

INTERVIEW WITH THE SMB BANKSIA SUSTAINABILITY AWARD WINNERS AND FINALISTS

We would like to thank the following Banksia Award Finalists and Winners that participated in our interviews.

Ecostore

Fieldtech Solutions

Kalleske Wines Pty Ltd

Kooweerup Regional Health Services

Now Architecture

Psaros – Property Development & Investment

Saffron Restaurant

Serendipity Icecream

Sydney Theatre Company

CONTENTS - The Areas that you will be able to read about are

1. WHY DO IT?

Small businesses start sustainable practices for a wide variety of reasons – from highlighting green credentials to saving money.

2. WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN?

Sustainability isn't just about habits that help the environment. It's really about keeping things going for as long as possible with the least amount of effort and fallout. So sustainable practices can also be financial – making sure you have enough revenue to invest in your business so it grows over the long term and social – such as making sure your staff are happy at work and want to stay with your company. So, what does sustainability mean to your business?

3. WHAT TO EXPECT

Sustainability needn't be a daunting prospect if you start small. Our contributors all agree that the key to making your business more sustainable is not to over-think it. The most humble start almost always leads to bigger and better. So, take some baby steps and before too long you'll be running. Also, don't drop the ball, because as you become more sustainable, the investments you make will start to pay off in ways you might not expect – helping win customers and boost the profile of your business.

4. INVESTMENT COSTS

Real or perceived, investment costs definitely come into the equation of making your business more sustainable. Depending on what kind of business you run, they can include infrastructure, training, time and staff obligation. But what you put in now is likely to pay off a lot more tangibly than just making you feel good.

5. RETURNS

As a business, it's only reasonable to expect some kind of pay-off for what you put in. Sustainability should be no different. It should be treated the same as any investment you make in the future of your business. But it's important to understand

that there are various ways to see a return on your investment. They can include boosting your business reputation, making you stand out as different from (and better than) your competitors, opportunities to market your business more effectively, and the chance to connect with other businesses that have a sustainable approach – including some you may not otherwise have come across at all. Another big benefits may also be a greater ability to attract and hang onto good staff.

6. SOCIAL BENEFITS

Sharing what you do in business is central to cementing relationships with staff, suppliers and others in your industry, as well as reinforcing customer loyalty. It may feel like an uphill battle at first, especially if stakeholders are reluctant to come on board with an idea they may see as having limited (or no) immediate returns. It's made doubly challenging to get them across the line when you can fall back on figures. While your actions may be hard to measure, engaging with your staff and the community can generate returns at a very limited cost – everything from keeping hold of great people to giving your marketing a whole new edge. By adding to your business' reputation, sustainability can help create more customer opportunities broaden your networks and even open access new markets. It also educates those you deal with, which can create further returns.

7. RUNNING THINGS

For sustainable practices to work, they need to fit easily and seamlessly into everyday business operations. Even if it takes a while for your investments to bear fruit, in time they need to make your business better. That is, enable you to attract and keep great staff, cut running costs, make you more visible to potential clients and open up access to new markets. The challenge is making sure there is someone who can keep things on track, staff who have sustainability front of mind on a daily basis and, ideally, a policy in place that sets out sustainability initiatives. An additional challenge is to keep tabs on the sustainability mindset of businesses you work with, such as suppliers.

8. BARRIERS

Sometimes the slightest mention of sustainability can create barriers, usually related to the cost and effort of putting things in place, and the ongoing cost of keeping them that way. Sometimes these barriers are real, but often they are little more than a typical reaction against change. In many cases, sustainability is something that gets pushed by one person with the persuasion and will to make it happen. This is especially the case in small businesses where the owner might have a strong idea of how their business might be run more sustainably. Perhaps they've read a bit or talked to those who know. Either way, that owner realises their business could be more effective by making a few sustainability-related changes. But they realise it's up to them to change the minds of others in the organisation, or at least get them moving. So how do you go about this? How do you get the message across to partners and colleagues that sustainability can be good for business, and that it can have lasting benefits?

9. EYE ON THE FUTURE

Businesses interested in taking steps towards sustainability tend to be interested in the future. Whether that relates to business growth or making a positive change on a grander scale depends on the thinking behind what got them going in the first

place. Either way, just like any smart planning in business, making your sustainability goals as real as possible is essential to keep you and everyone else in your organisation on track. Some of the things that might help is taking pride in being an industry leader, or at least helping encourage others (like suppliers) improve their practices. It also helps to band together with other like-minded organisations. You can do this whichever way works best for you – from informal catch-ups with industry colleagues to more formal arrangements such as accreditation or putting your operations forward for recognised awards such as the Banksia Sustainability Awards.

10. TAKE AWAYS

Why are key things to do to make your business more sustainable, and why? Our contributors summarise what they think you should take away from this, which is mostly what you'd expect from a decent business advisor – investing in your business can bring in better quality customers, set you apart from the competition and boost your profile. It can help attract and retain good staff and strengthen partnerships. It can also help create a useful network of alliances that you may otherwise not have had access to. Yes, it may cost you up front, but there is real potential to do much better than recoup your money. Over time, investing in sustainable practices can generate ongoing profits that help secure the future of your business.

1. WHY DO IT?

Initiated by Co-Artistic Directors, Cate Blanchett and Andrew Upton, **Sydney Theatre Company (STC)** began focusing on sustainability to affect socially responsible environmental outcomes in the arts. It was also seen as a real world proof that companies can embrace environmental sustainability effectively and efficiently. The project has also led to financial savings through reductions in resource use.

SERENDIPITY had an even broader motivation. As a business owner, noting a lack of leadership by government, I felt that I was in a position to show leadership to the business community in my area, and so set about working how to do something positive.

SAFFRON restaurant co-owners/husband and wife team, Jo and Selvam Kandasamy, saw first-hand that restaurants needed to catch up with the environmental awareness and commitment to sustainability initiatives that Australian consumers and industry already had.

