

More firms cut footprint Treading lightly

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ENVIRONMENTAL business leaders cutting costs and their carbon footprint have been recognised in green awards.

Under the Grow Me The Money program, businesses have embraced more sustainable work practices.

In association with peak employer group, the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the awards were announced yesterday.

Micro-business awards went to Grassroots Productions and Able Plastics.

The award for businesses with between five and 15 employees went to Organic Angels and Third Ecology.

In the category for businesses with 16-30 employees, the winners were McManus Real Estate and the Australian Business Arts Foundation.

In the 31-99 employees category, the winners were Express Promotions and Isuzu. The Body Shop and Blake Dawson won the 100 or more employees category.

VECCI says businesses are taking action to do something positive for the environment.

There has been a 40 per cent increase in uptake of the Grow Me The Money program, since its launch three years ago. So far more than 1300 businesses have joined.

To be in the running for the awards the businesses had to submit comprehensive action plans which outlined targets, activities, cost savings and strategies to cut their carbon footprint.

VECCI sustainability services spokeswoman Erin Simpson said many of the winners had adopted simple and low-cost measures.

"Each business submitted exceptional action plans that demonstrated real creativity, leadership and

What the winners did

GROW Me The Money award winners have been busy staying green.

McManus Real Estate, in Lara, has halved its use of paper.

It has cut its lighting by 30 per cent and reduced heating and cooling energy use by 15 per cent.

The agency has also instituted a property inspection checklist for tenants and landlords to increase sustainable practices. It looks at things such as installing water tanks, more efficient showerheads, energy efficient lighting.

McManus also has a drought tolerant garden display in its head office which shows clients water-saving garden options.

Among other things, Express Promotions opts for reusable felt blankets instead of non-biodegradable materials such as plastic wrap or foam sheets.

At its Port Melbourne head office, Isuzu has introduced an office recycling program among other initiatives.

An event management company, Grassroots Productions specialises in eco-friendly events such as weddings.

Among other things, it has a green supplier database and green purchasing supply list.

a holistic approach to business sustainability," she said.

"What's especially pleasing is the diversity of businesses that entered."

Businesses can take the 12-step online program.

Ms Simpson said participants claim they have achieved an average 15.4 per cent cut in their carbon footprint and saved on average \$6600.

□ Net link: www.growmethemoney.com.au