

**A SNAPSHOT OF
SUSTAINABILITY
REPORTING
IN AUSTRALIA**

OCTOBER 2007

Businesswriters & Design is a consultancy that specialises in sustainability reporting and stakeholder communications. It has advised on, written and/or designed over 90 annual and sustainability reports and provided strategic communications advice, speeches and white papers for a wide range of senior executives. In the sustainability and corporate governance arena the company has worked with IAG, ANZ, AGL, Caltex, Zurich Australia, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Diageo, the NSW Government and the Committee for Sydney.

This report was prepared for a day-long seminar on sustainability reporting presented by Businesswriters & Design and Momentum International Partnerships.

OCTOBER 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A snapshot of sustainability reporting in Australia offers insights into the sustainability reporting practices of some of Australia's largest companies. It examines their current reporting methods, how those methods differ from previous years and how they expect their reporting practices and those of their peers to evolve as their sustainability programs mature. The report also examines the value businesses place on their sustainability reports and whether they believe they bring reputational – and financial – benefits.

METHODOLOGY

Data for the research was gathered using email surveys. Selection was largely based on those Australian companies that were listed as having registered reports on the GRI Register as at July 2007. The register is a collaboration between the GRI and CorporateRegister.com.

The survey was sent to 125 companies. Thirty-one responded (a response rate of 24.8%). Twenty-four companies completed the survey and a further seven declined to fill it in but provided information on their reporting practices.

The survey specifically targeted the people responsible for producing the company's report. Their names were obtained from their company's sustainability report or where this was not included in the publication, from direct contact with companies.

This exercise in itself provided a revealing insight. Responsibility for issuing the report falls under the remit of a broad range of departments and positions: Media and Public Affairs, Investor Relations, Sustainability Strategy, Environmental Affairs and Sustainability, Sustainability Development, Communications and Consultation and Corporate Responsibility/Affairs/Strategy/Relations/Communications/Publications.

Survey questions were kept deliberately brief to encourage respondents – already burdened with the onerous task of completing indexes and collating data for reports – to participate. The respondents are a mix of government and publicly listed organisations from a broad range of sectors: mining, materials, oil, utilities, energy, property, financial services, retail, telecommunications, real estate, health and food and beverage.

The survey questions, participants and collection of responses are listed in Appendix A, B and C respectively.

KEY FINDINGS

Despite its modest sample size, the survey offers a useful glimpse into the evolving sustainability reporting practices and attitudes to sustainability communications among the company representatives responsible for producing reports in Australia.

Here are its key findings:

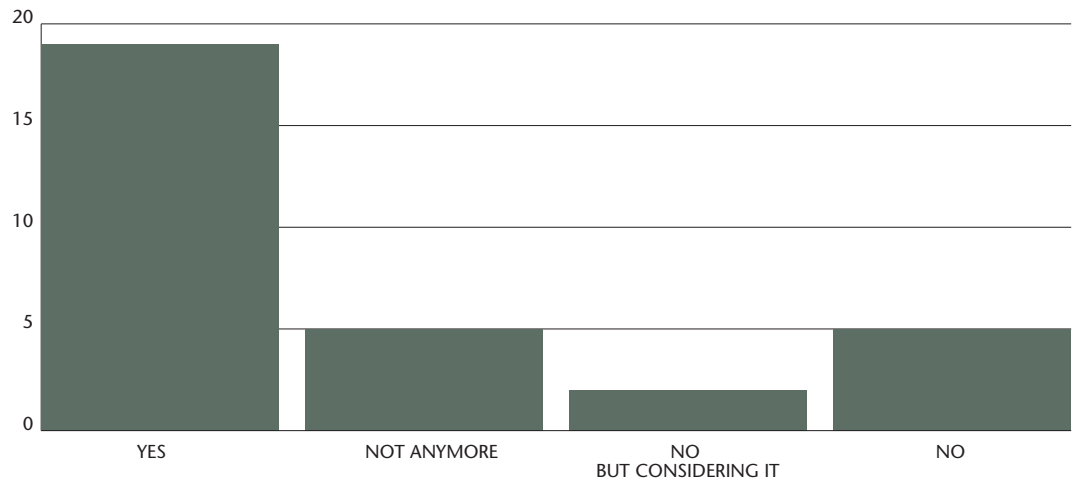
- While the frequency of stand-alone sustainability reports is increasing, a handful of more sophisticated reporters are reassessing this strategy and have begun to incorporate the document into their annual reports.
- Opinion remains divided on whether sustainability reports should be combined with annual reports. Some respondents predict a move to a less centralised method of communicating sustainability performance that is customised to the needs of the company and its stakeholders.
- A company's sustainability report is often used as centralised source of verified information that is drawn on for a range of internal and external communications during the year.
- The majority of companies surveyed either report against the GRI G3 guidelines or at least use them to inform their reporting framework.
- The majority of our respondents believed their sustainability report enhanced their company's reputation. Few, however, could confidently link it to improved bottom line performance, although there were exceptions.
- A significant number of respondents are shifting to web-based reports only, or have already done so.

