



Principles for  
Responsible Management Education

Sharing Information on Progress Report  
2011



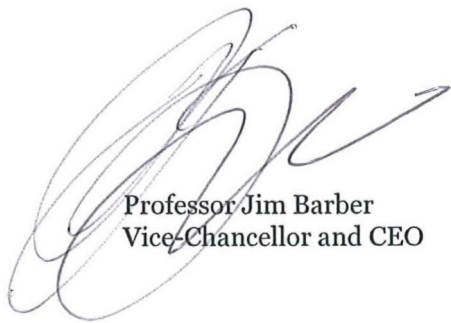
## Renewal of the commitment to PRME



As an institution of higher learning involved in the education of current and future managers, the University of New England is committed to engaging in a continuous process of improvement in the application of the Principles for Responsible Management Education. We are pleased to report on our progress and look forward to engaging with other signatories of the UN's Global compact as we continue our journey.

Our commitment to sustainability and the PRME builds on UNE's existing commitment to the Talloires Declaration, signed in 2005. Much of UNE's progress in sustainability projects has been undertaken by the Talloires Committee. With the additional commitment to the UN PRME we see broader scope for genuine cross disciplinary work on sustainability issues to more broadly enrich the curriculum.

We understand that our own organisational practices should serve as an example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.



Professor Jim Barber  
Vice-Chancellor and CEO

# Implementing PRME



The Graduate School of Business sits within the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy (BEPP) at the University of New England. In making the decision for the GSB to become a signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in late 2009, we soon realised that while we had intended to focus our efforts on the MBA in the first instance, the process of resolving how these principles can be enacted led us to consider the breadth of our business awards. We embarked on a process of critical reflection across the wider school, as we have sought to embody the principles of responsible management education throughout our business curriculum.

At the outset of the project staff agreed on a set of 'sustainability principles' that while not prescriptive, would move the sustainability agenda forward. Identifying the difference between educating 'for' sustainability and educating 'about' sustainability was crucial in developing a set of principles that would be seen as relevant to our business units. The latter is concerned with issues that directly concern understanding the factors that enhance or destroy sustainability; the former is defined by ARIES

(Shifting towards sustainability, 2006, [www.aries.mq.edu.au](http://www.aries.mq.edu.au)) as: ... an ongoing learning process which actively involves multiple stakeholders in change to achieve sustainability... and involves five key components:

- Visioning (imagining a better future)
- Critical thinking and reflection
- Participation in decision making
- Partnerships
- Systemic thinking

Staff readily accepted education 'for' sustainability as relevant to all of our business units. Casting sustainability education in such terms also achieved our strategic objective of enabling staff to conceive that the embedding sustainability task was not necessarily herculean – in fact, most units already included some, if not all, aspects of education for sustainability. From a change management perspective, this was a 'short-term win', which helped to reinforce commitment.

The following principles were agreed within the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy as the basis for our ongoing curriculum development :

- Industry and community will be regularly encouraged to contribute to unit content
- Each unit will explicitly discuss the underlying assumptions of the management techniques and skills being taught, including how their application affects sustainability.
- Provide opportunities for students to work on real problems in the community/locally/regionally/globally, especially in relation to how the problems relates to sustainability and innovation.

- In learning about best practice for implementing management skills and techniques, students will also learn that current best practice is evolving. Discussion regarding best practice will involve:
  - What compliance requires, and also
  - how non-idealised/real world context affects the application of best practice, and
  - ideas for how the application of tools and techniques might be creatively modified and utilised to consider sustainability issues.
- Provide students with opportunities to discuss links to other units in the program (and even other academic disciplines) to highlight the holistic nature of management.
- Promote a supportive learning environment for all students.
- Include assessment in each unit in which students engage with sustainability.

We welcome the opportunity to share our experiences and reflections on our PRME journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Sheridan'.

Professor Alison Sheridan  
Head of School, BEPP



UNE became a signatory to PRME in late 2009. We embarked on a journey to ensure that our business courses adhered to the Principles. The Graduate School of Business (GSB), in the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy leads the way with changes to the structure of the Master of Business Administration Program.

