



# Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI)



## Grow Me The Money™

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[www.growmethemoney.com.au](http://www.growmethemoney.com.au)

## The Best Unconventional Project for SMEs

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*Running your business doesn't have to cost the earth*

Grow Me The Money is an exciting joint initiative of VECCI and Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria designed to reduce the environmental impact of Victorian businesses. In a time of drought, climate change and increasing public awareness of environmental issues, business can make a real difference by making simple changes in the workplace – Grow Me The Money helps them do it.

Collaborative work and partnerships are a key element to the Grow Me The Money program. One of the key business rules for Grow Me The Money is to build on useful work and progress rather than recreating existing material and programs. This is most effectively done by forming productive partnerships. Through their partnership, VECCI and EPA Victoria provide both leadership and a strong model of how business and environmental interests can work together for mutual benefit.

Grow Me The Money brings together businesses, utilities, regulators, government and other interested bodies to provide all the necessary tools and support services via its convenient web-based Grow Me The Money Headquarters ('HQ') [www.growmethemoney.com.au](http://www.growmethemoney.com.au) making it accessible to all businesses regardless of location. This sort of interface also allows Grow Me The Money to carefully monitor financial and environmental results as well as continued participation from registered businesses.

### Key results of the project so far:

- ➡ 102 individuals from 80 businesses participating across Victoria;
- ➡ Over 100 government and commercial services listed in the service directory for referral;
- ➡ 14 confirmed industry mentors – 16 more engaged informally;
- ➡ 42 formal partnership with organisations to provide services and promote the program; and
- ➡ A further 53 organisation informally engaged



Everyone is concerned about the environment. Climate Change, global warming, carbon emissions, greenhouse gasses, renewable energy, waste management and resource efficiency – these terms have become part of everyday vernacular around the world.

Recent research conducted by VECCI into environmental attitudes and practices of Victorian businesses has demonstrated a major shift in SME business and industry thinking which indicates that the sector has embraced environmental sustainability as one its central business drivers into the future.

Business is increasingly recognising the need to respond to community and financial pressures to improve the environmental performance of their operations. Business is starting to invest in more resource efficient business practices. Unlike established larger businesses, which often have specialist staff assigned to the role of saving energy and water and cutting waste, smaller businesses do not have that luxury. Grow Me The Money has been established to give small and medium business an easy, low cost way of identifying improvements in their operating practices to the benefit of the environment and their own bottom line.

VECCI and EPA Victoria have joined to create Grow Me The Money - a free program that provides small-to-medium size businesses in Victoria with the resources and information they need to reduce their impact on the environment and save money. This initiative arms businesses with the tools to make real and sustained change in their workplaces without it creating another impost on their business.





# How does Grow Me The Money work?



**1** **LOG ONTO**  
www.growmethemoney.com.au  
website and register

**2** **CONDUCT A GUIDED WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT**  
Using step by step online tools to help you  
measure your energy and water use  
and waste production

**3** **DEVELOP YOUR ACTION PLAN ONLINE**  
Identify opportunities for improvement  
in your business and plan changes

**4** **IMPLEMENT** your action plan

**5** **RE-ASSESS**  
Complete a Workplace Assessment every  
6 months to track your progress and  
review your action plan

**6** **REAP THE REWARDS**  
See the financial benefits, receive rewards and  
well-deserved recognition as your business  
becomes more environmentally friendly

Grow Me The Money is largely delivered online. Businesses work through a simple six step process and call on support and assistance from Grow Me The Money when they need it.

A free call help desk operates from the Grow Me The Money office from 8am to 8pm which provides information and support on all aspects of the program and referral to services and programs that will provide specific advice on technical and environmental issues.

Grow Me The Money works on a model of *earned support*. Participating businesses earn points with the program as they work through the online tools, complete training or other development. Similar to a “frequent flier” model of rewards businesses can use their points to call on experts from a range of fields when they need specific help. This may be environmental engineers or consultants or it could be marketing expertise or financial help.

To ensure continued motivation and to help put a face to the program participating businesses have the opportunity to meet and to share what they’ve learned, though the online forum, regular newsletters, seminars and other events organised by Grow Me The Money.



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# How does it benefit business?



## Benefits to Business

- ➞ Cost savings from reduced consumption of natural resources
- ➞ Access to support and services from our expert technical and financial program partners
- ➞ Improved productivity from changes to business processes
- ➞ New ideas, advice and business networks
- ➞ Opportunities to meet potential service providers and business mentors
- ➞ Improved engagement with staff as they take pride in working for an environmentally sustainable business
- ➞ Customer recognition for improved environmental sustainability
- ➞ Enjoy positive publicity in local and wider media
- ➞ Position your business ahead of your competitors as a leader in sustainable business practice



TAKING ACTION FOR  
BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

Grow Me The Money has carefully developed a recognition program for participating businesses that ensures business efforts and achievements are recognised by the Victorian community, government and their peers. Businesses receive marketing and branding support to promote their business as environmentally friendly. To develop long term commitment the recognition program is staged through bronze, silver, gold and platinum club membership and working through these stages business become eligible for valuable rewards suited to their business.





# The value of partnerships



A key to the success of Grow Me The Money has been VECI's ability to bring together a formerly disparate group of services, agencies and programs to partner with this program. Grow Me The Money has established a gateway to new methods of partnership, relevance and thinking (see <http://www.growmethemoney.com.au/ProgramPartners> for more information).

