



## **Environment Victoria's GreenTown Program 2008-2011**

### **> Evaluation Report Summary**



Nina Bailey  
Project Manager, Sustainable Living - Environment Victoria

# 1. Introduction

## > 1.1 Project Background

GreenTown is a behavioural change program focussed on environmental sustainability. It is aimed at educating, mobilising and motivating adults from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to live more sustainably. GreenTown ran from 2008 until mid-2011 and a second series is running 2010-2012. GreenTown was delivered by Environment Victoria and supported by the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund.

Environment Victoria's organisational objective is to motivate 5 million Victorians to take action for the environment. GreenTown helps to achieve this by reaching out to non-mainstream, culturally diverse segments of the Victorian population. One quarter of the state's population is either born overseas (24%) or Indigenous (1%).

Through a decade of delivering sustainable living programs with multicultural communities, Environment Victoria had received anecdotal feedback that generally CALD communities didn't have a broad understanding of environmental issues facing Australia. However, despite their difficulty obtaining information, CALD community members often reported that they were keen to learn and make changes in regards to Environmental Sustainability.

Environment Victoria had also discovered that the most effective way to reach CALD communities was to frame environmental messages in a culturally appropriate way, and to make sure that the majority of the communication was being made by people from a similar cultural background. Thus the GreenTown program was designed to engage CALD communities across Melbourne in sustainable living. This report summarises the outcomes of GreenTown from 2008-11.

## > 1.2 Project Details

GreenTown consisted of the following phases:

- **2008 – 2011: GreenTown 1**-working with four CALD communities
- **2010 - 11: GreenTown Extra**-designed to extend the program's reach, including delivering evaluation activities which contributed to this report.
- **2010-2012: GreenTown 2**-working with two new CALD communities (*not included in this report*) – the multicultural Collingwood public housing community and newly-arrived refugee communities from Burma in Ringwood.

\***GreenTown 1** and **GreenTown Extra** are hereby referred to just as '**GreenTown**'.

The following groups participated in GreenTown:

- Arabic-speaking community in Moreland
- Turkish-speaking community in Hume
- East African community in Flemington
- Indigenous Australian community in Darebin

They were chosen according to a number of factors, including:

- significant demographic profile
- Responsiveness to Environment Victoria's initial scoping discussions

## 2. Project Activities

In order to spread sustainable living education into each GreenTown community, a series of developmental activities took place.

### > 2.1 Partnership Development

Environment Victoria established partnerships with **four** local CALD community grassroots organisations, who helped build relationships with the community. The partner also helped to recruit the community consultant and assessors and usually provided a venue for the training.

#### Arabic-speaking community

Managed by: Moreland Energy Foundation (MEFL)

Grassroots partner: Arabic Welfare Incorporated

Slogan: "Looking towards the future" in Arabic



#### Turkish-speaking community

Project Partner: Alevi Community Council of Australia

Slogan: "Looking towards the future" in Turkish



Alevi Community Council of Australia Inc.

### East African community

Project partner: Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal

Slogan: “Looking towards the future” in Arabic, Amharic and Somali



### Indigenous community (Darebin)

Project partner: Aborigines Advancement League

Slogan: “Healing our land”



### Other Key Partners

Each project involved guest speakers where appropriate. Yarra Valley Water and City West Water were excellent support, providing community outreach speakers and donated water saving products. Local Councils (Moreland, Hume, Moonee Valley and Darebin) provided support and often the Waste Education Officer for each council would attend training to present local information about waste and recycling services.

## > 2.2 Recruitment

In each project a Community Consultant was recruited, to help translate linguistic and cultural meanings and help recruit participants for the program:

- **Arabic-speaking Consultant:** Lebanese-Australian woman Gabby Fakhri easily recruited 13 people for the training, from a mixture of nationalities (Lebanese, Egyptian, Assyrian-Chaldean), religious backgrounds (Muslim, Christian) and gender (seven women and five men).
- **Turkish-speaking Consultant:** Turkish woman Suzan Saka worked with Alevi Community to recruit 13 assessors. Suzan selected a diverse range of Turkish, Kurdish and Chaldean nationality (hence the program became called the ‘Turkish-speaking’ project-as many were not Turkish people but all spoke Turkish), and Muslim, Christian and Alevi faiths.
- **East African Consultant:** Oromo man Abdul Wedai and Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal recruited 13 assessors - eight men and five women, two faiths (Muslim and Christian) and several nationalities (3 Oromo; 2 Somali; 1 Sudanese; 4 Muslim Eritrean; 1 Christian Eritrean; 2 Ethiopian).

