

# Energy Efficiency Matters: Training Accountants & Business Managers Industry Research Report

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Findings from focus groups and industry research conducted as part of course development for the University of Western Sydney project *Energy Efficiency Matters: Training Accountants and Business Managers*, funded by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

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This report was prepared by

Dr Anne Abraham  
Project team leader  
School of Accounting  
University of Western Sydney  
Locked Bag 1797  
Penrith NSW 2751  
Phone: 61 2 9685 9212  
Email [a.abraham@uws.edu.au](mailto:a.abraham@uws.edu.au)

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- The **55 participants** who gave their time, thought and energy to this project by sharing in focus groups and acting as table hosts. Their feedback has influenced the design of our energy efficiency training course.
- The **UWS staff** who assisted in the conduct and organisation of the focus groups and acted as table hosts. Special thanks go to Professor Lyn Carson for taking on the role of moderator, and Rob Firth, Jess Arranz and Rob McDonald for arranging invitations, venue organisation and parking.
- The **industry partners** who played a significant role in inviting participants, acting as table hosts and providing energy expertise during the focus groups.
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### Report prepared by



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### Industry partners



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### Project funding



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Through its Energy Efficiency Training Programs, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) “supports the development and delivery of higher education courses that enhance energy efficiency knowledge and practice”.<sup>1</sup> In particular, OEH has identified the importance of the role that accountants and business managers can play in supporting, promoting and introducing energy efficiency endeavours.

In order to ensure that their courses are audience-appropriate, designers of energy efficiency training programs for accountants and business managers should understand the perceived needs of these groups and incorporate a response to these needs into their course blueprints. Focus groups were selected as a methodology for understanding audience needs because they offer a way of systematically acquiring qualitative data on specific topics. They generate data through group discussion as people share and compare their different points of view. To this end, focus groups provide information not only about what people think but also about why they think as they do.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

During September 2011, two focus groups were conducted by the UWS Energy Efficiency Matters (EEM) project team. The purpose of the groups was to gather information from accountants and business managers to identify

- Common understandings and misunderstandings about energy efficiency;
- Energy efficiency issues impacting on their businesses, and
- Perceived needs that should be addressed in an energy efficiency course.

## 3. FOCUS GROUP DESIGN

### 3.1. PARTICIPANTS

Potential participants were invited to join “other business leaders to help identify the gaps in understanding energy and the current hottest business issues about energy”. (See Appendix A for copy of invitation). Involvement offered participants

- A chance to contribute, to be part of Australia’s huge energy debate and to get a feel for the energy questions that businesses are searching to answer;
- Great networking as they mixed with others who were discovering business realities in the low carbon economy ... for efficiency, cost savings and competitiveness, and
- An ongoing link to the project team and the ‘focus group Alumni’!

The participants consisted of accountants and business managers from Greater Western Sydney Region together with representatives from the OEH and EEM industry partners including a number of energy experts. In total 55 individuals participated in the two focus groups. Table 1 shows a breakdown of participants.

Table 1: Focus group participants

	Focus Group 1		Focus Group 2	
	N	%	N	%
Accountants & business managers	18	64.2	22	81.5
OEH	3	10.7	1	3.7
Energy experts	6	21.4	3	11.1
Other	1	3.6	1	3.7
	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), 2011, “Energy efficiency training program”, Sustaining Our Environment, September, Available: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/greenskills/eneftraining3.htm>

## 3.2. STRUCTURE

Each of the two focus groups was organised around a six-step structure.

### 3.2.1 Introduction and overview

At the beginning of each focus group, participants were welcomed and then shown a video message from the UWS Director of Sustainability regarding the importance of the project. Following this, the moderator outlined the structure of the session.

### 3.2.2 Question generation

Questions were generated by each participant reflecting on their one most important question in relation to energy efficiency in business. Blank index cards were distributed and participants were asked to write down this one question in a clear manner that would ensure that others would be able to read the card when it was distributed. Participants were then asked to exchange cards so that no person was holding their own question. This ensured that participants did not feel ownership of the question during the scoring process.

### 3.2.3 Question rating

Pairs of participants discussed the two questions they were holding and decided by consensus how to allocate a total of 7 points between the two questions. A (whole) number was then written on the back of each back of the card. This process was repeated for five rounds (five different pairs of cards) after which time the scores for each question were added together, giving a final score for each question between zero and 35. The cards were then sorted by their scores, with the ones rated more highly being used in the next stage of the process.

### 3.2.4 Small group discussions

Small group discussions adopted a six-round world cafe format with tables set up for 4-6 participants with two of the top rating questions being placed on each table. Each table was allocated a host who remained at the table while the other group members dispersed at the end of each round. Table hosts were asked to encourage discussion around their table questions and to become the table's memory by recording brief and succinct notes on large sheets of paper. These notes would then be summarised around the themes that emerged in relation to energy efficiency to provide input for course designers. A summary of these notes is provided in Appendix B.