The MBA was restructured to provide a more focused core and to ensure that at least one unit was dedicated to discussing responsible management, ethics and sustainability. The goal for the MBA was that all of the units in the core and all electives would address issues around responsible management and sustainability.

The process around this became a school wide initiative resulting in the adoption of a set of guiding principles for academics to refer

to in updating their content. The MBA program redevelopment resulted in the introduction of an innovative ePortfolio, which enables students to take a more holistic approach to their learning. It requires them to be engaged in professional development activities, community service and reflective practice over their learning journey.

Part of the commitment to the PRME aligns with further goals by the University in terms of our traditional distance education model. Harnessing the capacities for interconnection via Web 2.0 we are moving away from the traditional print based approach to the distance education to a more interactive and dynamic learning experience in the online environment. All of the GSB units will be fully online by the end of 2012 which will significantly reduce our environmental impacts created by the previous model of sending hard copy material in plastic folders to students.

The following report charts our journey over the last 18 months and describes some of the broader initiatives across the University. My thanks to Mr Chris Ipkendanz, Dr Robyn Bartel, Dr Miriam Verbeek, A/Prof Josie Fisher and Prof Alison Sheridan for their contributions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V Dalton', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Valerie Dalton  
Program Director, GSB

# Major Achievements in implementing one or more principles during the last 18 months

## Principles 1 and 2 - Curriculum Change

*Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.*

*Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.*

### MBA

In 2010 work on our Master of Business Administration (MBA) involved re-examining the program structure and content to see how we could enable students to gain the technical and human skills required of managers in a way that promoted responsible management practices. We grappled with how to address the issue of sustainability both in terms of content and skill development.

We revisited the MBA and adopted the following core units:

- GSB702 Accounting for Managers
- GSB711 Managerial Finance
- GSB721 Processes of Management
- GSB728 Economics for Management
- GSB731 Marketing Management
- GSB738 Organisational Behaviour
- GSB725 Strategic Management (capstone)
- GSB751 Business Ethics, CSR and Sustainability

Students undertake an additional four subjects and may choose

to use those to major in Human Resource Management or International Business.

The MBA is run as a distance education course. Students usually undertake a single unit per trimester. The program now has an additional element to encourage a more holistic approach to management education for sustainability. New students are required to complete an ePortfolio as part of their course. It comprises two key elements:

*Reflective Practice* – an online diary or blog recording student reflections on the learning journey including experience in units, face to face activity and in how learning is impacting on their work practices. Reflections on learning should look at the course learning outcomes and how the student is developing the graduate attributes associated with each outcome. Ultimately, reflections relate to how this journey will impact on the student's management practice.

*Face to face activity* – students are also required to engage in 60 hours of face to face activity around their own personal and professional development during the life of the degree. Any activity that will further develop a student's capacity as a manager or citizen is considered relevant. Students must undertake at least one activity from each of two categories - *professional development* (skills development in areas such as public speaking, negotiation skills, working with an industry mentor or executive coach; attendance at GSB weekend schools); and *contribution to the wider community* through volunteer work particularly where they can lend

their management skills to not-for-profit organisations.

### Bachelor of Business

The Bachelor of Business was also reviewed in 2010 and its core amended to 10 units covering accounting, economics, finance, organisational behavior, marketing, management, international business and statistics. Each of the core units have been updated to incorporate the principles adopted by the School of BEPP on education for sustainability.

The new version of the degree has introduced an interdisciplinary major in sustainability which comprises core units dealing with Benefit-Cost Analysis, Natural Resource Economics, Business Ethics, Globalisation and Sustainability. There is a new unit entitled Earth in Crisis which examines the environmental problems we face and potential solutions. Further units are selected from across several disciplines and include Psychology of Sustainability, Ethics of Environmentalism, Environmental Planning, and Strategic Planning.

## Principle 3 - Frameworks (Extracurricular, other learning methods)

*Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.*

The Postgraduate Business Community was launched in May 2011 along with our new Learning Management System. The aim is to have a 'commons' for distance students to come together and share information and ideas that are not tied to a particular unit



or course. The space has multiple resources, highlighting links to information related to sustainable business practice and areas where students can contribute their views, stories, criticisms and praise. The vision for the PBC is that it will encourage a meaningful level of engagement with other students and alumni and provide additional resources for sustainable business practice.