Our personal values around sustainability as a priority meant it was impossible to ignore the waste, the energy and water consumption, the lack of recycling systems in place and the wasted potential for positive impact at the restaurants we worked at. So when we first set up Saffron, we installed things like aerated taps, dual-flush toilets. We made sourcing locally a priority and we committed to 100% NT or Australian seafood on the menu – now 100% NT seafood. We talked with our suppliers about best practice waste management. We looked for genuinely biodegradable takeaway packaging and tableware, and we undertook environmental accreditation (Climate Action Business and Green Table). Community is central to Saffron's sustainability focus. Helping to keep our farmers on the land, including small scale agriculturalists, and our local fishing industry – which has a real commitment to sustainability – thriving, through Saffron sourcing locally from growers, is really important to us.

Kooweerup Health made a start thanks to the personal passion of its Executive Officer about health, climate change and environmental sustainability for patients, staff and the community. The Board and

senior staff shared the vision and in 2007 the organisation adopted a proactive approach to health, which includes the protection of our natural environment, conservation of resources and increased community connectedness. “Our local area is vulnerable to climate change and has experienced the impacts of severe weather through recent floods and bushfire. We have a commitment to include the environment as a dynamic entity which impacts on peoples’ health and wellbeing and as such are working towards reducing our environmental impact through our everyday operations. There are significant co-benefits for health to be found by responding in a positive manner to this issue.”

From day one **Kalleske Wines** have always strived to be sustainable. “Ultimately this is based on our ethics. But we also see how it makes good financial sense and sustainability is not mutually exclusive to financial gain but in fact can make a business more profitable.

For **Fieldtech**, it was seeing all the use of disposable plastic being used in the environmental care industry (for contaminated land). “What was the sense in cleaning up contaminated land if it made this large pile of disposable plastic that would still be here in 500 years time somewhere. It was like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

For **Ecostore**, a more sustainable business meant a more efficient business. We always have the longevity of our business in mind. For its own sake and for the contribution we can make to the health of people and the planet. We’ve also emphasised how the highest standards of sustainable and ethical business set us apart from our competitors. Those standards have allowed us to secure business where we might not otherwise have been able to, and cement longstanding partnerships with like minded companies to the benefit of both parties, because we can be so open and authentic with customers. We attract staff who live sustainably outside work as well as in the workplace. We know we have the people who will consider sustainable practices and share the company’s values regardless of their area of expertise. We’ve also extended our sustainability practices to include the implementation of a comprehensive health and safety plan, which enables us to lower risk at our head office, our manufacturing facility, and our retail store.

2. WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN?

Initially **Serendipity’s** motivation was purely environmental, but once we started it became apparent that there was more at issue. We find that sustainability has at worst had a neutral effect financially, but has had many positive influences on our business in other ways. We now win business not solely based on the quality of product but also because we are local/ethical/sustainable. Our staff have been involved in environmental sustainability initiatives from the start. Their involvement has improved their morale and their understanding of what they can do to contribute. Some staff members have even suggested and implemented their own initiatives in the work place. It all contributes to a positive work environment.

Saffron takes a triple bottom line approach, or people, planet, profits approach. We take all three into account. One example is as simple as best practice stock management, which reduces waste – wasted food, excess packaging, excess food miles – while also saving the restaurant money. These savings can be passed on to the consumer, or might mean we can employ more staff or invest in other ways in our business and our community.

NOW Architecture’s motivation to be sustainable is on all levels. Perhaps not entirely on a financial level for our business, because investigating sustainability for each project takes time, but for better long term financial outcomes for our clients. We always realised that human activity affected the environment so we addressed this issue by developing methods, which reduce consumption of non-renewables, not only in our projects, but in what we do as individuals and as a company.

For **KALLESKE**, embedding sustainability means asking questions before each business decision to help achieve the best outcome. Questions like: do we really need this?, can we get this made locally?, what do we know about the supply chain?, is it organic, certified, fair trade? how can we use our purchasing power to be a change maker? how can we give back to our community? Sustainability was

primarily environmentally motivated – being certified organic. But social sustainability is a natural result. And while there is no point being environmentally and socially sustainable if you are not financially sustainable, we found that often there are financial benefits in being environmentally sustainable.

FIELDTECH started similarly. We wanted to stop the abuse of disposable plastic. But there is a financial edge as well, as people become more aware of the environmental problems caused by conventional products and choose more sustainable options instead. Sustainability measures extend throughout our business. Not only do we focus on manufacturing and distributing biodegradable plastic products or recycled plastic products in our industry, we have made significant changes within the business. We've replaced warehouse lights with LEDs. We've implemented rainwater capture for flushing. We installed a solar system on the roof of the office to meet daytime power requirements. We contracted a soft plastic waste collector to collect all our plastic waste (mostly from incoming shipments) and that gets collected for recycling. Our city supplied recycle bin now only has a fraction of what it used to have. It's the same with the rubbish bin, which used to overflow with plastic film that the city wouldn't recycle.

Ecostore's sustainability is motivated environmentally, socially and financially, but product sales for their own sake aren't their ultimate driver. Sales are only worth something if they can contribute to projects that will help make a difference in the world. We couldn't have achieved brand recognition and regional expansion without a huge focus on people. Community involvement is a big way for us to support organisations that promote sustainable causes and events. We do this either by offering our time, mentorship, products or partnerships to form new ideas. We consider environmental impacts in every aspect of our business, from seemingly small things like office supplies to bigger things like ingredient sourcing, our supply chain, our packaging and manufacturing. We seek continuous improvement in the lifecycle of our bottles, packs and boxes, and we lower our energy, water, fuel and material input use wherever possible, no matter how small the gain. Ecostore hold a number of independent certifications governed in New Zealand that guarantee our manufacturing is better for the planet. These include CarboNZero and Environmark Diamond.

3. WHAT TO EXPECT

SERENDIPITY started out like most other businesses interested in investing in sustainability. They sourced low material use office supplies (staple-less staplers, refillable white board markers), turning the lights off when the premises are closed at night. Then they moved up the scale. Now they source locally produced ingredients and other supplies, use only recyclable packaging (some of it with a recycled content), using 100 per cent green energy and reuse materials where possible – such as carton liners are used in place of garbage bags, office paper is re-used for internal documents, pre-loved newspaper is collected and used in place of plastic bags in our retail shop. Now sustainability is a formal part of their business model, with metrics in place so they can keep improving. We collect data on our activities from waste and recycling volumes, fuel usage, electricity and water use. The data is entered into a customised carbon emissions calculator developed for the business so we can offset the emissions from activities that still produce carbon, such as delivery vehicles and CO2 emissions from waste.