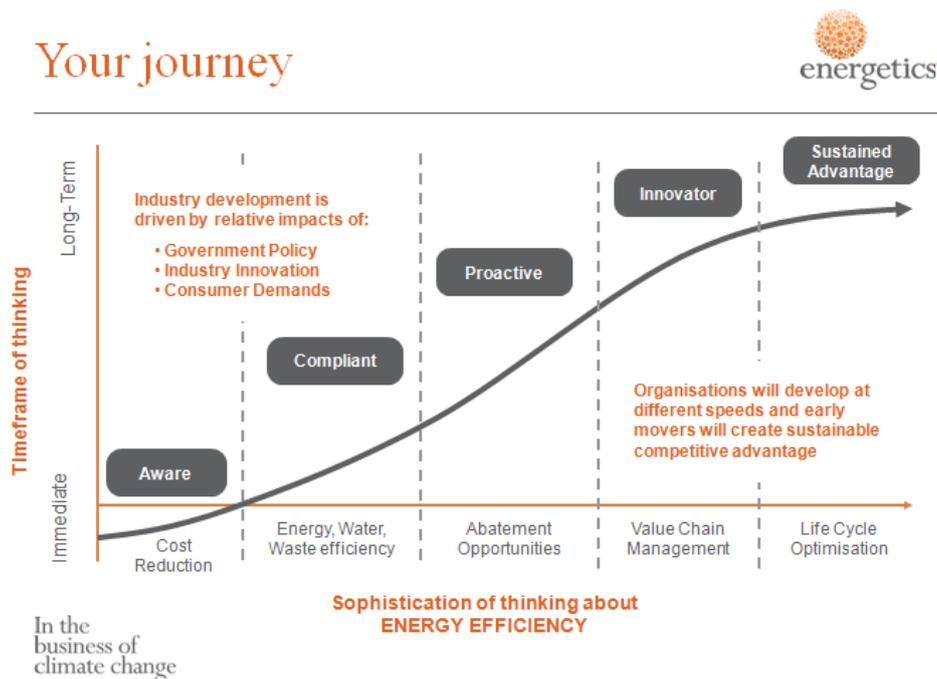
### 3.2.5 Reflection of business context

One of the energy experts from Energetics Ltd then led participants through an energy efficiency reflection in a business context by asking "How sophisticated is your organisation or your major client when it comes to energy efficiency?" He explained that organisational leadership typically operates at a particular level of thinking about energy efficiency. These levels of thinking, as depicted in Figure 1, underpin the type of activities in which organisational leaders are prepared to invest as well as the extent to which energy efficiency has been integrated into their business systems. These levels are

- **AWARE:** These organisations know that energy efficiency can result in cost savings but have only realised energy savings as a by-product from other initiatives.
- **COMPLIANT:** These organisations have conducted energy assessment to avoid fines and have no program in place to progress the identified opportunities.
- **PROACTIVE:** These organisations understand how energy is used in their business and where the best opportunities are. They have a program in place to progress best practice opportunities and they have taken steps to encourage their staff to initiate and champion ideas.

- **INNOVATIVE:** These organisations have moved on from implementing ideas and are now piloting new energy efficiency technologies; e.g. co-generation and or renewable energy sources, even though the cost benefit may be marginal. They inform best practice in their industry rather than follow best practice. They have a wider appreciation of the benefits of energy efficiency including carbon emissions, green credentials, etc.
- **SUSTAINED ADVANTAGE:** These organisations have been operating at level of innovation for a long time and are reaping the benefits across their operations and affecting their supply chain.

Figure 1: Your organisation's journey in energy efficiency



Source: Designed and developed by Energetics Ltd and used with their permission

Participants were then invited to place a dot on the spot in Figure 1 that depicted where they considered their organisation or their clients' level of thinking was with regard to energy efficiency. (Figures showing participants' dots are provided in Appendix C.) Each focus group concluded that there was a need to shift their businesses further towards a sustained advantage in their level of thinking. The group was then asked the following question: "What should participants learn from the proposed Energy Efficiency training course to progress their clients thinking to a higher level and realise the subsequent benefits?" Participants discussed this question at tables with the table host taking notes to input into the design of the course.

### 3.2.6 Final question

The moderator concluded each focus group by posing a final question "What must the course not leave out?" Participants wrote their answers to this question on index cards which were collected and analysed to provide input into course design. Feedback from this question and that in 3.2.5 has been included in the summary provided of the earlier focus group discussions in Appendix B.

## 4. FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

From the focus group findings, seven themes emerged which were identified as having particular relevance to the design of our energy efficiency training course. Overriding each of these was the need for the course to be tailored specifically to the needs of business, rather than to approach energy efficiency from a purely academic perspective. The seven themes are listed below together with a summary of the key topics under each.

### 4.1. WHAT IS ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Understanding the concept of energy efficiency
  - Difference between reducing costs or consumption and being energy efficient
- Need for a broader understanding of energy efficiency
- Understanding the jargon
- Some reoccurring concepts that people wanted demystified
  - Consumption vs efficiency
  - Renewable energy
  - Sustainability
  - Clean energy
  - The carbon tax

### 4.2. TRENDS IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- What is happening now?
  - Best practice
  - Benchmarking
- Changing Government policy
- What does the future hold?

### 4.3. GOVERNMENT POLICY

- What is current Government policy
- Government Programs
  - Incentives
  - Tax considerations – including carbon tax
  - Penalties

### 4.4. BENEFITS OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Economic
  - Cost/Benefit in Short/Medium/Long term
  - Compliance
  - Reducing costs
  - Gains in efficiency
  - More efficient use
- Marketing
  - Provision of marketing advantage
  - Advantage over competitors(? Is there?)
  - Generate positive perception of company/product
  - Market acceptability
- Social
  - Reduce carbon footprint

## **4.5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Cost/Benefit analysis – impact on bottom line
- Capital require to implement
  - Timing of investment
  - Impact on production
- Short/Medium/Long term costs & benefits
- Rebates/Grants
- Tax implications
- Understanding power bills
  - How power use is reported (documented & attributed)
- Providing the financial advice
  - Changing the role of the accountant

## **4.6. IMPLEMENTATION**

- Perceived importance to the company
- Financial considerations (see above)
- Production implications
  - Timing
  - Maintenance
  - Retro fitting
- Human Resource issues
  - Leadership
  - Motivation and inclination to change to energy efficiency
  - Who's responsibility?
  - KPIs
  - Need to change behaviours
  - Training
  - Role of staff in energy efficiency

## **4.7. NECESSARY TOOLS**

- Benchmarking
- Best practice
- How is energy efficiency measured
- How to monitor energy use
- Reporting (and information required)
- Procedures
- Technology required (to use consumption or monitor)

## 5. INDUSTRY RELATIONSHIPS

### 5.1. EVALUATION

At the conclusion of the focus groups, all industry participants completed an evaluation form consisting of five statements to be assessed on a five-point scale and four open-ended questions. A copy of the evaluation instrument is provided in Appendix D and a summary of the responses in Appendix E.