As a distance provider with no compulsory attendance requirements, our challenge was to consider some of the skills that managers might need to develop in a face to face context. We set a key component of the MBA to include 60 hours of face to face learning, and rather than impose a set of predetermined workshops the activities are self-selected with the assistance of GSB staff. This way activities can be tailored to students' specific needs. Initially they are required to undertake self-assessment around their values, leadership style and personality to assist in their choices. They are also required to make a contribution to broaden their perspective on the community.

## Principle 4 - Research

*Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.*

The following is a summary of research interests, publications and projects at the business school level and across the University.

### Current Grants Related to Sustainability

*Prof M Siriwardana, Prof D J Brunckhorst and Dr J McNeill* are using an Australian Research

Council Discovery grant to investigate improving our understanding of the effects of low carbon policies on the Australian economy and regions.

*A/Prof L Tacconi, A / Prof O Cacho and Mr J Douglas* have an Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research grant to investigate improving governance, policy and institutional arrangements to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation.

*Dr J Rindfleish and Dr S Adapa* have a grant from the Institute of Public Accountants to investigate the rhetoric and realities of the concept of corporate social responsibility in small and medium-sized accountancy firms in regional Australia.

*A/ Prof B Kotey and Dr O Al Farooque* are investigating advances in environmental reporting among Australian MNEs using GRI Guidelines. They have presented 2 conference papers on the topic.

### Staff Research interests and selected publications

*Prof Oscar Cacho*  
Economic potential of land-use change and forestry for carbon sequestration and poverty reduction.

*A/Prof Jack Sinden*  
Application of economics to resolve problems of the use of natural resources and the environment, in particular valuation of benefits and costs; economics of sustainable environmental use, and benefit-cost analysis of alternative uses of natural resources.

*A/Prof Josie Fisher*  
Business and professional ethics, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance.

*Mr Richard Stayner*  
Economic analysis and business development of sustainable wildlife enterprises trial sites.

*Dr David Hadley*  
Valuation of ecosystem goods and services and economic assessment methodologies that incorporate these valuations; researching methodologies that allow the incorporation of environmental externalities into measures of productivity.

More broadly UNE research around the university in sustainable practices includes:

### National Centre for Rural Greenhouse Gas Research

The National Centre for Rural Greenhouse Gas Research is a new joint initiative between NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and UNE to provide solutions to the challenges posed to primary industries by climate change, and to take advantage of the opportunities that climate change presents. The Centre is based at UNE, Armidale, with activities undertaken throughout New South Wales. The centre has also established extensive national and international collaborative links.

### Water Research and Innovation Network (WRAIN)

WRAIN brings together researchers who have the innovative minds and interdisciplinary skills required to address water management as an integrated problem to achieve high impact results by carrying out research relevant to communities and current water research agendas; establish, maintain and strengthen links with regional and rural industries and communities by incorporating research results into tools and systems for sustainable water management; develop education

programs that integrate the environmental, policy and cultural evidence for sustainable water management.

## Woodsmoke Reduction Project

Researchers at UNE are involved in a nationally-funded project aimed at reducing wood smoke pollution in Armidale. This project has support from the Armidale Dumaresq Council's Environmental Health Unit and industry partners including the Australian Home Heating Association, Firewood Association of Australia, and SmartBurn Inc.

## Principles 5 and 6 - Partnerships

*Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.*

*Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.*

UNE sponsors *The Sustainable Living Expo* (SLEX) held every 12 months in Armidale. "This Expo provides vital information to the region about sustainable living and sustainable business.

SLEX initially developed from a number of community events into an integrated flagship event for Armidale and the wider New England region.

SLEX aims to provide attendees with the information, inspiration and tools to transitions towards more sustainable ways of living and doing business as a response to the growth of Climate change as an issue for local government, business and the community." ([www.slex.com.au/about.htm](http://www.slex.com.au/about.htm)).