SAFFRRON has been on the sustainability path for a while but says it's still just as important to keep thinking about what improvements they can make. We're using our position at the centre of a network of suppliers and consumers to promote sustainable business practices and sustainable consumer choices with our community engagement. This is especially in relation to making consumers more aware of asking for local, sustainable dining options when out for a meal, shopping or travelling. It's essential to staying abreast of new developments in technology and consumer attitudes because it affects how we do business, how we streamline operations, and improve our service and sustainability. To be successful at sustainability, you really need to keep working on building relationships and trust. One way we've always done this is to ensure we pay our suppliers straightaway. Participating in awards programs such as the Banksia awards is another. Award wins

really do help to give our environmental initiatives credibility. We see awards processes, accreditation programs and social media as a form of reporting for a business our size. From the beginning when we started in 2008 sustainability has framed all our decisions. We articulated sustainability/business vision in our business plan in 2010, and have tweaked it over the years to minimise our environmental impact and maximise our potential for success and positive impact across all areas of operation. Environmental staff training is included in our induction process, with a checklist in the handbook to ensure staff understand and can communicate to consumers the rationale behind our sustainability initiatives. The aim is to stay a small business-big vision innovative restaurant and eco-dining experience, and an active participant in the local community and industry.

From the outset, the **PSAROS** CEO and Managing Director were on the same page. They believed embedding sustainability into the DNA of their business operations and decision making was the right thing to do for the greater community, the longevity of their apartments and their brand. They also recognise that continuous improvement to the way they operate is paramount to staying in front of competitors and reduce business risk.

Starting out with a sustainable focus in 1993, **Ecostore** is further down the track than many businesses, and at a point where its investments are paying off across the board. We invest in equipment that allows us to carry out day to day sustainability practices, such as recycling bins, a bokashi bin, IT equipment with eco settings, green star rated appliances, and the maintenance of a green wall, among others. Our investment in videoconferencing technology also means we're able to reduce air travel, and therefore emissions and our carbon footprint. We also invest in the up front costs of certifications that guarantee we're environmentally responsible, and plant, equipment and systems that ensure our manufacturing maintains the standards underlying these certifications and tracks our progress against them. As well, we support for social causes, primarily through product donations. We've also invested a great deal in improvements that make our packaging materials and delivery more sustainable – and extending the lifecycle of our products packaging with a goal of continuous re-use.

4. INVESTMENT COSTS

Sydney Theatre Company strives to use environmentally sustainable materials throughout the building, however two key factors in material selection is workability and cost. While STC uses sustainably sourced material wherever possible there are instances where a non-sustainable material needs to be used to achieve a certain design objective, such as large sculptural pieces may be made of plastic foams, or polystyrene when they need to be kept lightweight. Managers use the price for the sustainable material as the base product when costing a production, by doing this the precedent is set that the default choice is always the sustainable choice.

While some aspects of **SAFFRRON'S** sustainable operations are cost saving, others do come with a premium, such as the cost of local seafood compared with cheap imported seafood. However we find the difference in quality is really noticeable, and the emotional 'feel good' factor substantial, so most people are willing to pay the extra for the quality, the experience and the positive impact on the local community. Occasionally consumers may take to online review sites to point out that we're unusually expensive for an Indian restaurant, however this provides an opportunity to respond and talk about how the consumer dollar does stay in Darwin when you eat at Saffrron. There are instances where the cost of investing in sustainable initiatives, such as training staff, can more than offset other issues. For example, one of the big problems for restaurants in Darwin is staff turnover. But Saffrron doesn't have that issue because it invests in training and makes a big deal of social and community events. We are proud to have some long-term staffers on our team, including our floor manager Santosh who started at Saffrron six years ago on a paid internship. We attribute our long term staff in part to the high level of in-house training we provide, including environmental training, the involvement of staff in our community and sustainability-focused events and achievements, and regular staff dinners. This includes involving all staff in Support NT Caught tee-shirts for our annual seafood festival, participating in fun photo shoots to promote the event, and even financial bonuses for all full time

staff when Saffron receives an award – such as 2015 Seafood Restaurant Award, Northern Territory Seafood Council, recognising our commitment to and support of local seafood.

NOW Architecture encourages clients to think long term view when considering sustainable materials. Clients almost always want to know the financial implications. But usually a longer-term view will support more sustainable alternatives.

KALLESKE have gone all out to ensure its business is organic certified in both its vineyard and winery. Investments include energy efficient equipment (such as evaporative cooling instead of refrigeration), solar panels, rainwater harvesting (for self-sufficiency in water) and recycling winery waste as compost back to the vineyard. Resources are allocated to whatever needs doing or improving. There's no compromise on this – if resources (time, money) can make an improvement environmentally, financially or socially then it's done.

Conserving energy was the easiest change made by Kalleske. Installing solar a simple process and financially almost a no-brainer. Changing/researching equipment to be more energy efficient a bit more involved but still reasonably simple.

Water can be a little more involved. Installing rain harvesting and rainwater tank was a big investment but worthwhile. More water efficient processes were reasonably easy to identify and implement. Waste management was quite complex and involved, but worthwhile. When it comes taking the long view on investment, Kalleske says that without sustainability there is no long term.

FIELDTECH manages its cost inputs very carefully because most of its customers are only motivated by price. As a manufacturer of products we are mindful of what our sell prices are going to be. Even if our product costs more to make than a conventional non sustainable product we still try to do it knowing it has to be sold at a lower margin than our competitors to be price competitive for the end user. Some end users will pay a small premium for sustainable products but others still don't care. One of the fundamental problems with the way contracts are awarded at the moment is they are awarded on lowest cost with often no regard to other factors. If they could be awarded on cost and some environmental scale the contractees may make different acceptance decisions. This is particularly true for multiple levels of contractors on a project. By the time the message gets from the lowest level up to the top level the sustainable message can be lost and cost is the only remaining factor.

The cost issue is compounded by the limited volumes Fieldtech is required to produce for the relatively small Australian market. This means it is harder to justify the expense of a new mould for a product just for Australian sales when you could simply buy a similar product (non sustainable) from a USA manufacturer who is already making it, then put a margin on it here to sell it.