Overall, participants were very positive about the focus group sessions and pleased they attended. This is illustrated in the following two general comments:

- *Wonderful experience. Thanks for giving me the chance to attend.*
- *Grateful for invite to participate - good networking opportunity*

Other feedback from participants indicated that they found the focus groups both an interesting and a stimulating experiences. Such comments included

- *A different, interesting approach to seeking stakeholder input.*
- *The ability for all people to contribute to the conversation groups were 'right size'. How ideas came from the group*
- *The iterative approach to dealing with questions raised to gain a more balanced feel of what the issues/challenges/opportunities are*
- *"Card-exercise" facilitated excellent brain-storming and broad range discussions among all participants*
- *Cohort from different backgrounds could bring different perspectives to the debate*
- *Being exposed to different ideas particularly from other accountants*
- *Free exchange of ideas*

As stated previously, the purpose of holding focus groups was to gather information from accountants and business managers to identify

- Common understandings and misunderstandings about energy efficiency;
- Energy efficiency issues impacting on their businesses, and
- Perceived needs that should be addressed in an energy efficiency course

Thus the implicit aim was to collect information from the participants. However analysis of the evaluation feedback indicated that not only did participants find the focus groups a useful forum in which to discuss their energy efficiency needs, but that many also increased their understanding of energy efficiency issues as a result of attending the sessions.

Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate that the focus groups were highly effective in both raising participants' awareness of energy efficiency issues and in exploring such issues.

Figure 3: Participation in the focus group raised my awareness of EE issues

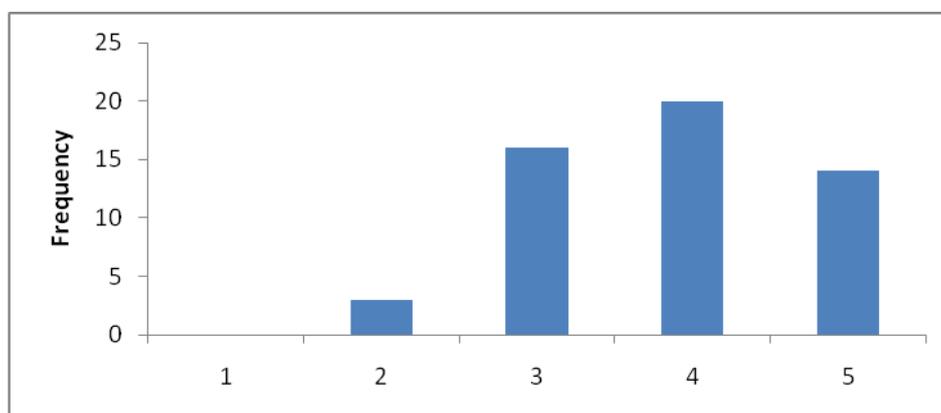
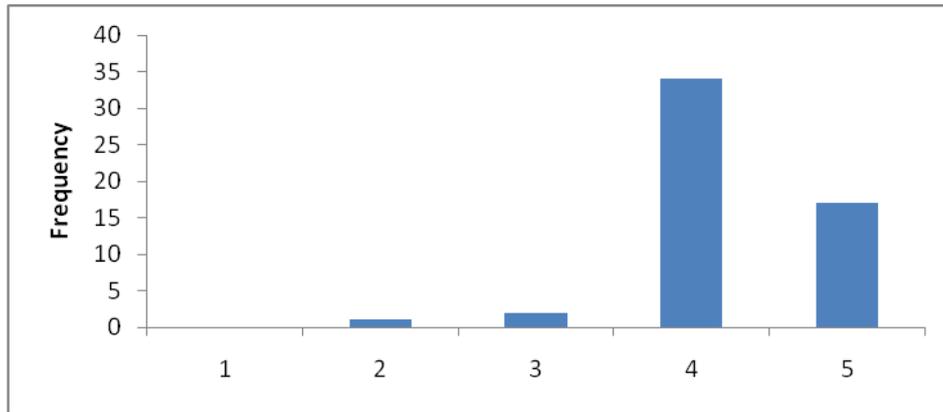
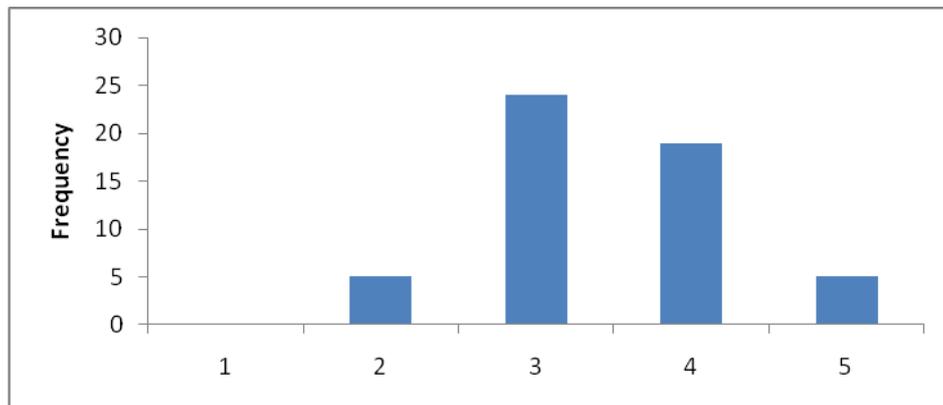


Figure 4: The focus group helped me to explore issues relating to EE



For some participants, this increased awareness and exploration extended into ideas that they believed they could take away and possibly implement in their businesses as show in Figure 5.