- **Indigenous Consultant:** Project Partner Sharon Bamblett and Consultant Tracey Onus worked together to recruit seven people to take part in the training. Four men and three women were recruited. Three completed the course and delivered assessments.

### > 2.3 Training Course Design and Delivery

The training course was designed in partnership with MEFL to be adaptable to each cultural group, delivering complex sustainability information in a way that is simple to understand. Training (approx. 20 hours) covered:

- basic climate change science
- environmental issues like drought and natural resources
- simple and practical actions people can take in their home/business to save energy, save water and reduce waste

The secondary learning outcome for the course was to equip participants with the skills and confidence to deliver basic sustainability assessments with their peers. Participants practiced delivering assessments in each-others' homes and discussed issues like cross-cultural communication (e.g. whether it would be appropriate for men to visit women's homes, whether shoes must be removed in certain households for cultural reasons).



*"My name's Aisha and I'm from Oromo community. The best thing that I got from this project is that I got to meet new people, had awesome time meeting new people, getting to know them; it's a great team. In general with the energy saving, waste reducing, water saving [...] – it was a very beneficial five weeks training, and I'm proud of my Certificate. Thank you."*

(East African participant upon completion of the Assessor training course, July 2009)

### > 2.4 Delivery of Home and Business Sustainability Assessments

#### > Home Assessments

A total of 295 home sustainability assessments were delivered with households from all four communities.

#### > Business Assessments

From 2008-2011, 46 small local businesses received Assessments including:

- 15 Arabic-speaking Accountants, Greengrocers, Bakers and video store Owners in Brunswick and Coburg
- 15 Turkish-speaking Mechanics, Hairdressers and Owners of kebab shops, curtain shops and clothing shops in Broadmeadows and Glenroy
- 15 businesses popular with the East African community (Flemington/Footscray) including Ethiopian Accountants, Owners of Ethiopian women's clothing stores, Somali cafés.



Turkish-speaking Assessor Seheriban conducts a business assessment at Lazoz Kebabs, Broadmeadows, Nov 2009.

> **Aims of Home and Business Assessments:**

- to spread sustainable living advice out into the community via 'kitchen table' or 'café counter conversations'
- to enhance GreenTown assessors' skills and confidence as environmental champions within their community

> **2.5 Retrofit Products Distribution**

A total of **8,127** energy, water and waste-saving products were distributed to help motivate sustainable behaviour changes. These included:

- compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)
- window/door draught seal packs
- water efficient shower heads
- four minute shower timers
- tap aerators
- 'No Junk Mail' stickers

Products were chosen which were simple to install and appropriate for each community's housing situation (e.g. not giving showerheads to public housing tenants who are not permitted to install them).

Providing free products helps motivate participants. Program participants were interested in products, particularly once it was explained how they work and their importance. Evaluation interviews showed that retrofit products are being used sufficiently by participants and were a worthwhile investment, for example:

- Install CFLs (80% of households, 70% of businesses)
- Use 4 minute shower timer (87% of assessors, 70% of households)
- Use tap aerator (75% of assessors)
- Seal gaps around doors/windows (87% of assessors)

> **2.6 Large Retrofit Installations**

A budget of **\$3,000** was included for a large retrofit of a facility/building in each community. Participants were asked to choose a location that was important to the community, and to choose the retrofit items most relevant. The aim of providing larger retrofits was to achieve greater resource savings than the household retrofit items alone.

The secondary aim was to provide a visible and functional reminder of GreenTown and the sustainability efforts each community was achieving.