ECOSTORE accepts that some of its sustainability practices come at direct cost. It chooses not to pass on any costs to consumers because it considers sustainable packaging will pay off as more people choose to buy the range because of the difference they can make. We also make budgetary allowances for even small things that allow us to be more sustainable. For example, we will purchase more expensive lunches or fruit for staff because it's organic, or because some of the proceeds of what we buy are supporting a charitable cause. Some similar choices are the use of recycled paper and partnering with companies that align with our sustainable values, but whose services may cost more. We assign resource and spend to larger projects we identify as having the biggest potential for global growth and streamlined operations. Among these larger investments are our Carbon Capture Paks, plant improvement, support for expansion into regional markets and extension into new product lines where there is most commercial opportunity. The investment gains that have made the biggest impact in terms of our manufacturing are optimisation of water use (including monitoring), and investigating re-use of treated waste water. We've also used high efficiency boilers and LED lighting to reduce our energy use to good effect, and optimised our transport fleet's route to lower fuel use.

5. RETURN

Sydney Theatre Company made most of its capital investment for sustainability between 2008-2011 when photovoltaics and a water capture system were installed, and the wharf plumbing and electrical systems were overhauled to include water wise and low energy fittings. Because STC creates a large amount of construction waste but as a result of its *Greening The Wharf* project, it now runs several streams of recycling, which means only 6 per cent of general waste ends up in landfill. The rest is split between energy recovery (2 per cent), organic recovery (4 per cent), materials recovery [recycling] (10 per cent), and bio-reactor use (78 per cent). The initial infrastructure project has given financial return to the company through reduced water and electricity usage. Ongoing initiatives have also generated practical results. For example, STC now uses FSC Birch cladding for sets, which has improved build quality and saved labour because it is easier to paint. STC's education ticketing team recently changed the process for ticketing school performances. This saved up to 900 tickets per show and simplified the ticketing and seating process for box office and front of house staff.

SERENDIPITY measures its return on investment by "being able to sleep at night, and breathing".

Menus, restaurant signage, vehicle wrap and email footers communicate **SAFFRRON'S** commitment to local produce, biodegradable packaging, and our accreditation and awards wins. Sustainability is highlighted in SAFFRRON's marketing, such as "eco-Indian dining experience" and "no imported seafood on our menu – we are proud to display the Support NT Caught logo on our menu". Sustainability is also top of the list when engaging with the local community. We talk about local, local, local most of the time! And we love showing off our packaging and tableware made from plants. Saffron's credibility is reinforced by being a Banksia finalist. We're proud to display the Banksia award in our restaurant, the seal on our website, our printed menus and even on our food transport van. Being named a Banksia finalist is national recognition that we're on the right track and sends a clear message to other businesses that environmental sustainability in business is not only possible but rewarding. We're a small business in comparison to many of the entrant and our chef, Sel, often mentions how humbling it is that 'the boy from the buffalo farm' is recognised on a national level in the company of some really innovative and inspiring business leaders. We often hear comments from visitors to Saffron that they were visiting on the strength of hearing about our award wins. This is often mentioned in TripAdvisor reviews too. Every win/recognition is a real morale boost for our team. They are really proud to be making a difference through work, and to work for a business that actively cares about sustainability and the local community.

Four years into their sustainability investments, **Psaros** can now accurately measure the financial and environmental savings of their initiatives. We are excited about the results. The benefits were always considered to be greater than the risks. In fact, not trying was a greater risk and the point of difference and early adopter position has positively effected customer decision-making towards our product and enhanced our brand position. Psaros also boosted its reputation as a result of Banksia. The Small to Medium Business Banksia Award was a way for the organisation to be recognised to change business as usual and lead by example. We gained some important press highlights in Western Australia newspapers and online for being the winners of the category. Staff are proud to work in a company that considers the environment and customer feedback surveys over the past 18 months have identified our sustainability agenda to be important in their decision and choice. Banksia's recognition also gives us an opportunity to start conversations about how we are improving and achieving our set policy goals. Being recognised as leaders by our industry counterparts, other leaders and change agents and the general public is so important for us. For example, we delivered an industry first community engagement EcoFair event in April 2016 that focussed on sustainable apartment living. We sponsored a number of local businesses, not-for-profits, and Local Councils who promote and produce sustainable and locally sourced products. Over 750 people joined us at the iconic Perth City Farm to listen, be inspired and learn from local leaders in the world of sustainability and conservation. Psaros' aim was to demonstrate just how simple it is to choose and live a sustainable and exciting lifestyle. Multiple sustainability initiatives for apartment occupants were showcased including renewable energy opportunities, water conservation, recycling and waste avoidance and alternative sustainable transport options that come from living in an apartment.

NOW Architecture always advocates a range of sustainable investments for its clients, including wind turbines and solar power. This commitment has very positive business-generating benefits. We always discuss sustainable outcomes with our clients. When we started our business 30 years ago sustainability wasn't a common issue so it took some time to build a reputation. Clients had to be educated on sustainability, but now most come to us because of our reputation for sustainable design. All our staff understand sustainability is at the core of what we do. Generally employees approach us for a position because of our reputation for sustainability. NOW'S sustainability profile also enables them to sponsor the university graduate prize for sustainable architecture in Victoria as an encouragement for final year students to take an interest in sustainability. We market on our record for sustainability so being recognised as a Banksia winner adds to our reputation.

KALLESKE calculated its return on investment in new equipment and processes by looking at existing costs and payback time and saw results almost immediately. For example, organic processes in the vineyard leave no chemicals in the soil or runoff into waterways so soil health and carbon retention in soil are better, there is more biodiversity, healthier waterways and a healthier environment for vineyard workers. Also, because wines are chemical free they are healthier to drink. Using energy efficient equipment combined with solar means zero electricity bills. Cutting edge technology (such as an Oenofoss analyser and ceramic crossflow) means big savings in consumables, which is positive financially and environmentally. Recycling all winery waste as compost back to the vineyard is also a win-win. Our Banksia win reinforces and endorses what we already doing. It has projected us as a leader in sustainability and made us even more aware how important it is to keep sustainability at the fore of our business and not to rest on our laurels. Our customers are very happy because they 'feel good' buying a sustainable product that's been endorsed so strongly. Our distributors are very happy because the Banksia win is a strong third party endorsement of us as their supplier. This gives them confidence and also another angle they in turn can use for their customers. For our staff and the owners, it confirms that what they are doing is right and valuable, and to continue this way in future. It gives us all a 'spring in our step'. We have always used our sustainability approach in our marketing but even more so now to promote the win and explain in more detail what we do that is sustainable. The local and wider community are very aware of our sustainable approach. It gets talked about at our cellar door, when we do trade promotions and features in local papers, national magazines and our online presence.