Figure 5: I learned new ideas about EE that I may impact my business



Others had their appetites whetted and wanted

- *more information {to be} available on how to move forward with implementation* and
- *would like some ideas to have taken back to our business.*

The need for accountants and business managers to grapple with and understand relevant issues was summarised by one participant who commented that the focus groups provided

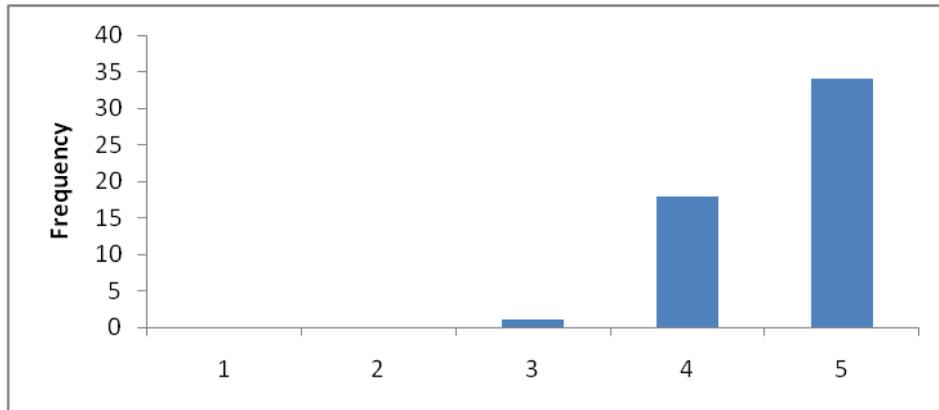
- *overwhelming evidence that all attendees have as I little or no knowledge of how to capture and improve energy efficiency*

Such responses indicate the overwhelming need for energy efficiency training. They further indicate that research in topics beyond those suggested by focus groups will be an essential part of effective course design.

## 5.2. FURTHER INVOLVEMENT

There was an overwhelming desire expressed by participants to receive feedback on questions raised during the focus groups as indicated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: I am looking forward to receiving feedback on EE questions

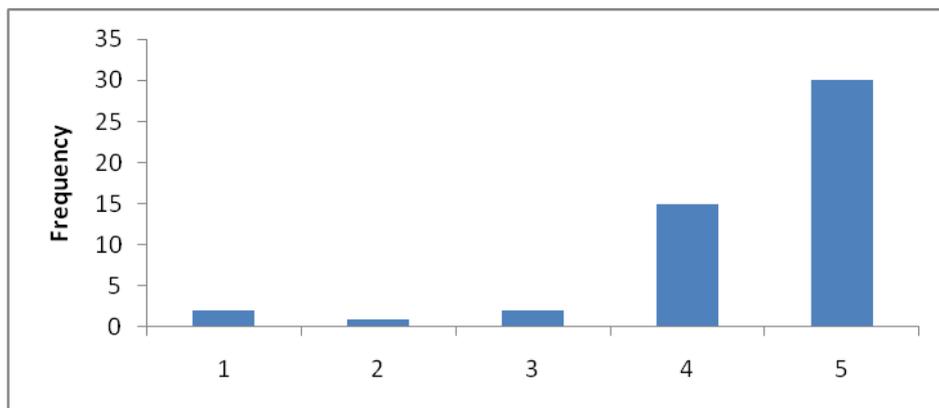


It is envisioned that this feedback will be provided through further involvement with participants in three ways.

### 5.2.1. Pilot course

In the medium term, further involvement will centre around the design and development of the UWS energy efficiency training course with a pilot to be run in August 2012. Many focus group participants will be offered the opportunity to attend this pilot. Figure 7 demonstrates the overwhelming interest which participants expressed in such an opportunity.

Figure 7: I am interested in attending a pilot of the UWS EE training course



### 5.2.2. Mailing list

In the short term, summaries of questions and issues will be emailed to participants who will be given the opportunity to go on a mailing list to receive updates on what is happening with the course design and in the general area of energy efficiency. These updates may evolve into a regular newsletter if a funding source can be found.

### 5.2.3. Ongoing research

Participants may choose to participate in research opportunities to understand and promulgate a wider appreciation of energy efficiency in relation to business in general, and accounting in particular. Here, too, the project team will be exploring available sources of funding.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP INVITATION



Industry Project Partner Logo



Supported by the NSW Government as part of the Energy Efficiency Training Program – visit [savepower.nsw.gov.au](http://savepower.nsw.gov.au)

Are you a senior accountant or business manager thinking about energy efficiency?

## Invitation to a Focus Group on Energy Efficiency

### 'Where you write the questions'

A major NSW Government-sponsored project is under way at the University of Western Sydney to develop Energy Efficiency Training Courses, for Accountants and Business Managers. UWS has six Project Partners in this exciting project:

- Institute of Public Accountants
- Western Sydney Business Connection
- NSW Business Chamber
- Moore Stephens Sydney West
- Energetics Pty Ltd
- Cadre Design, for the eLearning component

We need **YOU** and other business leaders to help identify the **gaps** in understanding energy and the current hottest business **issues** about energy.

#### Where?

University of Western Sydney (UWS), Parramatta campus, corner of James Ruse Drive and Victoria Rd, Rydalmere. We'll send you a map, and parking details.

#### When?

Your choice of either

8.45 am – 12 noon, Thursday 15 September, 2011

**OR**

1.45 pm – 5pm , Wednesday 21 September, 2011.

#### What does it cost?

Nothing. If your application is confirmed all we ask is that you **bring to the focus group at least ONE written question** (anonymous if you prefer). This should be about any energy matter that you would like us to feed into the design of courses for Energy Efficiency training.

**How many people will attend?**

A lot. UWS has experienced academics with techniques to handle large focus groups of more than 50 business leaders, in full participation mode!

**What is in it for participants?**

- A chance to contribute, to be part of Australia’s huge energy debate and to get a feel for the energy questions that businesses are searching to answer.
- Great networking as you have the opportunity to mix with others who are discovering business realities in the low carbon economy ... for efficiency, cost savings and competitiveness.
- An ongoing link to the project team and the ‘focus group Alumni’!