Above: East African Assessor Tehiya presents the owner of Negassa & Associates Public Accountant, Footscray with his GreenTown Business Assessment certificate, Oct 2009.  
Below: Turkish Assessor Aysel distributing retrofit products at a community workshop.





### Arabic-speaking Community

In partnership with MEFL and Yarra Valley Water, provided an energy and water retrofit to the Antonine Sisters (Lebanese) Childcare Centre in Coburg North.

*\*Estimated annual savings of **13 tonnes CO2e** and **822,290 litres of water**.*

### Turkish-speaking Community

Installation of two 5,000L rainwater tanks and high pressure hoses on the Community Centre's industrial kitchen taps (February 2011). This was funded partly by GreenTown, Yarra Valley Water (tap hoses) and the Alevi Community Council.

*\*Estimated annual savings of **54,759 litres of water**.*

### East African community

As no one building was representative of the whole community, the retrofit was the provision of fencing and concreting to support a recycling pilot program being trialled on Flemington estate, led by Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal and Moonee Valley City Council and supported by Environment Victoria. Four recycling bins were installed (Dec 2010) for participating residents.

*\*Estimated annual reduction of **4,528kg of waste to landfill**.*



Installation of rainwater tank at Alevi Community Council centre, 2011.

The **Indigenous community** chose the installation of a 3,000L rainwater tank on the grounds of the Aborigines Advancement League in Thornbury. This tank will be used to water community vegetable gardens.

*\*Estimated annual saving of **34,614 litres of water**.*

## > 2.7 Community Workshops and Presentations

A total of **23 workshops** were held 2008-10, reaching almost **2,000 people**. Locations included Community Houses, Parent's Groups, Women's Groups, Language Schools, Senior Citizen's Groups and Health Services. Examples include:

- Fawkner Community House (Arabic)
- Antonine Sisters Child Care Centre Parents Group (Lebanese/Arabic)
- Turkish mother's group, Meadow Heights
- Oromo and Somali women's group|workshop (25 people)
- Eritrean Boys Soccer Club presentation (6 men; 23 children)
- Australian International Islamic school Grade 4 (100 students, 4 teachers)



Turkish-speaking consultant, Suzan, presenting an energy saving workshop to children at the Alevi Community Turkish School, August 2009.

**Insights:** Go to where the community already meet; it is more successful than organising a separate event. Environment Victoria alone would not have been able to deliver workshops to this great diversity of community groups without the involvement of GreenTown participants.

## > 2.8 Field Trips

Field trips emerged throughout the program as a very effective way of introducing environmental concepts in an experiential learning environment. For example, participants reported being very affected by the sight of low reservoir levels, which motivated them to save water at home years after their visit.

Field trips also introduced participants to new parts of Melbourne. Many had not visited much of Melbourne and enjoyed learning about other parts of their new home. The locations most worth re-visiting for future programs are:

- CERES (for holistic sustainability demonstration)
- SKM Recycling (for excellent opportunity to learn about the scale/complexity of the recycling process)
- Sugarloaf Reservoir (to witness Melbourne's water storages and to visit a location of natural beauty)

These comments are from some of the Arabic-speaking participants at a field trip to CERES:

*"I'm now going to go home and start saving energy and water"*

*"The sound of the chickens reminds me of my village."*



Arabic-speaking Assessors and members of their community visiting Westwyk Eco Village, 2011.

## 3. Extension Activities

Between August 2010 and July 2011, the aim of GreenTown extension activities was to re-engage participants and to deliver sustainability outreach to more people in each community. The Indigenous group activities were still underway so they were not included. Nearly 20 Assessors and Consultants took part in further home assessments, hosted field trips and delivered evaluation activities within their communities.

**The extension activities delivered sustainable living education and retrofit products to a further 265 people in 2011:**

- 79 new households assessed
- 135 new people attended workshops
- 51 new people attended field trips.



## 4. Media & Communications

### > 4.1 Media

From 2008-2010 GreenTown achieved 68 stories in a range of English and CALD media like local papers/radio, *The Age* and websites.