FIELDTECH saw small results within a few months, but a business can't run on only selling a few low cost items. We had to expand our product range. So to make the business viable has taken about four years. On a personal level, seeing non biodegradable plastic products being replaced with biodegradable plastic for single use items or recycled plastic for more durable goods is a good sense of achievement. On a business level, we aim to make people aware of sustainable options and hope they will preference them over conventional products.

For **ECOSTORE**, investing in equipment and technology meant up-front costs but they are expecting long term pay offs. In the medium term, the systems provide the detailed information they need to make sound business decisions. Strong partnerships inside and outside the business are a big benefit of their focus on sustainability. We've quickly established a reputation that's set us apart from our competitors, so it hasn't been difficult to convince partners to come on board and support us. Our competitors vary in size, but many are multi-nationals with huge budgets. We believe our transparency, authenticity and ethical business methods set us apart. The level of trust we've established by being so open with customers is a real point of difference that's drawn like-minded companies to work with us, and helped us attract great people to work in the business itself. We will continue to employ and refine systems for lean and efficient business, and each year we measure and optimise our environmentally responsible manufacturing practices. That includes water use, energy use, fuel use, waste segregation and minimisation and recycling. It also includes recycling containers delivered to the factory, using soy-based label ink, and re-using pallets. Our investment in social and environmental action will continue through our not for profit arm The Fairground Foundation, funded by Ecostore to launch projects that can be adopted on a global scale.

Winning a Banksia award boosted ECOSTORE'S Australian business to be recognised by such a well-known and leading sustainability organisation and to reap the benefits of the publicity that's generated nationally. The Banksia awards bring together an incredibly inspiring group of companies and we were excited to be among them. Being able to network with the amazing group of companies that were award finalists or winners, both on the night and after the ceremony, was one of the most positive aspects of the program. Our approach to sustainable business is communicated in all of our collateral, because it's a key opportunity to inform and empower people to make good choices about the everyday products they buy. For example, we emphasise our use of the precautionary principle, where we avoid using ingredients that might harm people's health or the planet. We also spell out in our collateral the top common nasty chemicals that can be found in some body care and cleaning products, and we tell people how our products care for the planet in terms of sustainably sourced ingredients and packaging that's made from recycled and recyclable materials. Our collateral also includes information about our certifications that guarantee we're an environmentally responsible manufacturer. Banksia has also enabled us to develop a network with other businesses that may not have been possible without shared vision for sustainability.

Kooweerup Health is very effective at sharing its sustainability approach, presenting at various conferences like Gippsland Health Promotion Conference, Gippsland Bio-energy Conference, NSW Nurses Conference and the Brotherhood of St Lawrence/ACOSS "Towards a Zero Carbon Economy". Australians face serious and increasing climate change health related risks, including heat related illnesses and deaths, outbreaks of infectious diseases, impacts from food/water insecurity, mental illness and stress associated with environmental damage and increased respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Our stance on these matters have lead us to partner with other organisations interested in sustainability, including the Climate Authority, Doctors Without Harm and the Climate and Health Alliance. We hope our work will inspire other health organisations to put environmental sustainability on their agenda. Being a Banksia finalist has enabled us to be recognised by community and environmental organisations as well as among our staff but unfortunately not with at state or federal government level. Nonetheless, it is inspiring to work with individuals and organisations that share our passion.

6. SOCIAL BENEFITS

Sydney Theatre Company staff are very aware of the sustainability initiatives we run. They form part of our corporate culture and everyone is encouraged to offer input on existing and new initiatives.

FIELDTECH staff are educated all the time on things they never thought about before. Simple things like bringing their lunch to work in a plastic bag and changing their power habits at home.

ECOSTORE'S everyday operations emphasise sustainability at its head office, in retail outlets and its manufacturing facility. For example, in our head office we recognise the importance of community with shared lunch, we have a mobile phone recycling drop-off point, we use recycled paper and have a green wall for healthy indoor air. Through a staff initiative, we've also implemented a food waste reduction program with a bokashi system, three recycling bins, and support for community and environmental projects such as a charity that offers lunch to children who couldn't otherwise afford it, community tree plantings and rubbish clean-ups. We offer a refill station at our Auckland retail store, as well as a recycling point so our bottles can be re-used. The staff member who introduced the initiative is committed through their own motivation to maintain it and lead others into following the practice.

Sustainability is woven into our 'DNA principles' that are widely communicated to staff: 'pioneering, generous, expert, with integrity, intuitive and creative.' We've also implemented a flat organisational structure so that ideas to make the company more sustainable can come from anyone in the business and don't rely on a top-down approach.

Community support may feel like a one-way street, like you're giving and not getting back. But the profile can be better than spending a fortune on advertising with no definite return.

SAFFRRON regularly hosts special menu community engagement events highlighting different locally grown ingredients and their producers. This is often in partnership with diverse community organisations, such as the Wanderers Football Club, Darwin Vegan Society and Three Sisters breast cancer fundraiser. Every year Saffrron holds a candlelit dinner for Earth Hour with 75 lights off in the restaurant for the whole night. I think this year will be our 7th annual Earth Hour dinner, and our 4th annual NT seafood festival. We've celebrated cultural days including Harmony Day, Vindaloo against Violence, Holi, Diwali, Territory Day and Australia Day – the latter with a range of Indian-Australian pies, all made with local produce and so popular they are now on our daily lunch menu. We benefit through helping to keep our farmers on the land and our local fishing industry in business, towards future food security and good relationships with our suppliers. SAFFRRON is also very considered about taking a socially sustainable approach to employment. Over the years we've had speakers of Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Greek, Mandarin on our team. We proudly reflect the multicultural diversity Darwin is so well known for. It's very important – we usually have a mix of long term locals and students, who may not stay in Darwin long term. We have employed a few staff who arrived in Darwin as asylum seekers with little in the way of qualifications, experience and job prospects. Sel trained the in the kitchen and they became valuable members of our team. One of these staff members has become a longer-term staff member, with us about three years so far. 'Local' can mean many things in Darwin. We have supported staff members to come out from India who went on to become Australian citizens. Staff retention can be a problem in Darwin. There are many travellers in Darwin and in the hospitality industry so Saffrron invests to attract and retain good staff. Its staff handbook includes customer service and sustainability statements, and an environmental training checklist to ensure procedures are carried out and the rationale behind sustainability initiatives are carried out.

