INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLKIT

PROJECT TITLE: BUSINESS STREAMS

Tags; business, stormwater

Overview:

Business Streams is a long-term capacity building approach for small businesses in Australia. It aims to reduce stormwater pollution by building relationships between businesses and local authorities, raising awareness of pollution issues and encouraging businesses to commit to a series of pollution-reducing actions. The approach was created and developed by Vox Bandicoot.

Businesses join together as a group to "audit" themselves and make commitments based on stormwater pollution prevention. Their participation and achievements entitle them to display a "T.U. Platypus Award" as a marketing exercise to attract new customers and business.

The peer-to-peer networking aspect of the model aims to improve relationships between local businesses and use local champions as ambassadors and 'beacons' for other businesses.

The Business Streams program process includes:

- Creating and building relationships with local business people, and raising awareness of pollution issues
- Conducting basic training for participating businessess on stormwater pollution using an action-based education kit and presentations from local Council officers, EPA etc
- Businesses then commit to at least three stormwater pollution prevention measures
- Successful businesses receive their award at a creek walk celebration or during a theatrical public presentation on the street in front of their premises. The award can be displayed to communicate their local environmental responsibility to their customers

From their website "The Business Stream approach begins with action, grows through peer partnerships and is fortified through acknowledgement and business reward."

Why is it relevant to PTS?

It is based on participants committing to hands on, site specific, stormwater pollution prevention actions
It involves networking among businesses by building a "local business pollution prevention team" who collaborate on actions and projects and influence others in their area
It is based on businesses around streams, using the waterway as a direct connection with nature to inspire them to take stock of their actions, and change where necessary

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Ideas and tips for PTS:

It uses simple educational material to explain the surface-drain-waterway connection, with an emphasis on pictures and art

It involves self-auditing and reflection by asking participants to identify the pollution they are causing by "having a look around their shop" to plug the "stormwater" leaks
It recognises and rewards participants' contributions, to bring about long-term behaviour changes. Acknowledging and promoting participating businesses' achievements via media articles, advertisements, websites, signage, etc "rewards and embeds positive behaviour change". It also raises awareness of the project and helps to recruit other businesses

Contact:

Vox Bandicoot

This has close parallels with two local initiatives:
the Sustainable Business Network and the work that Green Jon did with local businesses on Aetna Street