STAND-ALONE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS

It appears that the number of the Australian companies producing stand-alone sustainability reports is increasing. Of the 31 companies that responded to the question relating to the production of a stand-alone report, the majority (19) answered in the affirmative. A further two companies said although they did not publish a report at the moment, they're likely to do so in the near future. One respondent said that in 2007 they had incorporated sustainability into their annual report as an interim step to producing a stand-alone report next year.

However, there are indications from more experienced reporters that we may be seeing the start of a reversal in the trend for stand-alone reports. After publishing stand-alone reports in previous years, five companies have now incorporated the document into their annual report. The change was made, as one respondent said, to "further integrate sustainability into our business practices."

Do you produce a stand-alone sustainability report?



Four survey participants did not publish a stand-alone report and expressed no intention of doing so in the future. Of these, two companies outlined alternative means of communicating their sustainability progress and initiatives, including annual reports, websites and case studies on individual projects.

ONE REPORT?

To further interrogate the potential of annual and sustainability reports being combined into one document in the future, respondents were asked for their views – and when they thought this would happen.

The question elicited an array of thought-provoking perspectives and opinions from the 24 companies that responded. Most participants did not have a clear-cut view either way. Even those who firmly believed in one or the other acknowledged the disadvantages of each approach. Some of the points raised by respondents include:

Arguments against combining the two:

- The documents have separate audiences and should therefore remain distinct
- Problems of length. The document would be too long or companies would be forced to cut content that would have been included in stand-alone reports
- Sustainability reports and annual reports are vastly different documents with different messages. Combining the two muddles their respective messages and detracts from the importance of sustainability, which deserves singular attention.

Arguments for it:

- A combined report reduces information duplication
- Reporting financial performance and sustainability together improves the integration of sustainability into day-to-day business
- Demonstrates a sincere commitment to sustainability
- Makes for more holistic reporting
- Reduces costs and paper consumption
- One document is easier for stakeholders to navigate.

The dilemma has resulted in some interesting approaches among our respondents. For example, one multinational with a solid sustainability reputation is sending its upcoming annual report to investors shrink-wrapped together with its stand-alone sustainability report.

One participant believed there was a danger of companies merging their reports simply to reduce costs and to give the appearance of sustainability being more highly integrated into their business than it might actually be.

Some respondents speculated on the future of sustainability reporting in general. One thought that, increasingly, it would become less centralised with most information available online. “It’s not so much about one document – it’s about convenient access to information that is material, complete and responsive to stakeholder needs,” she said.

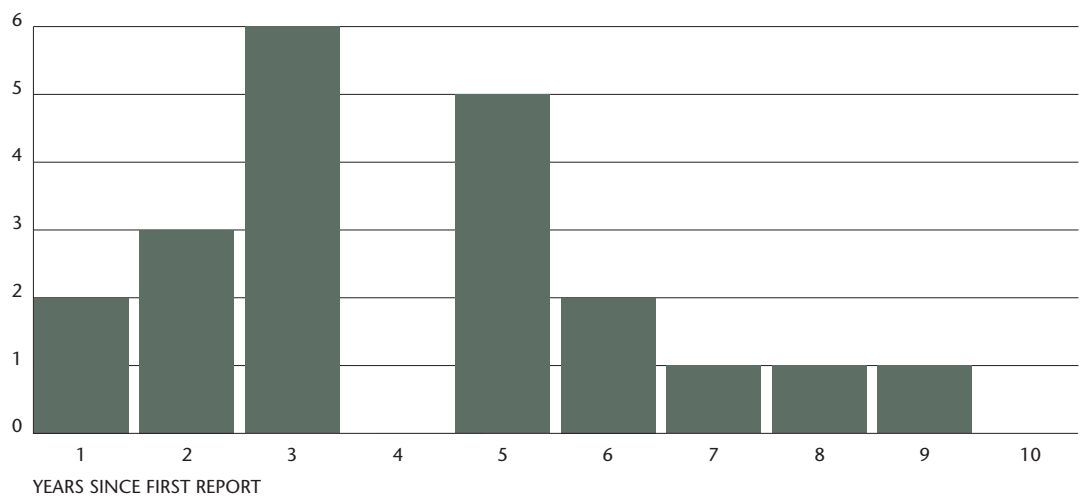
Another participant thought that the concept of sustainability reporting may evolve into a range of variations to suit the needs of each business and its stakeholders. Yet another said that in future, their reporting will be largely dictated by stakeholder needs.

REPORTING HISTORY

There was a spread of responses from the 22 companies that answered the question about how long they had been producing stand-alone reports, with the earliest being 1988 and two respondents producing their first reports this year (2007).

Several observed that their sustainability reports had evolved from publications such as dedicated health, safety, environment and community reports or from sections on sustainability in their annual reports to stand-alone sustainability reports.

How long have you been producing a stand-alone report?



MATERIAL ISSUES

With varying degrees of confidence, most (14) of the 21 companies that answered the question on whether they covered in detail their businesses’ top five material issues, thought their report had covered them in some depth. While several did not respond directly, others thought that although they had touched on their top five issues, they may not necessarily have covered them all in detail.

There is an interesting variety in how respondents identified their top five material issues. Five undertook a stakeholder engagement process to determine the appropriate issues to report on. One used the AA1000 Assurance Standard, a reporting tool devised by the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability. Another used the Global Reporting Index (GRI) indicators, while a third based their sustainability indicators on the Montreal Process MIF indicators.