Psaros has been educating the market place since embarking on our sustainability journey. We seek new ways to inspire the community to choose a low carbon lifestyles. It delivers informative and engaging community events, educational videos and seminars to help promote and highlight the many benefits of sustainable apartment living; demonstrating the initiatives that we put into our developments as well as giving smaller sustainable companies with aligning products the chance to show their products to the community. Psaros is equivalently invested in social enterprise. It is a member of the Property Council's Women in Property and Diversity Committee and has sponsored various women in business events. More broadly, Psaros is committed to better understanding community attitudes towards sustainability infrastructure. In 2014, in collaboration with the Property Council and the Conservation Council of WA, Psaros commissioned research that showed Perth residents are open to higher density development if it is designed and built with environmental, financial and social sustainability outcomes that lead to a more affordable and liveable city. Psaros operates a wellness program that supports charities such as Redkite. It has a formal annual performance review process, career development and training, and a staff incentive/bonus scheme.

Kooweerup Health is well regarded within the community and our community programs and willingness to support community events have improved our reputation. The organisation support or initiates community programs that increase social connections and improve mental health, such as the Kooweerup Men's Shed and local community garden that encourages social interaction and skills around growing food. Others include Preserving for Life (a cooking and preserving program with the drug and alcohol service, Taskforce) that helps people who need to cook on a tight budget and those at risk of social isolation, an after school program for children aged 10-14 years, a Heart Foundation walking group and Mother Goose – a support playgroup for families with babies. Kooweerup Health also runs the 'music on the grass' event and community events such as white ribbon day, prevention of family violence and the suicide prevention lamplight parade.

NOW Architecture also provides best resources and working conditions with freedom on work times and input into decision-making. Most staff join our practice because of our approach to sustainability.

Kalleske pays well above award, invests in training, workshops and seminars for staff. It purchases whatever resources are required so staff can better do their job, provides bonuses (cash or otherwise) and puts on group/team lunches and dinners that also involve partners/families.

7. RUNNING THINGS

Sydney Theatre Company began implementation of our greening initiatives in 2008, since then we have implemented a range of large infrastructure projects, including photovoltaics, rainwater capture, and reduced energy devices. We are now at a stage where we are focused on incremental improvements across existing systems. Keeping environmental initiatives at the forefront of staff's mind is the responsibility of STC's Greening Committee, made up of staff from across the business they administer the greening awards, communicate regularly with the company regarding upcoming greening initiatives, and encourage staff to come up with ways of improving the company's greening practices. Greening is fully integrated in to the organisation, while the greening committee oversees the company's environmental performance it is expected that all staff are aware of our greening policies and that greener, more sustainable options are considered during procurement, and that processes are assessed for potential improvements. STC has a Greening Policy, which has led to the implementation of green design guidelines for set and costume designers. There are also departmental policies and procedures in place to encourage greening. We get waste reports from our waste contractor outlining the final destination of the company's waste, with a large part of this being diverted to recycling. We also receive ad hoc reporting on production recycling, we endeavour to re-use set elements wherever possible and also offer used set to smaller arts companies for re-use.

Sustainability is a formal part of **PSAROS'** business model. As property developers we incorporate it into the design and construction (where possible) of every building. We employ a dedicated Head of Sustainability whose job it is to integrate self-sustaining sustainability initiatives into the company and manage policy and systems to ensure consistency. This role is necessary to manage their success and champion new innovative initiatives. Certain systems are now established and can be managed by other staff members and department managers, which helps the longevity of sustainability within the company. Psaros has developed sustainability principles and policies that underpin our core business and effects all decisions. These policies include an Environmental and Sustainability Policy that governs our efforts towards continuous improvement (2013-2020), a Carbon Management Plan with annual Carbon Footprint Reporting, an Energy Efficiency upgrade plan at head office, a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan with waste reduction to landfill target of over 85 per cent and a Life Cycle Assessment on all new projects to determine areas for improvement.

For **KALLESKE**, sustainability in the business keeps evolving. We are always looking at new processes, equipment and supplies that may be more sustainable. We are always learning by reading, attending workshops, trade fairs to work out if there is something more sustainable that can be done for the business. Nothing specific is done day-to-day, apart from following standard procedures that have been put in place. But it is second nature to always be thinking/looking/tweaking to make things even more sustainable.

ECOSTORE continues to document initiatives formed in different markets so that they become part of what our business does as a whole. We have also built sustainable practices into procedural manuals, recruitment criteria and training to ensure they are adhered to as new staff join the organisation. Our certifications also include performance indicators to keep our environmental protection gains on track. Key managers and their respective teams continue to foster the co-founders' vision for social and environmental good because they are passionate about the company's purpose. Ecostore's strategic plan looks further ahead than we imagine those of many other businesses might – we have a 30-year blueprint for success. This influences our thinking as we break that goal down into one, five and 10-year business plans. These plans include potential formulation changes to help us take advantage of the latest in eco science, evaluating partners that can help us innovate, products or new ranges we might develop, and development of our manufacturing capability. For example, we're assessing what a best practice manufacturing plant might look like in the medium term as we expand our production volumes but continue to uphold the highest standards of environmental protection.

PSAROS is focused on cultural change within the organisation and staff from each department have been engaged and educated on policies and in-house sustainability initiatives.

Because **KALLESE** is a small business, it doesn't consider any need to formalise its sustainability approach. Our small team of owners/employees are very aware of our sustainable ethos. That said, we are certified organic, so there are annual formal audits and reports we need to do.