Grow Me The Money has been very specific in developing partnerships that will not only reduce risk of friction or competition in the sector but will enhance the offering to businesses (by being able to refer on to other services, link with existing resources etc) and provide a variety of distribution channels through which Grow Me The Money can access small to medium sized businesses in Victoria. There are approximately 20 organisations the project liaises with on a weekly or even daily basis.

The Grow Me The Money program partners range from government agencies and departments, to commercial organisations and academic institutions. Partners share their commitment, commercial expertise and environmental know-how as well as providing financial sponsorship. Businesses participating in Grow Me The Money access the support of partners either through the website platform, Grow Me The Money mentoring program or directly, through their existing relationships.

In turn partners benefit from involvement in Grow Me The Money through expanding business relationships, increased profile among participating businesses, and community recognition. Grow Me The Money recognises partners in its promotional activities and provides opportunities for prominent participation in public and program events.



## A Critical Mass

Grow Me The Money has further distinguished itself from other business sustainability programs as it aims to create a critical mass of small to medium businesses participating in the program and therefore influencing very significant change, in the past similar programs in Victoria and Australia more broadly have aimed to target 10s of businesses. The participation targets of Grow Me The Money are in the 1000s, in fact a minimum of 3000 small to medium businesses by 2008. Because Grow Me The Money is so different to programs in the past VECCI has very carefully developed all the key elements of the program with considerable market research and industry knowledge.

Grow Me The Money is about to launch its first statewide campaign on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.

The development of Grow Me The Money has been piloted in three Victorian regions, the Melbourne CBD, the Goulburn Valley and western metropolitan area of Melbourne. These pilots have achieved the following results so far:

- ➡ 102 individuals from 80 businesses participating
- ➡ Over 100 services listed in the service directory
- ➡ 14 confirmed industry mentors – 16 more engaged informally
- ➡ 42 organisations formally partnering for distribution
- ➡ 53 organisations informally engaged



## The Goulburn Valley Pilot

A targeted campaign in the Goulburn Valley area of regional Victoria has seen the participation of a broad range of businesses in the Grow Me The Money program and make changes within the way their business is run to reduce consumption, do better for the environment and save money in the process.

Some of the specific practical initiatives implemented in the area are:

### A hospital:

- ➞ Provide improved signage for external area recycling bins
- ➞ Undertake lighting study to identify opportunities for minimising the lighting of unused areas
- ➞ Investigate roof cavities to identify areas that are not currently insulated
- ➞ Switch a portion of electricity consumption to a 'GreenPower' product

### A financial services business:

- ➞ Insulate wall of building and roof cavity to reduce air-conditioning load during summer
- ➞ Phasing in smaller more efficient car fleet
- ➞ Investigate the feasibility (cost, payback, etc.) and the availability of government grants, for the installation of a photovoltaic power system

### A fast-food outlet

- ➞ Install recycling bins both inside outlet and in car park
- ➞ Install flow restrictors in kitchen
- ➞ Identify local user (e.g. a farmer) for reuse of food scraps
- ➞ Assess if roof space is adequately insulated

### A hotel:

- ➞ A staged installation of insulation in all roof spaces currently without insulation
- ➞ Install compact fluorescent light globe throughout facility
- ➞ Install tap flow restrictors in all hotel rooms





# The results so far

## The RR&R Challenge



The Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (RR&R) Challenge was a six week promotion held in late 2006 encouraging Melbourne CBD businesses to make simple changes to improve their environmental work practices. The winner was the business that demonstrated the most extensive and creative initiatives implemented to reduce, reuse and recycle in the workplace. There was an excellent response with 25 organisations taking up the challenge. The judges were impressed with the initiative shown and obvious commitment to the environmental cause and found their own challenge in picking one overall winner.

The Australian Financial Planning Network (AFPN) or team name 'The Enviro-Mentals' was awarded the winner's title for their incredible effort in the six week challenge. The Enviro-Mentals drastically reduced their paper usage and waste by purchasing new photocopiers with capacity for double sided printing and upgrading the fax system and reusing paper to create new notebooks for the staff. The Enviro-Mentals also converted to environmentally friendly cleaning and kitchen products, introduced power saving computer equipment and started recycling all printer toners.

Staff continue to produce a monthly newsletter and now have a regular staff forum where all staff were encouraged to be actively involved and put forward their ideas on ways things can be improved. Both staff and management's involvement in the challenge demonstrated their commitment to environmental awareness and change, resulting in savings to their business and the environment.

AFPN Service Team Manager Pip Hughes said she would encourage other businesses to become involved in the Grow Me The Money program. Their success is a fantastic example of how small changes can make a big difference.

For more information about the RR&R Challenge visit [www.growmethemoney.com.au/RRnR](http://www.growmethemoney.com.au/RRnR)



Grow Me The Money has been established by VECCI with funding and support from Victoria's State Government. VECCI has a clear aim to develop the commercial success of this program and its ability to generate revenue in order to ensure it becomes a core function for VECCI into the future and its ongoing delivery to Victorian business.

Some key areas for revenue generation under investigation include:

- ➞ Commercial partnerships with large corporations
- ➞ A subscription service for businesses
- ➞ Provision of specialised training and education services
- ➞ Franchising the model and software to other providers
- ➞ Advertising of relevant services and products on the website

Grow Me The Money continues to find substantial gaps in the market and is planning new initiatives for the coming year to address these. Some examples include:

- ➞ Creation of an online version of the service directory in order for businesses to self refer into the relevant programs and services in their area
- ➞ Further development and sophistication of the online tools and resources
- ➞ Development of industry specific tools and programs to better suit the needs of our members
- ➞ Development of "ready-reckoner" tools to help business make good decisions about purchasing new equipment (i.e. energy efficiency, life cycle management)