REPUTATION AND BOTTOM LINE

The question of whether sustainability reporting influences bottom-line performance is a vexed one and subject to much debate, though the 21 companies that answered the question: “Has the publication of your report influenced your reputation? Your bottom line?” were more confident about its impact on their reputation.

A benefit to reputation

Most respondents believed that publishing a report had had a positive impact on their reputation with employees, customers, regulatory bodies, investors, business partners and competitors. One company used the information in its report as a basis for its marketing claims and to prevent accusations of “green wash”.

The bottom line

Three respondents linked this improvement in reputation to financial gains. However most were less confident about their sustainability report’s bottom line contribution. One respondent said the report’s financial benefit “wasn’t material”. Another said that, at the moment, sustainability was a “cost rather than a profit centre” and a third observed that while the report itself might not have directly boosted the organisation’s bottom line, sustainability initiatives had improved its ability to tackle issues that could pose risks to the company’s reputation and financial performance as they arise.

One respondent said the sustainability report had identified gaps in the business’ operational efficiency, while another said it was “part of our corporate responsibility” and they hadn’t identified a significant business impact arising from it.

Unsure

A handful of respondents weren’t prepared to comment, given their report’s impact on reputation and profits had not been tracked or quantified.

OTHER AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION

Participants were asked whether they communicate their sustainability activities in ways other than their reports.

The 23 companies that responded to this question use a diverse range of methods to communicate their sustainability initiatives to stakeholders, including:

- annual reports
- company websites
- community meetings
- newsletters
- company magazines
- intranet
- media liaison
- public speeches and presentations
- investor briefings
- regular – even monthly sustainability updates
- consumer surveys
- focus groups
- employee engagement surveys
- computer based forums
- participation in conferences and sustainability events
- participation in industry and corporate networks
- involvement in the supply chain
- plant and facility tours and open days
- consultation programs
- advisory committees
- consumer hotlines

The most common alternative means of communication among respondents were company websites and annual reports.

COMMUNICATION CROSS-OVER

It's clear that most companies in our survey regularly draw material from their sustainability reports for other communications. As one respondent said, they're used as "a benchmark that can be referred to for reliable information".

The information is used in a broad range of communications to help meet regulatory reporting obligations, in staff and customer publications, in annual reports and other investor communications, press releases and conference presentations. One company used the information in their report to participate in third-party surveys like the FTSE4Good index.

Of the 22 responses to the question of using information collated for their reports in other stakeholder communications, only two companies did not do so. One of these companies did the reverse: using the year's communications along with a "sustainability self-assessment" as the basis of their sustainability report.

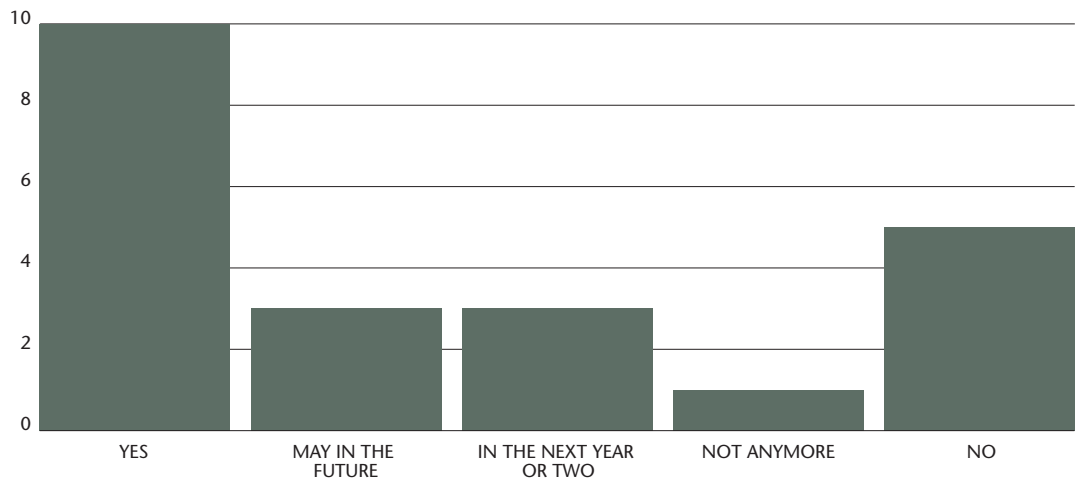
GRI G3 GUIDELINES

Almost all the 22 respondents to the question on reporting against GRI G3 guidelines either report against them or at least use them to inform their reporting framework.

One respondent referenced the G3 GRI guidelines but didn't report against them because they considered many of the G3 indicators to be "irrelevant to our business, which reduces the easy reading of the document".

Another reported against the Draft G3 guidelines and yet another was still using the 2002 GRI guidelines, "but part of this year's verification process will be recommendations to move us to G3". A number of respondents also used sector supplements in addition to the GRI guidelines.

Do you report against the GRI G3 guidelines?



Alternative guidelines

One company reported against the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) guidelines, while still referencing the GRI G3 guidelines. Another participant used the GRI G3 reporting guidelines along with those set out by the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, a global association established by the UNEP.