UNE's GSB is a member of the Northern Inland Sustainability Business Network (NISBN). NISBN is a not-for-profit organisation aimed at improving the sustainability of business in the Northern Inland region of New South Wales. It acts as a liaison point for government resources, both state and federal; provides access to experts in sustainability; showcases sustainable businesses, initiatives and projects and facilitates dialogue. Tim Cotter of NISBN sits on the advisory panel of the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy. Valerie Dalton, GSB Program Director is on the NISBN Steering Committee. Part of our new curriculum and research activities will reach out to businesses in the local area and beyond to facilitate practical experience for students, explore research opportunities and provide opportunities for educating business about sustainable practice.

## Key Objectives in implementing the principles for the next 18-month period

Valerie Dalton mentors a *Students In Free Enterprise* team on a sustainability project designed to improve on-campus practices while raising student and staff awareness and participation in sustainability initiatives. It deals with the consumption of coffee and water on campus. The aim is to eliminate take away coffee cups

and bottled water by providing students with a reusable coffee cup and a water bottle.

The second stage of the project is to ensure vendors on campus give discounts to students who bring their own coffee cup, and to ensure that adequate water coolers are available to refill water bottles. Vendors will also be challenged to provide 100% rainforest alliance certified coffee and to stop selling bottled water. SIFE is an international organisation and if the project is successful SIFE UNE will issue the challenge to other universities across the globe to follow the same practice.

A further objective is to increase dialogue about sustainable practice through the online Post-graduate Business Community.

We will also work more closely with local and regional businesses on joint research through organisations such as NISBN and others.

## Sustainability on Campus

UNE is engaged in numerous initiatives to minimise resource use. The following information is provided by the University's Facilities Management Services Department:

*Energy* – A Building Management System (BMS) and comprehensive energy sub-metering have been installed on-campus. The BMS and sub-metering allow UNE to accurately monitor energy use throughout our facilities and schedule heating, lighting and other services relative to space usage requirements.

*Water* – Low water technologies have been implemented across campus; these include waterless urinals, low-flow shower fittings,

and dual flush toilet cisterns. This has significantly reduced water use since 2000.

*Waste* – A comprehensive waste audit was undertaken in 2005 and led to the introduction of campus-wide source separation recycling initiatives, reducing UNE's landfill footprint.

*Greenhouse Gas Emissions* – A comprehensive emissions audit was undertaken in 2008. Recommendations included the installation of onsite renewable energy sources, an initiative which has been included in the UNE Master Plan. Numerous transport initiatives are also currently underway, including a subsidised public transport trial.

*Sustainable Buildings* – in 2006 UNE opened the Oorala Aboriginal Centre a sustainable building that utilises design features such as rammed-earth walls, passive solar heating, cross ventilation and local native plantation timber.

*Master Plan* – A comprehensive review of the UNE Master Plan was undertaken in 2009, resulting in specific sustainability initiatives for the built environment.

*Talloires Declaration* – in 2005 UNE became a signatory to the Talloires Declaration, a 10-point action plan which promotes sustainability in the tertiary education sector. Subsequently, the UNE Talloires Declaration Implementation Committee was convened to ensure implementation of these actions.

A multi-disciplinary Talloires Research and Education Team was assembled in addition to the committee, and has delivered numerous academic, operational and community programmes and projects. UNE has continued to implement and improve environ-

mental policy and strategic plans since 2000.

UNE became a signatory to the Talloires Declaration in 2005 and subsequently implemented environmental policy and strategic management plans. Current targets include:

*Energy* – Reduce annual use of non-renewable energy by 10% by 2013. *Water* – Install WELS 3-star fittings in 90% of showers on campus by 2013.

*Waste* – Reduce annual landfill by 20% by 2013.

*Transport* – Reduce transport fuel usage by 10% and off-set 25% of air travel emissions by 2013.

UNE recently completed a *Master Plan review*. Consequently the UNE Master Plan includes specific sustainability strategies such as:

*Alternate Energy* – exploration of alternative energy options to reduce the University's impact on the greater energy and resource network.

*Built Environment* – review and optimise the conservation of energy in existing buildings and design new buildings to maximise sustainability.

*Transport* – create an integrated transport network that promotes the use of public transport, cycling and walking as the primary modes of travel for on-campus and inter-campus activities.

*Natural Environment* – improve biodiversity by establishing wildlife corridors and green-links throughout campus.



Graduate School of Business  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351

[www.une.edu.au/gsb](http://www.une.edu.au/gsb)