STC keeps a close eye on its supply chain, particularly in relation to its endeavour to use sustainably sourced material wherever possible. This is dependent on the specific material being used and whether an accreditation system exists, such as FSC accreditation for timber products.

SAFFRRON reviewed its seafood supply after feedback from last year's Banksia judges in relation to the sustainability of our 100 per cent NT seafood. Our supplier's website provides links to its suppliers and in turn their websites provide sustainability information. This is all now on our own website's sustainability page. For example, Humpty Doo Barramundi (farm) says, "we pride ourselves on our rigorous environmental management systems. We have reduced our water discharge to almost nil by recycling it through a purpose built constructed wetland system to deliver the highest quality produce, while protecting our unique environment. Our water treatment system is the first of its kind in Australia. We recirculate our salt water using a manmade wetland to ensure optimum water quality for our fish while minimising the need to release water back to the Adelaide River."

SAFFRRON confirmed the excellence of its own supply chain, and rewrote its web copy to communicate this to stakeholders.

FIELDTECH are also attempting to influence their suppliers but have experienced less positive responses. A few have made changes to biodegradable packing, but the rest have made no effort to change.

Whether an ingredient supplier, a packaging supplier, or a general services supplier, **ECOSTORE'S** leadership team establishes a trusted relationship before any partnership begins, and many suppliers have worked with us since the company was in its early stages.

Tracing our palm oil supply is particularly important so we can achieve full traceability of our supply chain back to the plantation and make sure we are using palm oil derivatives from plantations that meet industry standards as well as our principles for sustainability. Our co-founders Malcolm and Melanie Rands personally visited one of our major suppliers and were well satisfied that supplier met our criteria. This supplier exceeded our expectations with their social good initiatives, supporting local efforts to combat domestic violence. We have also been certified by the New Zealand based organisation Child Labor Free, to guarantee that our manufacturing does not exploit child workers. We're continually evaluating our supply chain to ensure we meet the highest standards of ethical business. This is an area we feel we can really make an impact now – in the early stages of the business we were out on a limb because sustainable business practices were less common. Now as consumers make more conscious choices about what they buy, we need to be as accountable and transparent as possible about the companies we source from. And because of consumer demand, suppliers know they need to be more environmentally responsible too.

SAFFRRON has always made it a priority to talk with our suppliers about supply chain issues and issues such as waste management, and our current suppliers mostly have the information on their websites. For example, BioPak, several vineyards, organic tea brand, Mr Barra and in turn Mr Barra's suppliers – excellent environmental credentials. For example, it was a big part of SAFFRRON'S decision to use bagasse tableware instead of industry standard ceramic tableware. Bagasse is not only energy intensive through its lifecycle but is generally produced in factories in cheap labour countries where labour laws are not always enforced and pollution is high. Labour practices are also a supply chain issue when imported seafood is used, which is another reason why we use 100 per cent NT seafood.

FieldTech would like to know more about their suppliers' sustainability credentials but don't think their own customers would be interested because their only consideration is price.

8. BARRIERS

Sydney Theatre Company exists in a very agile, flexible industry that is well accustomed to change, however changing mindsets and work practices within the organisation is the biggest obstacle. Engaging staff throughout the process and allowing them to create ongoing opportunities for improvement continues to give them a sense of ownership of the process.

The initial project drive was from the then Co-Artistic Directors. Our ongoing engagement and communication with staff created a culture of sustainability within the company, which has led to managers and staff being more willing to invest time and resources in greening initiatives.

For **SERENDIPITY** one of the initial barriers was lack of information. We were lucky that our local council has a sustainability program, which they took out to businesses in the area to educate and help make change to existing practices. Small privately run businesses [like ours] are frequently run like benign dictatorships, and so then it was simply a matter of decision making and communication with staff to get the ball rolling.

Making **Psaros'** operations more sustainable involved a steep learning curve that meant new thinking, new ways of construction, new suppliers and new tender processes. It also meant getting the whole team on the same page, able to act and make decisions on the new standards implemented. This was achieved through engagement that included educational workshops, continuous training and conversation. At first, our staff needed to know why we were moving in this direction. They wanted to participate and support the shift because most saw it as a positive for their own business practice. The biggest hurdle is government bureaucracy. State planning guidelines and local government policy do not drive environmentally sustainable design and construction and so it is left to the early adopters and leaders to step up and make the difference. Only a handful of apartment buildings in WA have progressed towards low carbon and quality design outcomes. Four years down the track, Psaros has set a new environmental benchmark in apartment buildings in WA but most [developers] are yet to join, innovate and help lead the change. We need best practice state planning guidelines and consistent local government policy that reward environmental design outcomes where developers are incentivised to meet innovation and best practice design.

Despite being driven by its senior management and staff, **Kooweerup Health** still finds it a constant challenge to maintain staff involvement. We produce a bi-monthly newsletter that focuses on education, information and practical examples of how we can become more sustainable. All projects are required to have a business case and demonstrate return on investment before being approved by the Board. As a public hospital, it is always a challenge to get funding for work that relates to environmental sustainability. Savings made by via our different strategies are used to improve current health service provision and/or introduce new services into the organisation.

KALLESKE and **NOW Architecture** both consider the biggest barrier to implementing sustainable practices is a lack of information and knowledge in their respective industries. Kalleske believes the only way this can be overcome is to take a DIY approach. We needed to do a lot of research ourselves – reading, trade shows, looking at other industries and doing trials.

For **ECOSTORE**, the biggest barriers we were being pioneers in eco-products. When we launched in 1993 as a mail order business, some forms of sustainable practice were simply not common. It was difficult to find reliable recycled paper for our product catalogues, along with plant-based inks, for example. We overcame this and similar difficulties by adopting quite a radical and resourceful recycling scheme. We sourced and re-used boxes from retailers and overlaid them with a large branded sticker of our own. And we'd re-use materials like newspaper to package the products. In those early days the problems were overcome by taking time to overcome this lack of supply. Nowadays our barriers are more about cost and ensuring our various endeavours have a long-term return. To get potential partners over the line we had to make them understand that we would achieve the biggest growth by being the most ethical and sustainable brand. We had to make them understand how crucial this difference was, because otherwise we'd just be a 'me too' company, or we'd be taken over by a larger competitor. But we feel that where we have an advantage is our ability

to act quickly on our decisions and not be afraid to invest where we identify areas that will return us good results.