WHO DO YOU DISTRIBUTE YOUR REPORT TO?

The list of recipients of respondents' sustainability reports was long and varied. Some recurrent targets were employees, regulatory bodies, non-government organisations and customers. Some respondents also send their reports to members of the media and politicians.

Most surveyed companies make their reports publicly available on their websites.

HOW DO YOU DISTRIBUTE YOUR REPORT?

Mailing the published report to key stakeholders and making it accessible on the company website were the chief methods of distribution among our participants.

Seven respondents however, either published only a web report and directed their stakeholders to it, or were shifting to a web only report in the near future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The survey questions

Do you produce a stand-alone report?

How long have you been producing it?

Do you cover in detail the top five material issues for the business?

Has the publication of the report influenced your reputation? Your bottom line?

Do you communicate with stakeholders about your sustainability activities in ways other than your report?

Do you use the information collated for your report in any other stakeholder communications?

What is your view about the sustainability report and annual report becoming one document? If so, when do you think this will happen?

Do you report against the GRI G3 guidelines?

Who do you distribute your report to?

How do you distribute it?

APPENDIX B

The participants

AMP

Hydro Tasmania

Macquarie Bank Limited

Illawarra Coal

City of Melbourne

Stockland

Woodside Petroleum

Foster's Group

PaperlinX

Investa Property Group

Xstrata

Forests NSW

WSN Environmental Solutions

Coca-Cola Amatil

Nufarm

Yarra Valley Water

Ports Corporation of Queensland

Landcom

ActewAGL

Ergon Energy

Wesfarmers

CitiPower / Powercor

Coles

South East Water

MECU

City West Water

VicSuper

Great Southern Group of Companies

The Adidem Group

BHP Billiton

APPENDIX C

Responses by question

Do you produce a stand-alone sustainability report?

"No."

"We did separate reporting for sustainability within our 2004/05 and 2005/06 annual report. The 2006/07 annual report is an integration of annual and sustainability reporting."

"No."

"[Company] does not produce a stand-alone sustainability/corporate responsibility report at this time and is therefore unable to help with your research. We are however currently reviewing our sustainability reporting practises and reporting will be considered as part of that review."

"[Company] does not currently produce a stand-alone sustainability report."

"[Company] does not produce a stand-alone sustainability report. By [company], I mean [name of group] which includes a number of entities both listed and unlisted around the world. So while none of those entities produce a stand-alone sustainability report, a number of the entities – including [company] – have material on social and environmental risk management on websites and in annual reports. A number of entities also provide information on case studies relevant to these issues. So as you can see, it is not a simple all-encompassing answer. The simplest thing to say though is that [company] does not produce a stand-alone sustainability report, but reports relevant risk-management frameworks and, in the case of many of its entities, case studies of social and environmental projects and initiatives."

"We don't produce a sustainability report nor do we respond to the multitude of "triple bottom line"/ corporate responsibility surveys. We address sustainability issues in our annual report."

"Yes."

"No, we have combined our sustainability reporting into our annual report this year."

"Yes."

"Yes we produce global reports."

"Yes."

"Yes, in addition to the CR Report, [company] takes part in the St James CRI each year."

"We have produced a sustainability report for the last three years. We run it as part of the concise annual report and we also print stand-alone copies too."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Yes – we also produce an annual report and drinking quality report."

"Yes, [company] has been producing a sustainability report for the last nine years and is called the [name of report]. This year's report is due in November."

"We produce an integrated annual report/sustainability report"

"Yes it is titled [name of report] and is available on our website."

"[Company] produces a stand-alone Health, Safety and Environment report."

"We produce an annual sustainability report."

"We do produce a stand-alone sustainability report."

"Our sustainability report was stand-alone until last year when we combined it with our annual report to further integrate sustainability into our business practises."

"We used to, but last year we incorporated the sustainability report into the annual report."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"We have produced three CSR reports over the past three years."

"For the 2006/07 year we are currently producing an annual report; incorporating sustainability. We plan for this to be a transition stage, prior to producing a full sustainability report for the 2007/08 period."

"Yes."

How long have you been producing it?

"2004/05 was our first report. The next to be published will be our third, for the financial year 2006/07."

"We are finalising our fifth report."

"We have reported on sustainability since 2004/05."

"Completing year two at the current time."

"Since 2005 about to release our third report."

"This is the first year that we have produced a Sustainable Development Report, replacing previous years' Health, Safety and Environment Reports."

"First report released Sep 2006, second report due for release on October 17 2007."

"We have produced a sustainability report for the last three years. Our 2007 report will be released on Friday 21 September."

"Five years."

"This is our seventh year."

"Nine years."

"2006-2007 will be the fourth year."

"We published our first 2006 report in 2007. We launched it with a DVD at our AGM in May 2007."

"Six years."

"From 2001-2002 our environmental performance reporting has been incorporated into our annual report. Prior to 2001-2002 we published a separate Environmental Performance Report / Environment Improvement Plan."

"Since 2002."

"Annually since 2003."

"Since 1999."

"We have produced a stand alone sustainability report for the past three years (2006, 2005 and 2004). In 2003 we produced a "Towards Sustainability Report". In 2002 and 2001, we produced an "Environment, Health and Safety and Community Report". In 2000, 1999 and 1998 we produced an "Environment Report".

