

## The Gold Coast business sector: meeting the environmental challenge

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If the Gold Coast is to be the epitome of 21st-century sustainable development, the business sector will need to do its share of heavy lifting. As we shall elaborate in this chapter, considerable effort is already being made by the larger Gold Coast-based businesses. It is these businesses, such as the theme parks, integrated resorts, hospitals, universities, major shopping centres, sporting stadiums and large construction companies that are best placed to take social responsibility for their level of environmental and social impact. As noted earlier, most of the city's businesses are small-scale – highway motels, restaurants, coffee shops and a vast array of retail traders. These small businesses have neither the human nor the monetary resources for full-scale corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies. This does not mean that small businesses cannot, and should not, work to reduce their environmental impacts.

### What is corporate social responsibility?

*The time is not far off when companies will have to justify their worth to society with greater emphasis being placed on environmental and social impact than straight economics.*

Founder of Lend Lease, Dick Dusseldorp, 1973 (Lend Lease Corporation 2011).

The above quote is poignant. It introduces the idea of the triple bottom line (discussed below) and illustrates that the idea of CSR is far from new: it was over 40 years ago that Dusseldorp said 'the time is not far off'.

With the growing concern for our natural environment and the social aversion to the downside of the invisible hand of powerful corporations, CSR, in its various forms, is gaining momentum as a way for companies to promote the positive impacts of their business activities. Corporate social responsibility is the notion that companies, who traditionally have had little accountability for the third-party effects of their business operations, have an ethical responsibility to mitigate their direct impacts on the environment and the community. A corporation's CSR policy is, or should be, an integrated part of its