

Executive summary

In general the results of the MASG Low Energy Solar Display Home project were extremely favourable. We were able to achieve much more than we expected, for example:

- Estimated around five hundred visitors initially and we had over two thousand;
- Able to deliver more workshops than anticipated or required due to greater interest and partnerships formed with other sustainability organisations;
- Attracted many more volunteers than estimated, which allowed us to be open every weekend rather than five times during the project period of six months;
- Attracted many visitors from outside the immediate area and attracted much greater media coverage than anticipated;
- Attracted many more major and minor sponsors than anticipated;
- Attracted a range of different types and ages of visitors not only “the usual suspects”.

Key learning from the project:

- We were able undertake a very large project on a shoe string, something we would avoid in the future;
- We needed more detailed planning and understanding of specific project briefs amongst partners to avoid later confusions;
- We needed to have provided more effective and targeted training for volunteers to enable them to truly engage with the public and to pass on the key messages that the house represented;
- We needed to begin earlier with seeking out sponsorship for fittings and furnishings and that this needed more time and support;
- We learned that this house was an effective way of showcasing sustainability in a very real and conceptual way. People respond favourably to concrete examples and models of sustainability principles.

The project brought collaborators together who, under every day circumstances, would not have worked together. This brought about some challenges but in all was one of the most successful aspects of the project. Building on our success and experience, a clear thread in our evaluation is that we would now not do the same thing just for the sake of it. Although this is an extremely successful model and we would encourage other groups to do something of a similar nature we would now look to build on what we have learned and do something different in the future. For example, this could be something like an eco village model. We might also undertake a project with more collaborators in an exploration of the possibilities of increasing the number of builders and trades providing sustainable building and retro fitting options to the public. We would like to see all builders incorporating sustainability features.