**Refreshments?**

Yes, to support our participants as they work in their small groups. **PLUS** a light lunch for the morning group from 12 noon, or drinks for the afternoon group from 5 pm.

**Are you interested in joining one of these focus groups? Can YOU make a contribution, on behalf of your business and thousands like you? Then register NOW!**

**How can I register my interest?**

Please send an email now to [ [XXXXX@projectpartner.com.au](mailto:XXXXX@projectpartner.com.au) ], with your contact details, and indicate your preferred session:

- A 8.45 am -12 noon, Thursday 15 September, 2011  
*or*
- B 1.45 pm -5 pm, Wednesday 21 September, 2011  
*or*
- C Either session is OK for me

**Apply early!**

There will not be sufficient space for everyone from the Project Partner organisations, so we encourage you to email us your reply as soon as possible to make sure that you reserve YOUR place!

Thank you, from [project partner] and all the Project Team.

[Insert Project partner’s contact name, phone]



## APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF NOTES FROM FOCUS GROUPS

The review of the notes from the focus groups could be divided into two main themes regarding energy efficiency (EE): course structure and course content. The theme of course content covers participants' perspectives about the general parameters to be maintained in designing the proposed EE course. Table 2 provides details of the four sub-themes that were identified under course structure.

Table 2: Course structure

Sub-theme	Description	Examples
Connection to available data	'Know-how' to access, understand and utilise the existing information on EE	Where to access information Availability of energy grants for business Access to industry benchmarks, KPIs, Govt sources Understanding energy bill and contract including jargon and component parts
Business specific	EE information that can be customised to specific businesses	Measurement in different businesses Identify course content so it is specific to business. For specific industries (e.g. aluminium) EE will be very important, but for others focus would be more on finite resources
Foundational information	Basic information to comprehend EE	Ethics of business re sustainability Relation between climate change, carbon economy, EE Learn the language; e.g., amps, watts, etc
Practical approach to learning	Content and mode of learning that exemplifies how to make EE as part of business	Business case examples Learn from experience including what didn't work Industry specific examples of how EE can improve business operation and bottom line Practical case studies with detailed numbers Practical examples of EE projects and changes Practical tools & resources to use after the course

The other main theme, course content, covers participants' perspectives about the specific topics to be covered in designing the proposed EE course. Table 3 provides details of the twelve sub-themes that were identified under course content.

Table 3: Course content

Sub-theme	Description	Examples
Govt incentives & policy	Regulatory assistance, restrictions and its impact on business decisions	Understanding available government EE programs to assist businesses to move forward including capital grant assistance Benchmark incentives-for business via government Renewable energy certificates Legislative penalties Rebates to minimise consumption of energy Different packaging and tariffs, Compliance costs Role of government, policy and programs in driving change Govt. regulations Information on grants, capital funding, finance available. Long-term trends versus short term policy comparison
Benchmarking in EE	Standards to measure and compare performance against competitors and legislation	What are the benchmarks to be applied across businesses Compare competitors: strategic advantage Data is available from energy suppliers – trends; loads Identify savings over different periods GRI – set standards around dollar reporting KPI's consistency Look worldwide for standards of best practice Guidelines on reporting EE including external advice

Sub-theme	Description	Examples
What is EE & its components	How EE is defined and its components	Difficult to separate: supply of energy, renewable energy co-generation, EE Renewable energy alternatives & localised generation technologies Commercial versus residential Identify technologies that reduce consumption and costs Improve building standards (green buildings) The benefits to a business of implementing EE programs; e.g., public perception, financially and government support
EE and Carbon	Linkages between EE and carbon usage	Frame EE in the carbon renewable and sustainability ACCC – audit of carbon neutral Relationship between energy efficiencies and our carbon footprint Relation between climate change, carbon economy, energy efficiency (FG1 Essentials P)
EE challenges	Hurdles that businesses are facing at macro and micro level with regards to EE	Difficult to make forward planning and decisions in uncertainty around carbon tax What if technology is outdated? ASX does not reward for CSR – shareholders only want dividends/price Short term focus for all How do you convince a customer to purchase based on your green claims? More education about sustainability Need quality data based on user profiles/consumption No incentives in reporting on efficiencies with poor ROI <u>but</u> potential for savings or better capital investment Time and resources required Need to do audit-expensive Making investment decisions: go new or retrofit How to motivate people to change
Market frameworks in EE	Information on stakeholders, their perspectives and how they influence the functioning in EE market	Stakeholders (drivers of sustainability): government policy, “green left”, who are they? Stages of consideration of energy – size (i.e. information gathering, cost analysis, public awareness, testing Product Price i.e. do customers care about sustainability Balancing CSR and TBL Role of big business in sustainability and effect on competitors and suppliers National energy issues – electricity grid and market nationally. How do global, national & industry specific issues impact on my business decisions
Staff engagement in EE	How to implement EE through staff	Changing the culture of the organisation Awareness of sustainability, EE champions, role models Incentives program around EE Communication/Training/Education of employees Tools and practical steps that staff can take in their own role to increase EE Behavioural change, recognition of achievers Sustainability must be part of staff induction
EE & SMEs	EE information to meet specific requirements of SMEs	SMEs need expert advice – cost effective Best practice implications for SMEs Small business- need to know easily- how to measure Training for SMEs What is the benchmark to calculate