"We produced our first stand-alone sustainability report in 2003."

"2006/07 will be the second year for a stand-alone report. We had a sustainability section in our annual report for three years before that."

"Three years."

Did you cover in detail the top five material issues of your business?

"Detail varies, but yes, we cover the top five material issues as defined by a materiality process involving stakeholders both external and internal to the business."

"Yes."

"We report against all the issues that are material to us."

"This year yes – material issues as determined via AA1000AS."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Not specifically, identify various issues based on GRI indicators."

"Our focus on sustainability covers economic, social and environmental framework. The sustainability report focuses on employees, community and environment."

"I think so, though we haven't expressly set about identifying them."

"Yes."

"Yes, indicators are based on the Montreal Process MIG indicators. The report is produced in four main chapters: Social, Environmental, Economic and Sustainable."

"We do cover the most material issues however the level of detail varies – in some cases we just report data but don't provide much discussion."

"We have reported under our four sustainability pillars – environment, marketplace, work and community."

"Yes, the initial sustainability indicators were developed through stakeholder consultation to assist us to identify what is considered to be material for the business. We have continued to consult annually with various stakeholder groups."

"We don't articulate a top five as such although our top five issues are naturally covered in depth. But this year we have structured our report around the key stakeholder issues and are presenting the issues in the approximate order of what stakeholders advised in the survey they most wanted us to see us reporting on."

"I would say yes, but it's more like the top 20 – maybe we're reporting too much."

"We focus on about five issues for each of business units, splitting them between environment, health and safety."

"Our report goes through an external verification and assurance process. The auditor stated in the assurance statement of the 2006 report:

'Materiality issues material to stakeholder as identified though our review have been considered and communicated within the report. Material environmental, social and broader economic aspects of [company] and [company's] sustainability performance as deemed through a peer review process are also appropriately addressed. Potential carbon liabilities from transmission losses, related climate change risks, recycling and community management are seen as the key sustainability issues arising through the stakeholder engagement process.'

"Yes."

"As part of the preparation for the 2007/08 Sustainability report we will be going through an extensive engagement process to identify the appropriate material issues for our organisation to report on to meet the needs of our stakeholders."

"Currently, our Annual Report already includes information on a number of KPIs for our organisation as well as commentary on our approach to the significant sustainability drivers for the [industry]."

Has the publication of the report influenced your reputation? Your bottom line?

"Have no way to measure this currently, and no plans to at this point in time to introduce a measure for this."

"We don't undertake research specific to the report but we have received positive feedback about our reports. Our 2005 report won the best sustainability report from the [industry] association of Australia and was ranked third out of 23 reports in an external benchmarking exercise by URS."

"Reputation, probably yes. However it would probably have no influence if we weren't also seen to be doing what we say we are. Bottom line is much harder to gauge. I'd have to say that it probably isn't material."

"We believe it makes a positive contribution to enhancing our reputation as a responsible corporate citizen. Our view is that there is a direct link between that and improved financial performance over the longer term but we have no measure for this."

"Always difficult to measure but it surely did enhance our reputation, especially among our employees, external stakeholders, and audiences that I did presentations to about sustainability. Impossible to say if it has enhanced the bottom line – sustainability as a function is more a cost than a profit centre at the moment."

"Difficult to measure, but it receives positive feedback from regulators, investors and other stakeholders."

"No significant impact or benefit to the business has been identified. However we consider it part of our corporate responsibility."

"Yes, sustainability reporting is consistent with our sustainability principles and we hope that it has added to our reputation as an environmental leader."

"Yes I believe it has influenced our reputation in the [sector] across Australia. Has the production of our report influenced our bottom line? By this I have assumed you are referring to whether we have secured business as a result of preparing our sustainability report and the answer would be that our sustainability processes have certainly given some of our partners particularly public sector partners a degree of confidence in our approach."

"We do not have a tracking tool to answer that question."

"We have only done limited stakeholder consultation re the sustainability aspect, and overall we believe our reputation was enhanced because we reported transparently about our sustainability practices, however we cannot say conclusively."

"It's not so much the publication of a report (a snapshot of performance at that point of time) – rather it's the commitment (communicated through an array of means) and measuring which contributes to performance which then shapes reputation and in turn, bottom line."

"Reputation – most definitely, bottom line – yes in terms of identifying gaps in operational efficiency."

"This has not been quantified."

"We do not have evidence to prove either."

"It is difficult to measure whether there is any direct link between the information published in our sustainability report and our reputation and financial performance. What the consecutive reports show is that as a company we are maturing and tackling issues as they arise that could pose risks to our reputation and financial performance. Reporting on 'non-financial' information is becoming increasingly important."

"Yes and yes."

"It has influenced our reputation with regards to sustainability, particularly in the [industry]. We are also seen in the sustainability sector (for example GRI) as a leader in sustainability reporting."

"The [name of report] is highly regarded both within Australia and internationally. The report is considered a leader in government organisations' sustainability reporting. As a [description of sector] manager, under close scrutiny by NGOs, the [name of report] has provided a means of assuring our stakeholders of the quality of our [description of sector] practice. It is likely this has played a positive contribution to our economic bottom line."

