprises:

- Systemic Practices;
- Critical Thinking;
- Integrated Ecological / Commercial Modelling;
- Principles of Redesigning Regenerative Enterprises;
- People, Technology, Market and Regulatory Intervention strategies for sustainability.

Every time we work with a group, either within one or across a number of organisations, the specifics are finalised to meet the unique requirements of the participants' context.

We provide a range of options based around a four-level framework:

### **First steps**

A 4 hour workshop to show an enterprise how it can gain new skills.

### **Introductory**

4 x 4 hour workshops format to identify the knowledge and skills needed to address complex sustainability issues, and learning some key cornerstone applications

### **Skilling**

10 x 4 hour sessions plus in-house project. Participants learn a wide range of systemic practices for responding to their specific sustainability issues.

### **Certificate**

20 x 4 hour sessions, plus in-house project and reading program. The Certificate is at MBA standing and is based on the Green MBA program offered by Dominican University California. Participants engage in studying and implementing both theoretical and practice aspects of managing a sustainable enterprise.

### **Accreditation**

The Sustainability Learning Institute is discussing formal accreditation for our Certificate level course. Advice on this issue will be available on application.

### **Tailored Path-finding Workshops**

Companies, government or non-profit organisations encounter complex issues as they strive to become more resilient and sustainable. We combine capacity building and identifying real-time paths for continuous improvement . We will work with your teams in tailored interventions based in systemic analysis and creation of strategic innovations.

We do not 'solve' your sustainability issues, they will evolve over time. What we do is give you the capacity to find pathways to a more sustainable future.

# coursework



*These systemic labs are providing priceless value to my future as a green business professional. I have been in the working world for ten years. I know how to facilitate a meeting or lead a brainstorming session. But Bruce is teaching us more than how to facilitate a group exercise. He is showing us how to guide an organization out of chaos toward sustainable business practices. After just two days of labs, I already feel that I have valuable skills and insights to offer my company*

*Rosemary Hugh*

Our coursework **always** links theory and practice. We teach our own methodology and our students apply it on real issues. We bring in expertise in new enterprise thinking, innovation, current social and environmental practices.

## **Systemic Practices and Critical Thinking**

As 'Cradle to Cradle's Bill McDonough said, *"Design is the first signal of human intention."*

The programs of the Sustainability Learning Institute enable participants to take a lead in the redesign of existing systems and enterprises, and in the design of new ones.

All our programs, of whatever length or mode, apply systemic and critical thinking. This enables organisations to deal with the complex task of changing to more sustainable practices.

This approach provides a method and practice that will enable our graduates to lead, to assess what they observe, and to justify the confidence of their peers and colleagues. The anatomy and physiology of a well-reasoned judgement is the core of this approach. Students learn to explore complexity from multiple perspectives, and when to apply specific techniques to the opportunities and problems that they perceive. The coursework is set within a systemic critical framework and encompasses a range of skills required to always be aware of the bigger picture.

## **Eco-Commerce Models for Sustainable Enterprises**

The purpose of this subject is to provide an overview, a comparative understanding and a working knowledge of the major initiatives at the intersection of business development and environmental and social responsibility. We will explore and practice methodologies designed to help established enterprises to incorporate environmental and social considerations through all organizational levels. Students will learn to assess impacts within their domains, become conversant in a broad array of eco-commerce models that can help address issues that emerge, and develop some practical experience in applying eco-commerce models.

# coursework



## Redesigning Regenerative Enterprise

Sustainable business practices are often

1. poorly understood,
2. rarely implemented systematically, and
3. merely a disguised set of traditional business practices masquerading as innovation.

This course will integrate prior learning and new ways of thinking to empower organizations to place sustainability at the core of their business strategy, and optimize the use of human, environmental and financial capital through all levels of the organization. This will foster a new vision of the possibilities for organizations to regenerate the environment while allowing all stakeholders, including shareholders, to thrive. The primary focus of the course is innovating to become sustainable.

## Social Impacts of Enterprises

In global and local arenas, the operations of companies have positive and negative impacts on cultures, social dynamics, politics, household health and incomes, and societal development. In this course, students learn how to identify, assess, report on and address the impacts on the various stakeholders affected by enterprises, including employees, customers, community members, social and political institutions, and society at large.

Students build skills in developing metrics, engaging with stakeholders, and managing the social capital of an institution that is also mindful of impacts on natural and financial capital. The social function of regulations and regulatory authorities is also investigated.

## Evolving Clean Technologies

New technologies are being developed and each poses a question for organisations – is this technology in the interests of sustainability objectives. This course reviews the latest initiatives in energy, water and communication technologies and proposes criteria for assessing their 'green' value. It will be continually updated and will provide early advice for participants, and direct contact with innovators where desired.