FIELDTECH'S biggest challenges related to infrastructure and education. To reengineer the biodegradable products we produce meant we had to manufacture moulds, and dies and teach the producers how to deal with our biodegradable materials. Finding plastic manufacturers who were willing to take the risk to work with our material and produce much smaller volumes than what they normally produce is difficult too. Convincing clients they could buy a more sustainable product is a big challenge many times. Getting around these issues takes time and patience. Plus start up capital.

9. EYE ON THE FUTURE

SAFFRRON is justifiably proud to be a sustainable food industry leader. Even in 2016 with all the awareness we have of sustainability issues there are still so many businesses that are not implementing even basic sustainable practices. But the potential for waste minimisation and positive community impact through responsible business operations is so great. We're here to say that not only can a business be environmentally sustainable and financially sustainable, environmental sustainability can make all the difference to your business success. For example, we can't understand why we still see businesses using polystyrene or plastic packaging when there are such high quality, well designed and affordable alternatives available now, such as BioPak. To stay at the forefront, relationships and partnerships will always be key, which is one of the reasons why we always attend professional development events. Entering awards has been a great way of doing this, for a time-pressed business owner especially. For example, the Banksia Awards asks all the right questions so we keep looking at what we're doing, how we do it, where we are getting it right and where we can improve. Banksia's feedback process has also been invaluable.

Kooweerup Health is focused on staying as an industry leader. According to The Lancet (2015) tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century. If we can influence our community, staff and peers of the importance of sustainability through our mitigation and adaptation policies and practice, hopefully we can be prepared for the future impact of climate change on health. There are plans for a documentary to be made of the work undertaken to date for release to the International Global Green and Health Hospitals Network. This network now has about 3,500 member health organisations around the world. We have presented our work at several conferences across Australia and hope this will continue until we see a national strategy on climate, health and wellbeing in Australia. We hope that by entering our service into award programs, such as the Banksia Sustainability Awards we can even further highlight the work that needs to be done. It would be fantastic to have multiple health organisations such as ours putting themselves out there to be recognised as leaders in sustainability.

KALLESKE expects its business to continue to set an industry benchmark for sustainability. We are self-sufficient in water and electricity, we use almost 47 per cent less water than industry average and annually we use 230,000 kWh less electricity than an average winery our size. We also have other measures include zero chemical use and zero waste that goes off-site. They have very clear (and deceptively simple) sustainability goals – never ending continual improvement. While there is nothing specific we are changing at present, if we knew of it now we'd probably implement it now. After all, you don't know what you don't yet know. We will continue to research, innovate and learn to ensure we are always doing things the best (most efficiently, sustainably) way they can be done. And we will continue to share our knowledge with customers, suppliers and others in the industry. We welcome people from our industry (wineries, growers) to visit the winery/vineyard to see what we do and openly share our knowledge/practices through things like workshops and industry visits (local, national and international). Customers know about our innovations from our marketing material as well as from events we do, and suppliers are told as required or see for themselves when they are on site.

FIELDTECH expect all manufacturers to be making sustainable products the way they do in future. It won't happen overnight because so many systems and relationships are in place to maintain the status quo, and people and businesses are resistant to changing something that is already working.

Nonetheless, other manufacturers are adjusting to more sustainable practices and products. If they see they are going to be left behind they will have to make a decision to adjust to keep up or retire from the line of business they are in. By 2020, we hope our product line will be five times larger and the company holds a position in a number of different sectors. We hope the name is on many people lips as the go-to company for innovative and sustainable products.

Most businesses have long-term goals, but **ECOSTORE** maps out the next 30 years. When your goals extend this far it's even more important to take care of the things like your staff, the workers at your partner businesses and your stakeholders. They become vitally important for your own sustainability and that of your wider global community. There is always room to improve. Some key areas where we feel we can make gains are fully tracing our ingredients back to their source, and being even more transparent in the way we communicate. For example, in the first area we'd like to be able to source each naturally grown component of our products back to the piece of ground it came from and be fully across each aspect of the supply chain, from the workers who harvest it to the surrounding ecosystem. We've already done a lot of work in that area, but we think we can do better. We also want to enhance our communication with stakeholders, customer and our own team, to be even more authentic and open. We believe sustainability is only the start, because we also believe in the idea of being a restorative business. Wouldn't it be great if you knew that every time you bought an Ecostore product, more topsoil was being created, for example, or that there was no waste associated with the process of making our products. It's the idea of the true circular economy, where everything becomes fuel for another process.

10. TAKE AWAYS

The **Sydney Theatre Company** benefits from increased publicity, some reduced costs and an improved reputation. It **saves the business money**. Initial costs for some set construction materials can be higher when they're sustainably sourced but there are large savings in lowering water and energy use throughout our venues and shows.

For **KALLESKE**, environmental and social sustainability often leads to economic sustainability. Being sustainable does not need to be a financial burden – on the contrary. Do your own research. Each business is unique and only you know what is best for your business and what can be done. It won't magically be handed to you on a silver platter. We embrace sustainability because saves the business money, differentiates us from our competitors, helps attract new customers and business, helps generate higher profit margins, has risk management benefits and helps us meet regulatory requirements.

FIELDTECH says that just because you are passionate about something and will go out of your way to do something more sustainable, many people will not feel the same. You can produce a great product with all sorts of sustainable and new features to make it far superior in your eyes to the current products but many clients won't care to change their buying habits. A lot of people do not care enough yet to take action. For this to happen the whole topic of sustainability needs to become more mainstream and heavily supported by people the media talk about the most, like government, community leaders and celebrities.

ECOSTORE says to involve your team in making your business more sustainable and make sure sustainable practices are part of their key performance indicators. That no practice is too small – any effort can contribute to overall sustainability enhancement. Invest in equipment and systems that have a long-term payoff in terms of making your business leaner and more sustainable. Remember certifications are important – they tell consumers that you're genuinely environmentally responsible, and they also keep you on track to ensure you're making incremental sustainability improving and maintaining independent standards. Make sure that you think holistically – create a workplace that supports flexi time and work/life balance. And finally embed sustainability throughout the business by employing, up-skilling and retaining people who believe in your mission, don't leave sustainability to one or two staff.