In the 2010-11 extension at least 28 mainstream (English) media stories were generated, surpassing the goal of eight stories:

- Print/online stories: Environment Victoria *Green Action News*, *Hume Weekly*, *Moreland Leader*, [Northern Weekly](#), [Brotherhood Comment](#) newsletter, *Eingana Journal* of VAEE
- Websites: [Eureka Prize](#), Candy Broad, Victoria Naturally E-Bulletin, MAV bulletin, [The Other blog](#), [Brands4Tomorrow blog](#), MEFL site, Twitter, [Supergreenme blog](#), #sustainability blog, [Flickr](#), [Sustainable Melbourne](#) blog, [MetroWasteMgmtGroup](#), [Westwyk](#)
- Radio interviews: Radio Australia, NW FM [Environmentality](#) program – both by Nina Bailey.



Arabic-speaking Assessor Lina (right) doing Arabic radio interview and presenting interviewer with retrofit products, 2011.

In CALD media, five stories were generated 2010-11, not meeting the target of 10 stories:

- Print: *Zaman Turkish* - articles on tanks installed at the Alevis centre
- Radio: 3ZZZ Arabic (interview with Assessor Layla); 3CR Arabic radio Kalamat program, [SBS Arabic radio](#) (interviews with Assessor Lina).

### > 4.2 Communications Activities

A key objective of GreenTown 2010-11 was to share program Insights and sustainable living advice with different stakeholders. These include:

- **Communications Materials** in 11 languages [www.environmentvictoria.org.au/translations](http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/translations)
- **Online:** Environment Victoria created an Online Resource Hub to distribute sustainable living materials suitable for CALD communities *and* practitioners seeking to work with them. See [www.environmentvictoria.org.au/sustainability-for-diverse-communities](http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/sustainability-for-diverse-communities)
- **Faith Communities' Materials:** Environment Victoria supported the production of 'Shavu'a Tov: Good week sustainable week', by the Jewish Ecological Coalition who were inspired by the Mercy Mission Muslim sustainable living book 'Zamzam Greenbook' for which Environment Victoria was also a supporting partner. See [www.environmentvictoria.org.au/faith-communities](http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/faith-communities)
- **Forum: Sustainability for Diverse Communities:** held in April 2011, Environment Victoria's Forum aimed to share Insights between practitioners. Around 100 people

from a range of professions attended: Environmental NGOs, Councils, state government and community organisations such as migrant information centres.

### Eureka Prize Win

Environment Victoria was awarded the 2010 National Eureka Prize for the Advancement of Climate Change Knowledge for work with multicultural communities. GreenTown was one of the highlighted programs in the award submission, and was chosen for all the Eureka Prize publicity announcements.



L-R: Kelly O'Shanassy, CEO, and Michele Burton (Environment Victoria) with Surmeli Aydogan (GreenTown partner) receiving the Eureka Prize at the award ceremony, Oct 2010. *Photo credit: Australian Museum Eureka Prizes and 247 Studios.*

## 5. Evaluation

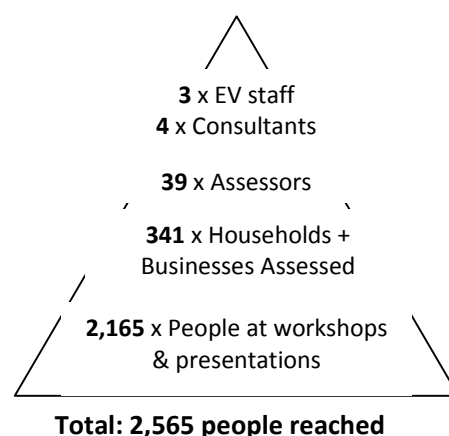
### > 5.1 Immediate Outcomes

This section details the immediate outcomes of GreenTown: what happened as a result of the activities that were delivered with the first four communities.

#### 5.1.1 Reach

##### > Direct Reach

Through employing a 'pyramid' shaped train-the-trainer approach (see diagram), GreenTown, with two Environment Victoria project managers and a part-time community consultant were able to engage more than **2,500 people** from CALD communities. This number of people is **significantly** larger than any other sustainable living program Environment Victoria has delivered to date.