"The report has provided a strong foundation for marketing claims – prevents accusations of green wash and thus enhances our reputation. We haven't been able to demonstrate direct financial returns as a result of sustainability reporting – there is not a direct link that can be proven yet I think it enhances our credibility which contributes to successful sales."

"We have not surveyed either of those yet."

"Yes."

"Our Annual Report is a significant part of our brand development strategy, which, as an overall program has had a positive impact on our reputation and the confidence of our customers in our ability to provide solutions to meet their needs."

Do you communicate with stakeholders about your sustainability activities in ways other than your report?

"Yes. We actively communicate with our multiple stakeholders via many and various other means – these include: annual report, company website, public community meetings, national contact centre, newsletters, media releases, public speeches and presentations, corporate seminars, consumer hotlines, focus groups, plant tours, consumer surveys, promotions, consumer education campaigns, the [name of website], [name of foundation] in Australia, South Korea and Indonesia, analysts briefings, intranet (for employees), customer satisfaction surveys, customer events, customer ordering websites, national community engagement strategy, employee engagement surveys, membership of trade associations, local chambers of commerce, council meetings, state and federal party political conferences, AGMs, ASX announcements, dedicated investor hotline, natural disaster relief programs, [name of employee giving scheme] employee salary donations for charities, staff volunteering days for charities."

"Yes – brochures newsletter, technical forums, conferences."

"[Name of management plans] These plans have been available to the public for comment while in draft form. Feedback is considered and where appropriate changes have been made to the drafts plans. [Name of plans] are available on the [name] website."

"Yes, we communicate through media, publications, on our website but also through our employees. We have a sustainable staff committee that looks at ways employees can be sustainable at work and at home. It looks at the triple-bottom-line and provides tips, workshops and seminars."

"Yes, tenant newsletters, investor briefings etc."

"Via a monthly sustainability update published on-line and emailed to a subscriber group."

"Yes, through community reference groups and one-on-one stakeholder meetings, as required."

"Yes through presenting at conferences, focus groups, meetings, website, participation at sustainability events and in case studies, through community relations teams etc."

"Yes

Investor presentations

Employee presentations, intranet, team activities, newsletters

Extensive participation in industry and corporate networks which leads to extensive forms of communication

Involvement with supply chain

Response to media queries

Website."

"Yes, we have a branch responsible for sustainability who communicates with stakeholders."

"Yes – community newsletters, community consultative committees, [site] open days, information forums etc."

"Sustainability is a value of the organisation – we want our business to contribute to a healthy environment and economic and social development to improve the quality of life for future generations. Owing to the nature of our organisation our stakeholder communications throughout the year involve a lot of environment issues in particular, and some social issues. We don't single out sustainability as an issue in itself."

"Website."

"We also communicate through ongoing consultation programmes and through day-to-day business activities."

"Various ways including website, newsletters, face-to-face communication to name a few."

"Yes through other publications and face-to-face meetings."

"In general communications with investors and others via the annual report."

"The report is on the internet. It is also distributed to all team members"

"Our individual business units, which operate quite autonomously of the parent company, have varying levels of stakeholder contact in place."

"Some stakeholders and some sustainability activities."

"Yes."

"Last year we sent our printed concise sustainability report (16 pages) to a range of stakeholders, and all employees with our staff magazine. Last financial year I did about five presentations to student groups and conferences. I sent the Stakeholder Survey to around 80 people this year and out of that group I plan to establish both internal and external sustainability reference groups to help guide the development of future sustainability reports and the sustainability function more generally."

"Yes, we have a number of mechanisms by which we communicate with our external stakeholders about our approach to sustainability. These include; customer satisfaction and perception surveys; customer advisory committee; environment advisory committee; many one-on-one contacts, which will be holistically managed through a stakeholder engagement strategy which is being implemented currently. The report is also an important communication mechanism for internal stakeholders as well as being an essential report for our [owners]."

Do you use information collated for your report in any other stakeholder communications?

"Yes. The information in the report is used frequently in external communications such as at conferences and other peer group forums as well as on customer accounts; media information etc etc..."

"Yes."

"Yes, for instance to meet our regulatory reporting obligations under the [agreement]."

"Yes – as above."

"Yes – we use almost all the material in various communications with our multiple stakeholders. Most recently we divided the [name of report's] Environment and Community sections into bite-sized pieces for inclusion in staff intranet newsletters."

"We use the information for other reporting requirements, for news stories and for publications."

"It provides a benchmark that can be referred back to by anybody that wants reliable information to do with our performance."

"We use the information to participate in third party surveys such as the FTSE4Good index and the Carbon Disclosure Project. And also with our customers and in our internal communications with employees."

"Internal newsletters, [name of company's] Business Review, customer communications."

"Yes. The information collated for our sustainable development report is utilised for internal employee communications and education. Information from the report is also shared with external stakeholders, as requested on a case-by-case basis."

"Yes – annual reports, website, press releases, presentations etc."

"Website."

"We refer to the publication of our report in our local news."

"We frequently use the material in a number of other communications."

"No, the other way around. We do a sustainability self-assessment to measure how we perform on sustainability and this is the basis of our report. We look back at the year and address criteria, including stakeholder communication, and then decide how we have performed. It is a rigorous process, although not reviewed by an external party. Our report is assured. Our communication plan is not based on our report, it's more the outcome of the past year's communications. Reading your seminar brochure this question appears to be a focus for your organisation."