Sub-theme	Description	Examples
IT for EE	Ability to develop and apply IT system in EE	Measurement tools available to determine energy output for different components in business and production IT solutions with measurement tools Software to measure cost implications Software to be able to track and <u>report</u> energy use Tools for integrating energy consumption as part of business management & reporting
Accounting and finance for EE	Role of accountants and finance staff in EE including the technical skills	What innovations can accountants consider in adopting new innovations? CFO involved in decision margins on energy sustainability Payback in business from real energy savings Timing of payback Tax deductions Capital expenditure versus ongoing expenditure. You must consider carbon tax into ROI Brand enhancement benefit? Need reporting down whole consumption chain Applying NGER Act Dollar impact of EE on TBL reporting Audit check list for on energy saving How does measurement convert to dollars? Cost benefit of EE
EE and business Operations	Integrating EE in business strategy and operations	Energy efficiency in strategic plans Tying back EE into “competitive advantage” Not just simple dollars, may be more: quality, production, safety, HR, may be longer term Changing procedures with reduction in cost of energy When is it strategically important to invest in EE? Understanding supply chain and risk points along this – drivers and opportunities Understanding of ALL the EE metrics available and how to set up a data collection systems within a business Outsource to more energy efficient processes Need constant roadmap to where to go
Business Opportunities	Potential sectors for expanding EE	Export opportunities – ‘clean and green’ Teaching and inspiring

## APPENDIX C: JOURNEYS IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The dots in Figure 8 and the crosses in Figure 9 indicates where each focus group participant considered their organisation's (or their client's) level of thinking to be with regard to their energy efficiency journey.

Figure 8: Focus Group 1 – My organisation's journey in energy efficiency

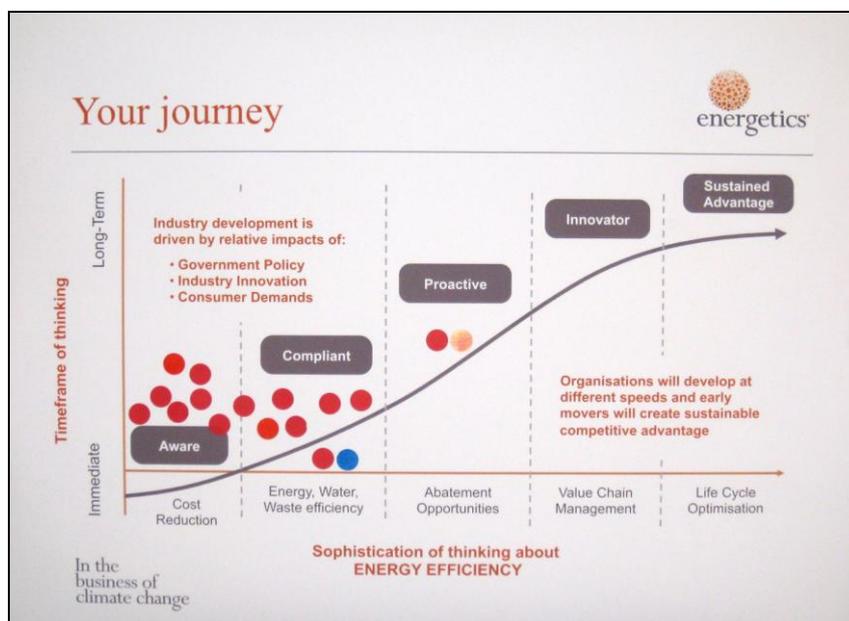
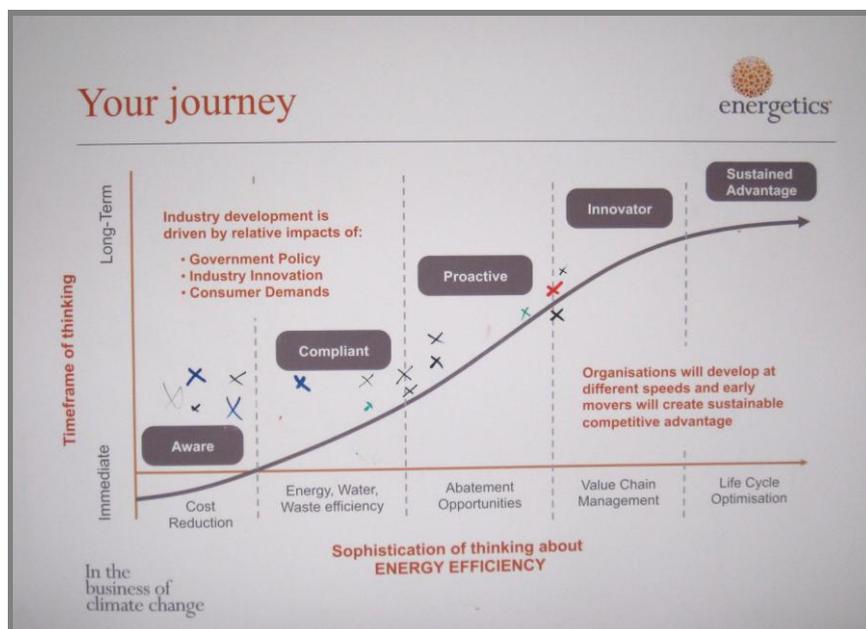


Figure 9: Focus Group 1 – My organisation's journey in energy efficiency



## APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Energy Efficiency Matters  
Training Accountants and Business Managers



### Evaluation Form for Focus Groups

Thank you for participating in our Energy Efficiency Matters Focus Group! We are interested in learning more about the effectiveness of our session, so that we can continually improve our delivery. Your honest and thoughtful feedback is important to us.

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements?*

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The focus group helped me to explore issues relating to energy efficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
2	In this session, I learned new ideas relating to energy efficiency that may impact my business.	1	2	3	4	5
3	This session raised my awareness of energy efficiency matters.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am looking forward to receiving feedback on the questions raised in relation to energy efficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am interested in attending the energy efficiency training pilot program that UWS will be offering in 2012 at no cost.	1	2	3	4	5
6	One element of today's focus group that stands out is ...					
7	The strongest element of the focus group was ...					
8	The focus group could be improved in the following way ...					
9	Additional comments					
If you would like us to send you more details about our Energy Efficiency Training Program please complete your name and email address below						
NAME:				EMAIL:		

Thank you for your feedback!

## APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP EVALUATION SUMMARY

The focus group evaluation summary is divided into two tables. Table 4 provides the results for the statements that were assessed by participants on a five-point scale. Table 5 provides participants' verbatim qualitative comments in response to the open-ended questions.