##### > Indirect Reach

In addition to the 'direct' participants, people heard about GreenTown or sustainable living information in the following 'indirect' ways:

- **Festivals:** staff and participants delivered stalls at nine festivals<sup>1</sup> where an estimated 200 people were engaged
- **Media coverage:** it is very difficult to estimate the number of people reached by media coverage, but a conservative figure of 1,000 people was estimated
- **Word of mouth:** Results indicate that this is a key feature of the program and has significant potential to help spread the sustainability message.

<sup>1</sup> These festival stalls were at local CALD community events: HYP Lebanese Festival at Federation Square 2009, Sydney Rd Festival 2009, Assyrian Festival at Coburg Lake 2009, Anatolian Alevi Festival in 2008, '09 and '10, Multicultural Eid Festival in Flemington 2009, Clean Up Australia Day Flemington 2009, Renew (Moonee Valley City Council waste collection event) in Flemington 2009.

When asked in evaluation surveys if they had spoken to anyone about GreenTown or sustainable living information at least **80% of each group** said they had spoken to others. Assessors estimated **they spoke to 74 people each**, Householders estimated 12 people each and Business owners estimated seven people each.

From these many face-to-face conversations, stall displays, and media hits we are able to estimate that the indirect reach of GreenTown 2008-2011 to well over **10,000 people**. Including direct participants, this **total is at least 13,266 people**.

## > 5.2 Flow-On Outcomes

As a result of people attending training, workshops, home assessments and field trips, what actions have they taken? What have they learnt? What has happened as a result of the program activities?

### **5.2.1 Environmental Outcomes: Resources Saved (Greenhouse Gas, Water, Waste to Landfill)**

From participant responses in follow-up interviews we can attach resource savings to the self-reported actions taken to save energy, water and waste.

**Table: GreenTown Participants' Average Annual Savings, by Participant Type:**

Group	Greenhouse savings (per household)	Water savings (per household)	Waste to landfill savings (per household)
Assessors	3.9 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	84,307 litres	191 kg
Households	4.2 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	66,541 litres	84 kg
Businesses	3.7 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	8,471 litres	n/a

By averaging all the participants' responses we can see the following high levels of resource savings:

**Table: GreenTown Participants' Average Annual Savings, Whole Group Average:**

	Average participant savings (per household per annum)	What this means (compared to state averages)
Greenhouse	4 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	A 33% reduction <sup>2</sup>
Water	61,000 litres	A 35% reduction <sup>3</sup>
Waste to landfill	191kg	A 25% reduction <sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Compared to the average Victorian home's emissions of 12 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e (source: <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/1819-energy-use-in-victoria.asp?intSiteID=4>)

<sup>3</sup> Using Target 155 which was thought to be an average per person water consumption figure, and comparing GreenTown with the average Victorian household size of 2.7 people's water use (147,095L/year), this is a 41% reduction. Comparing to a larger GreenTown household size of 3.9 people (220,642L), this is a 28% reduction. A 35% figure is roughly between these two.

<sup>4</sup> The average Victorian household throws out 472kg of rubbish to landfill (source: [http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/Vic\\_Local\\_Government\\_Annual\\_Survey\\_2008-09.pdf](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/Vic_Local_Government_Annual_Survey_2008-09.pdf))

These savings are much higher than those achieved in any other Environment Victoria sustainable living programs to date, and as a comparison, the state government's target for annual household greenhouse gas savings in a behaviour change program is one tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e. Four tonnes here is a very positive outcome.

### **5.2.2 Social Outcomes**

The social outcomes of GreenTown are very important. The program aimed to bring benefits to the people and the communities involved....and has achieved this. The following is a selection of GreenTown's social outcomes.