*The systemic tools taught in the Green MBA are extremely valuable to me as a successful future leader in the sustainability movement*

*Kiersten Light*

# coursework



## People, Technology, Regulations and Markets - Factors for Sustainability

In striving for an integrated approach to sustainability issues it is necessary to have an appreciation of how intervening variables can arise from many different sources. Four sources of particular concern to business are:

- People who are their staff, competitors, and consumers
- Technology which are the scientific innovations which may disrupt
- Regulations introduced by governments or other agencies with authority and
- Market that is sensitive to economic changes.

People driven interventions arise out of changing demographic patterns, emergent lifestyle fads and motivations and inter and intra generational changes. The program seeks to build a sociological awareness of these factors.

Technology driven interventions arise from the continual progress of science to utilise resources in more effective and efficient ways. The particular technologies of interest will vary from industry to industry therefore the facilitators will design the focus of this section of the program with the client so that participants gain an overview of what is emerging in their specific areas of responsibility.

Similarly regulatory changes tend to be industry specific although there is an increasing move within sustainability to develop holistic regulations. The program will provide a briefing on new regulations like the developing GHG emissions trading scheme being developed by the Australian government.

There is no doubt that the changing community attitude to sustainability and other aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility will become an increasingly important influence in the behaviour of markets for all products. The program presents an outline of current indicators of market behaviour that assist business anticipate and accommodate these changes.

This is a dynamic subject where the details will vary with every program. The segments will be lead by specialists in each of the fields not with the intention of creating fully competent performers in each area but rather to ensure all participants appreciate the role these variables play in sustainability strategies and an understanding of where and when appropriate expertise should be engaged.

*The systemic tools taught in the Green MBA are extremely valuable to me as a successful future leader in the sustainability movement*

*Kiersten Light*

# project work & enhancements



## Project Work

The lead faculty in each subject will negotiate with each participant a relevant short term project through which they will have the opportunity to consolidate and explore knowledge and practices presented within their own organisation. Participants will report on their project in the final session of the subject. The project will be peer assessed.

At the first course offsite meeting the Course Co-ordinator will negotiate with participants a whole of cohort project that will require the participants to work together to achieve a sustainability goal they have selected. In programs where the whole cohort is from the same organisation the Co-ordinator will negotiate the project to be completed with appropriate senior executives in the sponsoring organisation. Cohort projects will be co assessed by faculty and members of the host organisation.

## Enhancements

### Additional Involvement Practitioner Network

SDI is in partnership with GYM to provide additional involvement opportunities and has formed a 'think tank' from its faculty and supporters around the world. The purpose of the think tank is to offer participants and graduates access to mentoring and a network of resources when requested. GYM will continue

to grow and harness a global network of knowledge and experience that will stand behind all its graduates.

### Software and other tools

A sister company of GYM is currently developing software to assist learning and practice. In initial stages it reflects the suite of 'pen and paper' techniques currently used to give a systemic approach to the complex problems facing organisations in building sustainability. Students of the Sustainability Learning Institute will have preference in learning and using this software as it comes on line. Second generation software will then address Web 2.0 applications as they evolve from user needs.

### Alumni Network

The number of graduates from GYM's programs in sustainability leadership around the world is increasing rapidly and GYM is committed to providing the graduates with ongoing exclusive alumni online forums for networking, learning and benchmarking.

# benefits



## Graduates will be in demand for years to come

There is a significant shortage of individuals who can lead these changes, with the growing demand for green policy initiatives and innovations to enhance sustainability performance.

The Graduate network already established by the GreenMBA includes leaders of sustainability with experience in many of the world's leading corporations such as Microsoft, Kaiser, Google, Cisco, Wells Fargo and Wal-Mart. On completion, participants receive course certification and enrollment into a web-supported alumni network.

Participants will develop new knowledge, skills and understandings of sustainability leadership. They will be equipped with practical techniques for engaging people from a participatory leadership role. They will be linked into practitioner and the alumni networks, have access to mentoring and other resources, and will be well equipped to take a leadership role in sustainable business development.

## Benefits to companies

Companies which enroll a group of leaders from across the business will move quickly towards sustainable practice. They will take a leadership position in their field.

Individual managers will bring their new knowledge into their respective fields (marketing, logistics and supply chain, production) and will be able to begin instituting positive change immediately.

The Corporate Cohort work is a business-wide project for change toward sustainability within the business, under the mentorship of faculty members and the Corporation's senior managers.

Participating companies can expect a significant escalation of the organisation's progress towards sustainable practices, products and marketing, with positive impacts on reputation, client satisfaction and shareholder value.

