

Business Tenders

BusinessDaily
www.heraldsun.com.au

Order in green house

tendersdiary
Paula Beauchamp

BUSINESSES that choose to become carbon-neutral solely through offsets are asking for trouble, a sustainability expert says.

Sustainable Business Practices founder and director Dan Atkins laments how popular the trend is becoming in Melbourne.

"Focusing solely on offsets isn't leadership. It is paying for the right to pollute," Mr Atkins said.

"It doesn't show companies have made any effort to change their own environmental performance."

Mr Atkins said such announcements drew attention to a company's internal performance — good or bad.

Thus, if the business is doing little or nothing internally, carbon-neutral claims can be a recipe for trouble.

Instead, Mr Atkins recommends managing the environmental and social aspects of your operation across the value chain of the business.

He calls it "life-cycle thinking".

For instance, in Germany, companies that sell cars must agree to take their vehicles back — when they drive past their use-by date — and ensure they are recycled.

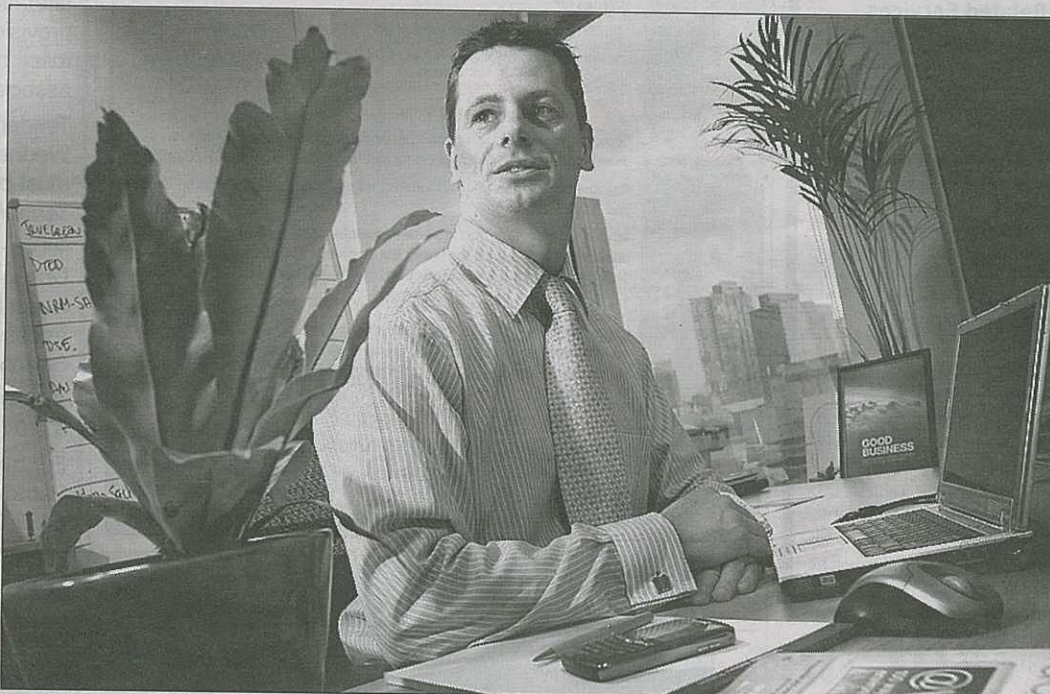
Mr Atkins recommends focusing on two or three areas of the business where carbon emissions are greatest.

"Focus on reduction, not offsets," he said. "The greenest energy is the energy you don't use."

Mr Atkins has been working in the sustainability field for more than 10 years, but has seen it take off in the past year.

The company helps clients develop whole-of-company sustainability strategies.

He says companies that do not consider the environmental and social implications of their operations and products are laggards.



Saving energy: Dan Atkins hopes to plant sustainability into business practice. Picture: CAMERON TANDY

Those companies risk eroding their shareholder value, he said.

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority is one of many private and government organisations trying to get their house in order.

APRA has released an expression of interest seeking environmental consultancy services to help it minimise, where possible, the environmental impact of its business functions.

The successful bidder will sum-

marise APRA's obligations, as a government agency, both in regards to environmental initiatives and reporting.

The contractor will also measure the level of APRA's current carbon emissions and avoidable waste.

According to tender documents, the contractor will also recommend cost-effective actions, and implementation plans, to minimise carbon emissions and avoidable waste.

APRA already has a "going green" group which runs tips and advice through the organisation's newsletter.

It is seeking industry comment, through the EOI which closes today, to ensure its requirements are compatible with industry expectations.

The organisation does not plan to publish any report produced by the contractor, but might ultimately publish recommendations which have been successfully implemented.

AUDIT PROGRAM:

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office is seeking a contractor to develop a technical training program for performance audit staff. The program must include training modules for each stage of performance audits, and associated curriculum materials. A set of case studies linked to each training module must be provided.

Tenders close: September 20.

GAME OVER:

The Department of Justice is seeking applications from not for profit, non-government organisations to provide regional Gambler's Help services to problem gamblers. Services include problem gambling counselling, financial counselling and community education. The contract will run for three years from mid-2008.

Tenders close: October 11.

NURSE AT HOME:

St Vincent's at Home is the community nursing service attached to St Vincent's Health. It is seeking an information management system.

Tenders close: October 3.

SECURE PROTECTION:

Northern Health is seeking tenders for the provision of security services.

Tenders close: September 26.

LEARNING MENTAL HEALTH:

The Department of Human Services is seeking a contractor to develop and deliver professional learning modules for the Australian mental health workforce.

EOI closes: October 4.