#### **> Increased Sustainability Knowledge within Community**

In evaluation interviews, *participants reported they learnt something about sustainability:*

- 88% of Assessors
- 97% of Households
- 90% of Business owners

#### **> Community Connectedness & Strengthening**

In evaluation interviews, *almost all participants reported they now know where to get more information on sustainability issues*, and indicated a range of contacts both new and existing:

- 100% of Assessors (Responded: Environment Victoria/GreenTown website; Internet; Council)
- 100% of Households (Responded: 'My Assessor'; Internet; Community Centre linked to GreenTown; Environment Victoria; Council; friends)
- 90% of Business owners (Responded: 'My Assessor'; Internet)

In evaluation interviews, *participants reported they are now more active in their community:*

- 100% of Assessors
- 82% of Households
- 80% of Business owners

### **5.2.3 Most Significant Change – Five Main Domains of Change**

Environment Victoria held a 'Most Significant Change' session for GreenTown participants and project partners at CERES in October 2010. The aim of this exercise was to bring participants together, celebrate achievements and gather evaluation data in an engaging way. Participants shared with the group the 'most significant change' that arose for them as a result of participating. Stories were sorted into five 'domains of change'.

### > Domain 1: Environmental Action

This refers to people taking new actions or convincing others to take action to reduce energy, water and waste.

Sample story: Zahy visited a lady who had been initially reluctant to have him visit, and he shared his environmental information with her. Months later, he visited her home:

*"I went there, got a cup of coffee. I said, "First of all, there is a water tank there. I don't know if it was from you, or from someone else." And, she had a little garden, with parsley and radish and onion, and she said, "Look, the most important thing is, I saved more than a thousand dollars [on energy bills] in these six to seven months." (Zahy, Arabic-speaking GreenTown Assessor)*

### > Domain 2: Learning and Sharing of Information

A strong theme which emerged during the program was participants' increased knowledge of sustainability and environment, and motivation to change their behaviour. Motivated participants also spoke to others and shared this new knowledge.

Sample story: *"She has a dishwashing machine and she doesn't use it. I say, "Look, when you use this one, you use less water – when you wash them one by one, you use more money, more water and time ." (Aysel, Turkish-speaking GreenTown Assessor)*

### > Domain 3: Empowerment

Many participants spoke about personal development, gaining confidence and feeling empowered by participating in GreenTown. Assessors often saw themselves as acquiring new status and position of influence in their community, with their new assessment skills and ability to motivate their peers - an excellent outcome of the program.

Sample story: *"Part of this program is helping us see how to do it ourselves and lead the way, and get our mob back looking after our land. It's always been there, and having this program has been a really great benefit, and a way for me to say, look – here is a program. We can start here."* (Sharon, Indigenous GreenTown partner)

Empowerment of individuals to become leaders of their community:

*"I've been a tree-hugger for most of my life. But, I've pretty much not spoken to other people about it because they've been like, "Oh, you're just a tree-hugger; I don't have to live like that!" But now - through doing this program - people are actually listening to me, and thinking that I actually do know what I'm on about now." (Shannon, Indigenous GreenTown Assessor)*

### > Domain 4: Partner Organisation Change

One aim of GreenTown was to help Environment Victoria's partner organisations work more effectively with CALD communities. Jason's story illustrates one way this was achieved.

Sample story: *"My first meeting with Gabby was to talk about recruiting assessors – I had planned on a simple concept of first in, best dressed. Then, Gabby explained the importance of having all the different ethnic groups, language groups, religious groups, religious subsets etc represented. She told me about the community, the history, the culture and the idiosyncrasies..." (Jason, MEFL)*



## > Domain 5: Barriers Encountered or No Change

While blanket 'No Change' seemingly never occurred in this program, there could always be moments of resistance in conversations about sustainable living. For future programs it is useful to keep this in mind.

Sample story: Laila shared a story about a woman who:

*"...really wanted a water tank but her husband wouldn't agree. He thought it was too expensive. She was scared to tell him it would be good to have a tank, the benefits of having a tank" as "culturally, the man make decisions" and "you don't question the husband."*

(Laila, Arabic-speaking GreenTown Assessor)

### 5.2.4 Financial Savings to be made by Saving Energy and Water

#### Savings Per Participant

- Each household will save approximately **\$774** on their electricity and gas bills each year by saving **4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e**.<sup>5</sup>
- Using Yarra Valley Water's pricing guide, the average GreenTown household's water savings of **61,000 litres** will save them **\$108 a year**.<sup>6</sup>
- Therefore a total of approx. **\$884 per year** will be saved from household bills.

