ABN 37 932 479 648

Submission to

Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services.

Inquiry into Corporate Responsibility.

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia.

From
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The Buoyancy Foundation of Victoria
Reg Public Benevolent Foundation since 1967
And Buoyancy Services Inc (Incorporated Association)

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Committee Secretary

Department of the Senate

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Introduction

This submission is an example of a small organization that is taking triple bottom line responsibility with impeccable integrity and measurable results. We offer this as a contribution to the Committee as to what is possible for even the smallest incorporated organization.

Our audited accounts show that Buoyancy Foundation and Buoyancy Services have a combine capital value of approximately $750,000 and an annual turnover of approx $350,000. Both organizations are quality endorsed companies accredited by SAI Global and a qualified provider of drug counseling for the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

Buoyancy's land at Mt Alexander, Castlemaine and the Triple Bottom Line

(Researched and written by Deborah Homburg, Michelle Braunstein, Diana Cousens, Dr Anthony Dare and James Kilby)

The mission of Buoyancy Foundation is ***to create and offer opportunities for people to participate in a culture of self expression and contribution.***

The contribution of the land arose in the mid nineties when it was offered for $8000. At that time the land was valued for rate purposes at $16,000 and a sworn valuation on the land in 2005 values it at $90,000

Overheads are very low, and rates rebate by the Council encourage the land to be treasured as an environmental asset. Land for Wildlife registered the property and a Trust for Nature Covenant protects it for everybody in the future.

Buoyancy was successful in obtaining twenty thousand dollars Enviro funding from the Commonwealth Government which facilitated re-planting, restoration and regeneration of sections of the granite woodlands degraded by misuse.

Buoyancy has adopted the policy of managing its operation and assets according to a ***triple bottom line approach***. The triple bottom line includes objectives and measures in three areas: *environmental*, *economic* and *social*.

Consistent with it mission, programs and practices in Richmond and its management policy, Buoyancy intends to manage its 5-acre Mt Alexander rural property as follows:

Environmental

Buoyancy has adopted the concept of the "environmental footprint" for its overall operation. An environmental footprint is the demand made by the organization on the bio-capacity of the Earth. Buoyancy seeks to be environmentally responsible by ensuring that the environmental *demands* of the urban (Richmond) operation is offset by environmental *benefits* produced by the Mt Alexander land, thus the overall operation would have a net neutral environmental footprint. In fact, it is conceivable that Buoyancy might be able to produce a *net benefit* to the environment.

Vegetated land produces an environmental benefit through its capacity to act both as a *carbon sink* (absorbing and converting carbon) and a *water catchment*. At the time of acquisition, the Mt Alexander land was considerably degraded through animal and human trespass. Grazing from cattle and sheep prevented natural re-vegetation, encouraged erosion and caused damage to the watercourse. Further damage was caused by human trespass.

Buoyancy has preserved and improved the land as a natural habitat. Thus its capacity to act as a carbon sinks and water catchments has been enhanced, rather than continuing to be degraded. The net increase in that capacity constitutes Buoyancy's offset, balancing the environmental impact of the Richmond operation.

Carbon (energy) - Buoyancy's objective is to ensure that Buoyancy's operation in Richmond is carbon neutral in terms of energy consumption (gas, electricity and consumables), energy usage at Richmond being offset by capacity of rural vegetation to act as a carbon sink.

Water - As re-vegetation occurs, the land increases its capacity to act as a water catchment. While trees take up water they also prevent erosion and silting in the water ways. By binding the soil they contributing to lower run off rates and water velocities. Trees inhibit salinity caused by rising water tables breaching the surface.

Measures

Energy and water consumption and offsets are measured. Buoyancy uses recognized, standard engineering measures to monitor elements of the "environmental footprint" of its overall operation.

"Carbon sequestration" is a technical matter and advice on the appropriate engineering measures is being sought currently.

To date, Buoyancy has identified the following:

Direct energy usage:

Carbon Sequestration.

While figures are somewhat fluid with growth rates of forests and woodlands, and the fact that trees have best growth rates from about 20-60 years age, for this period, the range is

Forest growth = 2-6 (full range 1-15) cub m./hectare/ annum

Embedded carbon = 0.5 - 1.5 tonnes / ha. / annum

Equivalent CO2 = 1.8 - 5.5 tonnes / ha. / annum

CO2 produced by coal-fired power station ~ 1.5 tonnes / MWHr = 1000 kWh.

Electricity generation offset of forest / hectare = 1200 - 3600 kWh

The Richmond operation's current energy consumption, as measured by quarterly accounts, is as follows:

Electricity consumption - Origin Energy	*Kilowatt hours*
To 26 June 2002	2050.0
To 24 September 2002	1810.0
To 23 December 2002	1780.0
To 24 March 2003	1730.0
Total:	**7370.0**

Gas consumption - TXU	*Megajoules*
To 2 August 2002	22218.00
To 25 September 2002	14612.00
To February (not available)	
To 8 April 2003	623.73
To 17 June 2003	57547.07
Total:	**95000.80**

Indirect energy usage: The energy impact of consumables such as paper, other stationery, kitchen and toilet consumables and miscellaneous consumables are measured using standard estimates based on the relative size of the operation, then converted to equivalent carbon emissions. Embedded energy in construction, use of cars, client services and staff amenities, the energy in drug supply and drug using equip can all be canvassed.

Measures for indirect energy use are yet to be researched.

Water usage: Richmond operation consumption in kilolitres per year, as measured by quarterly accounts:

Water consumption - City West Water	*Kilolitres*
To 29 August 2002	27
To 3 December 2002	36
To 7 March 2003	22
To 6 June 2003	72
Total:	**157**

Offsets: The capacity of a parcel of land to act as both a carbon sink and a water catchment can be estimated from the *percentage of land that is occupied by vegetation and the density, type and maturity of that vegetation.*

Buoyancy has been funded for and is implementing recognized land care measures including replanting 2,500 native plants. These will

result in the improvement of the land as a rural, naturally vegetated site.

Buoyancy will measure the additional capacity of the land that results from the *preservation* (from predictable degradation arising from livestock, trespass, etc.) and from *improvement*, such as re-vegetation arising from replanting and natural regeneration. It is expected that the capacity of the land to produce environmental benefits will increase year by year.

The measures to be used to estimate the carbon and water catchment offsets of a given parcel of vegetated land are yet to be researched. Given the modest size of our 5 acres of land and the whole Foundation, the continued development of solar power sufficiency and other sustainable practices will be equally important offsets.