*Table 4: Evaluation summary of statements assessed on 5-point scale*

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
	GP	Helped me explore issues relating to EE	Learned new ideas that may impact my business	Raised my awareness of EE matters	Looking forward to receiving feedback on EE questions	Interested in attending EE pilot
1	G	4	2	2	5	4
2	G	4	3	3	5	5
3	G	4	3	4	5	5
4	E	3	3	2	4	4
5	E	4	3	3	5	
6	E	4	2	2	4	1
7	E	5	4	3	5	4
8	E	5	4	3	5	5
9	P	5	5	5	4	4
10	P	4	2	4	4	5
11	P	5	4	5	5	5
12	P	4	3	3	5	5
13	P	5	3	3	5	5
14	P	4	3	5	5	5
15	P	5	4	4	4	5
16	P	4	3	4	4	4
17	P	4	5	4	5	3
18	P	5	4	5	5	5
19	P	4	3	4	5	5
20	P	4	3	3	4	4
21	P	5	5	5	5	5
22	P	5	4	4	5	5
23	P	5	4	4	5	5
24	P	5	3	5	5	5
25	P	4	4	4	4	4
26	P	4	2	3	5	5
27	X	4	4	4	4	4
28	G	4	3	5	5	5
29	E	4	3	3	5	
30	E	4	3	4	4	2
31	E	4	3	4	4	5
32	E	4	3	3	4	1
33	P	4	3	3	4	3
34	P	5	3	5	5	4
35	P	5	4	5	5	4
36	P	4	3	3	5	4
37	P	2	2	3	3	5
38	P	4	4	5	4	5
39	P	4	3	4	5	4
40	P	5	4	5	5	5
41	P	4	4	5	5	4
42	P	5	3	3	5	5
43	P	5	5	4	5	5
44	P	4	3	3	5	5
45	P	4	3	4	4	4
46	P	5	5	5	5	5
47	P	4	4	4	5	5
48	P	4	4	4	5	5
49	P	4	4	4	5	5
50	P	4	3	3	4	4
51	P	4	4	4	4	5
52	X	4	4	5	5	
53	P	3	2	2	5	5
54	X	4	4	4	4	4

Table 5: Evaluation summary of open-ended responses

	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
GP	One element of today's focus group that stands out is ...	The strongest element of the focus group was ..	The focus group could be improved in the following ways ...	Additional comments
1	G A different, interesting approach to seeking stakeholder input	Democratic discussions which facilitated a range of people to express their ideas	Better explanation at the beginning about the proposed courses for accountants and business managers. ie set the context. Why is UWS doing this, a little bit about the other 3 units and what they're doing	It worked quite well even though some questions seemed unclear. Good to be able to choose others. Good movement of people & different discussions
2	G The ability for all people to contribute to the conversation groups were 'right size'. How ideas came from the group	Variety of people with different business backgrounds. Mixing it up so different people talking about different questions	Maybe make sure questions are written clearly - give directions on need to clarify meaning when giving "marks". Question should be able to comment or question e.g. to focused	Excellent day - thanks for inviting me
3	G The lack of understanding of participants of energy efficiency assistance available from government	The variation - having a variation of questions, changing partners in the table	Allowing the question writer to be able to clarify their question once they've moved on	
4	E The interest of interacting with people with very different background/agenda		Grouping/screening of questions - could have been more efficient to group them by topic and then select the most interesting question for each topic	Question for each topic. Example of topics - strategy; energy/carbon management information system; assessment of opportunities; business case
5	E Variation in understanding of "sustainability"; position in organisation; size of organisation	Understanding different viewpoints. eg SMEs, LGA, large corporates	Understanding how this information will be used to develop curriculum	Need to consider strategic elements required to transferred accountants & business manager's approach to EE
6	E Need for leadership/initiative around benefits of energy efficiency	Good opportunity to mix ideas with everyone in room, but in small groups	I felt the industry reps were underrepresented (too many consultants from businesses in EE)	
7	E Interest of lawyers and accountants	Business case development and strategic alignment	Inputs to stimulate thinking	
8	E Some understanding of broader sustainability issues is encouraging	Circulation	Qualified questions (clarified)	
9	P Input & facilitation by experts	Being exposed to different ideas particularly from other accountants	Good as is	I think this will be a popular & appropriate course for students
10	P	Integrate with business leaders	Some of the technical terms are difficult to understand	It is advisable every business leader distribute their business cards, so they have the opportunities to integrate later
11	P Card system of the training and giving an opportunity to interact with others	Coordination of the group and trying to elaborate the questions	To increase the time for discussion group and giving some breaks between the discussions	Wonderful experience. Thanks for giving me the chance to attend.
12	P		People who have exposure to energy eff	More numerical examples in the course
13	P Method used			
14	P Manner and structure of the discussions	The quality of the questions	The manner in which the answers are recorded doesn't reflect at times the meaning intended	
15	P Location	Recognise the questioning person		
16	P Grading of questions	Questions were targeted for accountants etc	Better explanation of the purpose provided before the event	
17	P Diversity of state of knowledge and subject matter	Concurrence on subject matter	Organisation at start - element of confusion. Clear delineation of control	Grateful for invite to participate - good networking opportunity
18	P Diversity of issues & situations covered	The mix of views & opinions expressed	Some participants did not have sufficient knowledge on the topic	
19	P The iterative approach to dealing with questions raised to gain a more balanced feel of what the issues/challenges/opportunities are		Not limiting the invitations to business managers and accountants	
20	P Good focus on 'energy'	Good participation	Greater clarity on who were the facilitators experts etc	Consider technical people as well as accountants!
21	P Diversity	Experience & ideas	Involve broader areas of business, different areas of expertise, participants from overseas	I would like to be in touch and extend my hand for any help I could be of for designing this course
22	P Relevance of energy efficiency in Business. Businesses is serious about "alternatives" - but they need to be assessed and quantified. Bottom line/returns = major concern	World café - interesting (I haven't participated in before)	The whole group - quickly assessing the "questions" and deciding on the main questions = joint ownership of questions.	The consultants from Energetics were very knowledgeable & interesting
23	P Need for carrots sticks for business, need to measure energy consumption for business, need for education for small business re carbon tax	Diversity of participants and backgrounds	There was some state government participation. Was there anyone from Federal govt? More small business participation?	Card game was interesting, helped draw out ideas
24	P Each business has a different idea/perspective of energy efficiency - what it is, what benefits are & how carbon economy will impact	Sharing of ideas. Multiple groups & discussions	Some questions needed clarification/preliminary assumptions to actively discuss. If assumptions were clear (even if varied) focus of discussion might be greater	Excellent group. Interesting & educative
25	P Everyone's desire to share information for benefit of others	Getting feedback from industry	Perhaps emailing the initial question for clarification before 1st exercise - so no confusion about language of question	
26	P How unprepared representatives were to tackle one of the major business challenges today - energy!	World café model	Eliminate more the specific questions before group discussion	Participants were not well informed of basic business drivers & how to harness these bring about change without legislations