## 6. Selection of Key Findings

### > 6.1 What Worked?

#### Program Design

- **Peer-to-peer learning** – by training community leaders as Assessors, participants receive advice from a respected source, information is presented in culturally appropriate ways and in the community's language.
- **Train-the-trainer model** – the program recruited four Consultants and trained 39 Assessors who together reached more than 2,500 people. Using a train-the-trainer approach, sustainable living advice was disseminated through pre-existing community channels which Environment Victoria alone could not have accessed.
- **A community development approach** – a significant amount of time at the beginning of each project allowed project managers to build and develop relationships with leaders in each community. This meant that by the time participant recruitment and training took place, there was a shared understanding of the needs and aspirations of the community.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Pears, [http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/AGC/resources/docs/agc\\_assumptions\\_for\\_calculations-march\\_2011-v2.pdf](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/AGC/resources/docs/agc_assumptions_for_calculations-march_2011-v2.pdf) p33, and private email correspondence, Dec 2011

<sup>6</sup> Yarra Valley Water, [www.yvw.com.au/yvw/groups/public/documents/document/yvw1002519.pdf](http://www.yvw.com.au/yvw/groups/public/documents/document/yvw1002519.pdf)

## > 6.2 What Didn't Work?

- **Centralised workshops** – few people attended workshops held at a central venue that people were invited to; instead it was more successful to deliver sustainability workshops to pre-existing community groups when and where they regularly meet.
- Initially, the **collection of household bills data during assessments** did not work well, but in the 2010-11 extension assessments, the billing data was much more thoroughly and correctly gathered. This suggests that with adequate training and experience this is a reliable method of collecting billing data, without actually contacting utilities retailers.

## > 6.3 Unexpected Outcomes, and Action Learning Program Design

- **The program is highly cost effective** – GreenTown has been found to be a cost effective way of achieving environmental and social change. It costs less to deliver the program, per-participant reached, than the eventual financial savings each participant is making on their home energy and water bills, resulting in a net gain to the state of Victoria.
- **Participants talk to *many* other people about GreenTown** – while it was not unexpected that participants would talk to others about their experiences and sustainability tips they had learnt, it was unexpected that they would speak to so many.
- Feedback was that **at times assessors felt like social workers**. On home visits residents would sometimes ask for advice about social issues beyond the scope of the program, or assessors would realise that the householder was living in impoverished conditions and want to help. In response to this feedback, project managers adapted the program and gave more support to Assessors to provide advice, including useful social service telephone numbers.



Lina and Mesko from GreenTown Arabic-speaking program brought some of their Victorian Arabic Social Services clients on a field trip to CERES Environment Park, May 2011

## Recommendations and Future Directions

What has emerged over the four years of delivering GreenTown with four CALD communities is that when delivered successfully, new knowledge leads to new action which can bring about real environmental resource savings. What makes this delivery successful are when *people are motivated*, when *information is provided in ways that people understand*, and when *products are provided*.

The techniques and practices developed and piloted in GreenTown are worthy of repetition. Six recommendations include:

- > **Work with enthusiastic community leaders** and make the most of their extensive community networks. Allow them to spread sustainable living information in culturally appropriate ways out through their peers.
- > Include **retrofit products** for distribution to participants. This provides an immediate and tangible incentive to start adopting energy, water and waste-saving actions.
- > **Train participants in how to read and understand utilities bills.** Home visits by assessors to discuss and record the billing data also worked well. Delivering tailored information in community languages is effective.
- > Including a focus on bills and how to understand them in project communications, and **incorporate the rising prices of bills and resources** like electricity, gas and water – this is a very effective way to engage people.
- > **Pay participants to deliver services** such as home assessments and bill-reading advice. This provides an incentive and helps ensure activities occur in a timely fashion. When promoted as being part of a new and growing Green Jobs industry, this paid role creates a sense of self-reported pride among many participants.
- > **Use photos of people from similar cultural backgrounds** to the people you intend to give your publications and communications materials. Use photos of actual program participants taking sustainability actions. This has the bonus of promoting sustainability in culturally-relevant ways as well as creating a ‘project story’ which illustrates the achievements of the program and its participants. Ensure you gain consent from participants whose photos you intend to use, and that participants understand where and how these photos may be shared.