*Right off the bat I found a connection to the material being presented and could see immediate applications for the tools presented in both my graduate studies (GMBA) and work environment*

*Kas Neteler*

# case stories



Companies, government or non-profit organisations encounter intractable, complex issues as they strive to become more resilient and sustainable. We combine capacity building and identifying real-time paths for continuous improvement. We work with our clients in tailored interventions, applying systemic analysis of intractable issues. As well as cultural change and practical learning, our clients are immediately creating strategic innovations.

## **The World's First Green MBA**

Systemic Practice tools and techniques taught in all SLI programs are key components of the highly successful Dominican University California's Green MBA. For example, forty students of the GMBA program have recently completed a series of 7 two-day laboratories. The skills learnt in these laboratories are now been implemented in a variety of business, government and community enterprises, including Cisco, Wells Fargo Bank and Metronics. [www.greenmba.com](http://www.greenmba.com)

## **In Asia**

In 2007 the major Thailand management consulting company APM contracted SLI faculty to train 20 of their senior consultants in systems thinking tools for managing the complex changes being experienced by Asian businesses. These consultants are now implementing SLI taught practices to business groups in Thailand and beyond.

## **Green Your Management (GYM)**

SLI partner GreenYourManagement has been contracted to organise and facilitate the Fort Baker Leadership Summits (Feb 2009) which will bring 40 diverse Californian leaders together to co-design a resilient and sustainable future.

## **Environmental Protection Authority**

The EPA in California found a systems-based approach, facilitated by Bruce McKenzie through GYM, enabled key players in the Biofuels sector to overcome a year of negotiation difficulties and reach shared options on issues that they need to address. The full report is available at [www.efc.org](http://www.efc.org)

## **Dairy Australia**

A team of SLI faculty, headed by Chair Bruce McKenzie, is working with Dairy Australia to develop sustainable options for the industry's future. The team is using the same suite of systems thinking tools as taught by SLI, in this case to address its complex economic, environmental and social issues.

## **Parsons Brinkerhoff**

SLI is working with this leading global infrastructure firm to develop systemic approaches to its innovation practices - including integrating sustainability into its design and engineering considerations.

*SLI tools and techniques brought the disparate factions of the US Biofuels industry to the shared table. This course-work accomplished in one day what we had been unable to do in one year*

*Sarah Diefendorf*

# faculty



## Bruce McKenzie Chairman

Bruce is a faculty member of the Green MBA and Co-Founder of Green Your Management, he provides Systems Thinking services in sustainability and other complex situations. Bruce has a background in academic, business and community developmental applications of systemic practices.

## Rob Kay Senior Facilitator

Rob has a PhD in systems approaches to learning, and is an Adjunct Professor at UTS. His recent work includes heading Strategic Innovation at Westpac Bank. Rob is a Director of Incept Labs.

## Bruce Hills Director

Bruce is a Director of Incept Labs. He previously held senior positions at Westpac Bank in areas of Risk Management and Strategic Innovation. He is a member of several business development networks.

## Cheryl Hardie Secretary / Public Officer

Cheryl is a qualified Company Director. She has held several Advisory positions to Governments in the critical sustainability areas of water. She continues to work extensively with staff development programs in all sizes of business and government enterprises.

## Ian Hardie Senior Facilitator

Ian is a former senior manager in the health care industry with extensive experience in the operation and change potential of professional associations. He is currently developing capacity building programs for adult education and employment agencies.

## Damian Collins Director

Damian has a Doctorate in Organisational Psychology and specialises in individual and organisational change management. His career spans many assignments for leading organisations in the UK and Australia.

## David Morrissey Director

David has a background in Social Science and Adult Education, and has worked with Indigenous, cultural and commercial organisations in planning and implementing change. His current focus is in Corporate Social Responsibility.

# fees and contact information



Participation can be by corporate block, individual fees or sponsored engagement. Fees will be based on the size and circumstance of each project. Our policy is to be a cost-effective option for our clients and partners.

## **Sponsorships**

In addition to corporate block participation, the Sustainability Learning Institute offers sponsorship opportunities of two types:

- 1) Supporting particular events and activities within the Program
- 2) Supporting individuals, for example from partner NGOs

## **Locations**

Coursework can be provided across Australia and in neighbouring regions. Corporate block work can be provided on premises. Individual work will be at select locations.

## **Certification**

For shorter coursework the Sustainability Learning Institute will issue certificates of completion to participants who meet completion criteria, exercised via both peer and faculty review.

The Certificate Program will be accredited through our partnership with Dominican University, California

## contact

For further information contact

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