"Not really, we provide our stakeholders with copies of the report, a CD and the report is available on our website."

"Yes. The information is consistent with other forms of communications."

"Yes."

"In general communications with investors and others via the annual report."

"Quite substantial reference is made to these issues in the company's annual report."

"About half of it is used in other communications."

"Yes."

What is your view about the sustainability and annual report becoming one document? If so, when do you think this will happen?

"I think they both serve different needs and would recommend that they remain separate."

"This year FY07 we have included CSR reporting in our annual report."

"Effectively, this is what we are doing currently. Over the next months we will be deciding whether we will obtain more value in separating the reports to further emphasise the future directions of the organisation as well as how we have performed from a sustainability perspective and provide a separate financial report to comply with our reporting obligations. This will depend on the feedback we receive from our stakeholders."

"In my opinion this is likely to happen within the next three years, but no decision has been made in this regard. The [name of report] is currently produced as the flagship document in a set of three with the annual report and a fact & figures booklet."

"We prepared an integrated report right from the start of sustainability reporting because we didn't want sustainability to be an add-on: incorporating it with the financial report gives it more prominence and weight. However, we are limited in terms of quantity of information and format as the annual report has different audience requirements."

"At this stage we intend to keep them separate. However we do include a one page section on [name of sustainability program] in our annual report with a link to our sustainability report on the same page."

"I think the reports should be one document as some of the information is doubling up. It would also give a better overview of the financial side of the business. I think this will happen over the coming years."

"A good idea potentially. Though, just like financials in a typical annual report, you'd have to keep some information for a separate report. Ours this year is 23,000 words approx."

"This is academic. This year we are moving away from incorporating the sustainability report within the concise annual report because it is a significantly different type of report and deserves singular attention. So we will be sending shareholders two reports wrapped together. We are also publishing the annual report and the sustainability report in an online interactive web version for the first time."

"I do not expect ours to merge anytime soon. Our report is more complementary to the [name of company's] Business Review, a reader friendly review that coincides with the annual report."

"We have not considered this."

"Sustainability performance should be integrated into the annual report... however, I think a stand alone sustainability report should also be published to outline commitments and future initiatives otherwise the combined version can get far too large!"

"Reporting is about what makes sense for each and every organisation. Increasingly, sustainability reporting is accessed on-line, with highlight documents and references in the annual report. It's not so much about one document – it's about convenient access to information that is material, complete and responsive to stakeholder needs."

"This year we are producing as one document."

"[Name of subsidiary] doesn't produce an annual report – [Company] does so."

"This will be published in October for 2006/07 financial year."

"Don't think it is appropriate in the short-term as the audiences are very different unless very brief information is included in the annual report, which is supported through web-based information. Over time, as online reports become more common, it would make sense to integrate the two through click throughs."

"I think it serves to improve the integration of sustainability into the business day-to-day corporate activities and demonstrates a greater commitment to a triple bottom line approach. We integrated the documents last year."

"Currently is the case. My personal view is that it makes for more holistic reporting and is easier for stakeholders to follow."

"We moved away from this many years ago – it becomes too long and has a different audience. We prefer to publish them as separate documents, even though we recognise a significant overlap."

"No strong view."

"I expect we will maintain separate reports in the foreseeable future."

"I believe it's only relevant for this to happen when sustainability strategy and business strategy are one. Some Australian companies are doing it, and maybe they are at that stage, but I suspect at least some are driven by a need to be seen to be at this level and the desire to reduce costs and effort by just producing one report. Westpac's Stakeholder Impact Report is an example of how the sustainability report concept will potentially evolve into all sorts of variations that suit different organisations. Hopefully, 'sustainability report' will be the norm for the sake of clarity and consistency of understanding. For us, I believe it will be at least two years, more likely three, and maybe even longer before we publish one report."

"Last year we incorporated sustainability into annual report. Benefits: duplication between the two reports is gone, a saving of around 10 pages; cost of production is lower; and I've had some feedback that it's much easier to navigate one document rather than two."

Do you report against the GRI G3 Guidelines?

"As a guide only."

"A number of our existing KPIs reflect the G3 version of the GRI indicators, but over the next months we will be reviewing the completeness of our indicators by benchmarking with the GRI and other reporting tools to ensure we are getting the best possible value from our reporting processes to measure our progress towards sustainability."

"Not currently, but we intend to review our reporting after this reporting and will be incorporating GRI G3 in that review."

"Not yet. We're still using the 2002 GRI guidelines, but part of this year's verification process will be recommendations to move us to G3."

"Yes, as much as we possibly can. This year we are also reporting against the (draft) GRI Electric Utility Sector Supplement."

"No."

"No."

"We report against UNEP Guidelines and reference the GRI G3 guidelines, but do not directly report against the GRI. We consider many of the GRI Guidelines to be irrelevant to our business (child labour issues etc) which reduces the easy reading of the document."

"Yes we have done so in our 2005/06 report and will do again this year. The G3 indicators are reported on in a separate supplement to the annual report that is only available on line. The aim of this was to limit the size of the annual report to save paper, energy, etc."