There is a great deal of yearning to be better connected to our shared environment among people of all cultures. Given the success of the GreenTown program to date, and the momentum generated amongst participants and partners, it is recommended that the program be delivered in more locations around Victoria (and beyond).

# Acknowledgements

Many people helped make this evaluation process possible and are thanked with gratitude. Data analysis and evaluation advice came from research colleagues at the Brotherhood of St Laurence (Victoria Johnson and Damien Sullivan) and Professor Colin Hocking. Sustainability experts at Moreland Energy Foundation (Chandra Sundareswaran), DJR Consulting, AMH Consulting (Andrew Hinchliffe, ex-Yarra Valley Water) and Alan Pears (RMIT).

Data entry and analysis and editing from volunteers and casual staff – Xiaomei Tan, Jaklin Malut, Peter Saunders, Elke Norton, Clare [grand-daughter of regular Environment Victoria volunteer Janet].

Most Significant Change research and story collection from Melissa Howard, University of Melbourne intern.

Ongoing evaluation advice and work by the GreenTown team of Michele Burton (who designed and delivers the GreenTown program) and Domenica Settle and Sustainable Living team member Charlie Davie.

And finally, all the GreenTown participants and partners who generously spent time collecting, discussing, writing and thinking about evaluation findings from the program, as well as making all the program's achievements possible – a very big thank you to you all.

For more information please contact [nina.bailey@environmentvictoria.org.au](mailto:nina.bailey@environmentvictoria.org.au)

For details of the program visit [www.environmentvictoria.org.au/green-town](http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/green-town)

## Disclaimer

This project was supported with financial assistance from the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund, managed by Sustainability Victoria.

Sustainability Victoria or the Victorian Government may not endorse or necessarily agree with the views reflected in this publication.

All issues and correspondence regarding this publication should be directed to the authors.

**Sustainability  
Fund**







**Arabic-speaking program. Above:** the program logo. **Top left:** Lebanese GreenTown assessor Lina (left), with Mr and Mrs Zora of Glenroy, a family she re-visited a year after delivering a home sustainability assessment. They wanted to show her, and for her to show others, how productive their vegetable garden is, Feb 2011. **Bottom left:** Assessor Maha. **Below:** Hyp Lebanese Festival at Federation Square. L-R: Gabby Fakhri, Community Consultant, Mesko and Lina (Assessors), Jason Cox (Moreland Energy Foundation) and Zahi (Assessor) at the GreenTown stall, Feb 2009.



#### Turkish-speaking program.

**Left:** assessors with graduation certificates, March 2009.

**Right:** Kellie Watson (Sustainability Victoria), Abdul Wedai (East African GreenTown) and Kelly O'Shanassy (Environment Victoria) at the celebration of the end of the Turkish program, June 2010.







نظرة الى المستقبل  
የወደፊት ብሩህ ተስፋን በጉጉት መመልከት  
Aragtidayada Xagga Mustaqbalka  
*Looking towards the Future*



**East African program. Right:** assessors receive graduation certificates,. L-R: Taha, Tewelde, Aisha, Ahmed. Bottom row: Fred and Abdul, Khalid, Jemilla and Tehiya, July 2009. **Below right:** business assessor training, practicing in a Somali café. Dec 2009.



**Indigenous program. Above:** Assessor Shannon hosting a stall at Aboriginal Health Service; **Below left:** Sharon and Shannon learning about analysing bills, at training led by Greg Snelders, MEFL. **Below right:** graduating assessors, L-R: Cindy, Shannon, Michele Burton (EV), Sharon, Tracey and Richard, April 2010.

