GREEN WITH GUSTO

UniSA is now 41 per cent more energy efficient than the average Australian university.

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- Paul Beard

Taking on the Federal Government’s Greenhouse Challenge in 2000, UniSA has pulled out all stops to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, accelerate the uptake of energy efficient equipment and infrastructure, include greenhouse issues in business deliberations and collect and provide consistent reporting on greenhouse gas emissions.

UniSA Executive Director Finance and Resources, Paul Beard says UniSA has taken the challenge very seriously.

“We believe we can make an important contribution, both in the changes and improvements we are making in the way we operate and in the example we set for other organisations, our students and the wider university community,” Beard said.

“Since 2000 we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 15.7 per cent. That includes a reduction in electricity use of almost 10 per cent and almost a 22 per cent decrease in gas use. This is all in a period when our student numbers were increasing by about eight per cent.”

A finalist in last year’s national Greenhouse Challenge Plus Awards, UniSA has made improvements across all campuses.

Initiatives include push button lighting and air conditioning controls that ensure the services are not used in rooms when they are empty, the installation of solar panels at City West campus to provide hot water for showers and taps and the introduction of an interactive energy management system (IEMS) allowing the monitoring of energy use to maximise efficient use. In the single year that the IEMS has been in operation the estimated savings have been 700,000 kWh.

The University has also replaced petrol vehicles with ones powered by LPG and signed up to the Greenfleet initiative which plants trees to offset CO₂ emissions.

Although not factored into the Greenhouse Challenge, UniSA has also been targeting a reduction in water use as outlined in the State Government’s water reduction targets. A 20 per cent target was met at the end of 2005 and there is now a comprehensive strategy in place to reduce mains water use by using grey water and storm water.

And Beard said the efforts being made at UniSA would not slow down.

“All hot water services will be replaced with solar systems; we will introduce automatic light sensors to internal and external lighting and replace all globes with energy efficient products. We also plan to be maintaining the green at Mawson Lakes golf course with grey water only from the end of 2006.”

by Michèle Nardelli