"We will provide an analysis of our report against G3 but will not be reporting in accordance with G3 until next year once we've reviewed all our indicators."

"Yes, for 2006/07, and have used GRI in the previous two."

"Yes."

"Yes, we have incorporated throughout our annual report, and have also included a GRI content index."

"FY06: Draft G3 FY07: Preparation underway, intention to apply G3"

"Yes and finance sector supplement."

"We used GRI and IPIECA as a guide, however did not closely align as it was our first year reporting. Refer to statement on page 2 of sustainable development report."

"Yes."

"We use GRI as a guideline but we currently don't use the exact format to report against."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"No."

"We reported in accordance with the GRI for the first three years. The report currently under preparation may not comply as we do not put in a lot of discussion about the management approach – we stick to reporting data with brief commentary."

"Yes and these are detailed in the last pages of the report."

Who do you distribute your report to?

"Our report is publicly available on our web site. We also provide hard copies to our owners, particular customer and stakeholder groups and our people."

"This year it will be distributed with the annual report – some by mail, others online. It is also on our website."

"Industry, NGOs, customers, other [description of industry] agencies both in Australia and internationally, universities."

"Our partners, various environmental and community groups, members of the [governing body] a number of private individuals, managers in [company], water and electricity associations, some of our large customers, universities and high schools in the [state], peer organisations, various government departments and agencies, potential customers when submitting tenders, anyone who asks for it."

"Last year, all senior managers by hand or via internal mail with covering letter, all employees with the staff magazine, all annual report receivers, a range of other stakeholders, students and others I present too, occasionally at relevant sponsored events, and both full and concise versions are available online for anyone to download."

"Employees mainly. We print about 6,500 a year. But it goes also to key stakeholders of each business unit, to politicians and it is distributed to shareholders attending the company's annual general meeting."

"Internally; to key regulatory bodies; and other stakeholders as appropriate."

"All stakeholders and it is put on our website for access by all."

"Includes [government], regulators, and environmental stakeholders."

"We print 2000 copies which will go to stakeholders."

"We have a list of interested stakeholders that is reviewed each year."

"Employees and all stakeholders."

"We'll be promoting the web version widely to all stakeholders."

"All shareholders are notified of the online document
Hardcopy is distributed to all employees
Hardcopy is distributed to all BUs for distribution to stakeholders."

"On our website – predominately for our members and staff but all stakeholders are welcome to have a read – we love feedback!"

"The report was distributed to employees and external stakeholders (joint venture partners, government, investors, community members, NGOs, media, environment and community groups, etc)"

"Public on-line, internal link, limited print run."

"Shareholders, our management at every site, key stakeholders such as environmental NGOs and major customers."

"Web based."

"We distribute our report to a range of stakeholders including water authorities, other governmental bodies, universities, customers (who ask for it) basically anyone who asks for a copy."

"As many stakeholders as we can, including the media. We printed 1000 hard copies but encourage people to visit the interactive version on our website,"

"Customers, staff, owners (state gov), community stakeholders."

"The report is distributed to key stakeholders. We produce limited hard copies of the report although these are available as requested. We have a list of 800 key stakeholders. Employees are notified via email and a link is available on our intranet."

How do you distribute it?

"Our report is tabled in [parliament]. We also produce approx 1000 hard copies of our report and publish the report via our website as a pdf once it has been approved by government. These distribution methods (aside from government release) will also be reviewed in the coming months."

"With annual report, and website."

"Postal and website."

"About 300 hard copies go out in the standard post (but this is number is steadily reducing with the advent of the internet). The report is also available on our intranet (for internal staff), our website, the Corporate Register site and the [department] site. In many cases we will email the link to our website. We inform our customers that the report is available through the [name] newsletter sent out with quarterly bills. We also inform our staff when it becomes available."

"As above."

"The report is mailed out and is also available on our website."

"By post and by posting it on the corporate website."

"The sustainability report is produced as a CD attachment to the annual report. The annual report and CD is sent to all identified stakeholders."

"The report is available online as well as a limited number of hard copies."

"Mail out and on an as needs basis."

"First, our annual report is tabled in the [parliament] It's then published on our website, we distribute some hardcopies by mail and have CDs for others who are interested."

"By addressed mail."

"This year we are not printing at all – just producing a web version, along with a summary web version."

"Mail, web, all sites"

"Website, printed summary report and section in our annual report (posted and available at meeting, conferences and events."

"The report was mailed to all employees and [company] external stakeholders and available on the [company] internet site."

"As above."

"Mailing, but this year we will launch an interactive online web version also."

"Web based."

"Last year we produced the full report on the website and had a hardcopy summary version. We sent the summary version to these stakeholders via mail. We hope into the future we can just send them a link to the website."

"Hard copy posted out to a mailing list plus sent a request. Also provided in PDF format on our website."

“All employees are sent notification that the report is available on our intranet. They receive this notification through our internal magazine [name of publication] and via email. It is also featured on the front page of our intranet site.

“We have a list of 800 key stakeholders. We sent an email to all stakeholders who have an email address announcing the release of the report and giving the link to it on our internet site. For those stakeholders without email, we sent a letter explaining how they could access the report of offering them a hard copy.”