	GP	Q6 One element of today's focus group that stands out is ...	Q7 The strongest element of the focus group was ..	Q8 The focus group could be improved in the following ways ...	Q9 Additional comments
27	X	Discussion of the questions in small groups	Different mix of people/backgrounds	The initial question be written on the board/projector => was read out and possibility of misunderstanding	Information such as "The Journey". Questions/instructions to be put on powerpoint/projection. More of agenda so know what is being covered when
28	G	There were more managers & accountants	I found some ideas and questions that strongly came through today. The Energetics people were great at helping pull question out -> direct questions	Less repetition in questions - more/some questions from UWS included	
29	E	Pragmatic approach from this group much more focussed on operational elements	Focus on operational issues	Breadth of questions -> strategic to operational	
30	E	5 days of course is too long for accountants & business managers. They want 1 day express course	Open discussion	Wider ability to discuss more topics	
31	E	Lack of understanding of how to systematically assess a business in terms of energy costs and developing actions towards improving and working out the costs and benefits of doing so	Need for more education in energy, energy billing and energy efficiency and especially carbon	I felt there were some critical areas not discussed due to the initial question set being developed by people when they may not know what they do not know.	Would suggest ensuring all key areas are covered by question sets & repetition is removed. A repetitive question is really a lost opportunity to discuss another important area. One or 2 questions were a little off track to energy efficiency or poorly
32	E	Stronger focus on delivering course content, not necessarily wider discussion	Small groups allowing contribution from everyone	Backup questions being thrown in the mix of top questions are very similar	Better representation form business groups this time around
33	P	Ability for everyone to participate		More representation from business owners and managers (i.e., your target market of whom I assume this course is being designed for)	Content of course needs to be designed around what business actually wants
34	P	Broad knowledge of energy efficiency and other issues	Many ideas & discussions regarding various topics	There were very repetitive questions. Maybe throw in different questions	
35	P	It was fun	It was interesting	Grouping similar questions	Still have a way to go to convince the public that their accountants will be equipped to give and validate energy efficiency advice.
36	P	Eagerness of people to engage in the process	Training required and the need for practical solutions	If more information was available on how to move forward with implementation	Would be good to have information to give people when leaving session
37	P	The overwhelming evidence that all attendees have as little or no knowledge of how to capture and improve EF	Standard business models put forward to solve this problem facing all EF. I believe we need structure from the informed.	Was fine. I would like some ideas to have taken back to our business	Although the point scores seem negative its only to highlight how confused and uneducated we are who have powers/responsibilities within business models
38	P	It was fun - met so many people, explored so many viewpoints	The participants and the topic	Reduce repetition in questions - not sure how you collect so many good questions then cull the repetition as quickly as you ran the session today	Well done! Good luck with developing the program
39	P	That stakeholder's interest in energy efficiency and related issues	Cohort from different backgrounds could bring different perspectives to the debate		
40	P	"card-exercise" facilitated excellent brain-storming and broad range discussions among all participants	Broad-range discussions	Better selection of questions to be discussed. Avoid repetitive discussion on different tables	
41	P	Rapid idea/input prioritisation	Everyone participation in some way	Selectively cull out cards that are repeated, to get more inputs	
42	P	Good participation by the group	Style used to run it was energetic and interesting	Group/summarise like questions	A little more background at the beginning. Easy to move away from the main purpose
43	P	Open mind. Realised how importance of energy efficiency	Everyone's involvement and contribution	Avoid duplicated questions	Great discussion
44	P	The lack of clarity about what 'energy efficiency' actually means	Preparedness to contribute	Structure questions a little better	Didn't have the opportunity to scope the range of issues which could be covered
45	P	Openness	Team work	Giving basic information before starting the course	Was a good interaction course on energy sector
46	P	Most people do not understand their energy bills, how to read the energy use & network charges	Being sustainable	Very good. Do not reinvent the wheel	Keep up the good work in regards to sustainability
47	P	The focus groups runs so smoothly	Relaxed environment	If we can have a quick session for to group the question that eliminate the duplicate questions	
48	P	People exchange opinions on various questions	Lots of discuss and feedback	Group the questions to avoid repetition	Very well organised
49	P	The session was running under good procedures	Free chatting & discussing between groups		
50	P	The discussion between business & bureaucrats is vital	Ideas and concepts discussed well	Once questions are developed better define the meaning & intent of the question	
51	P	Informal	Interaction		
52	X	Good awareness of energy issues	Feeding ideas off others	Possibly a bit more information for host	An excellent process
53	P	Professional, facilities were excellent	How is was facilitated & conducted	Eliminate questions that are the same and provide questions you want answers to	
54	X	Different perspectives of different occupations	Free exchange of ideas	Theme of topics	