



Bringing others on the journey

Ryan Morrison

CEO, Eastbay REAP

How best to go about introducing sustainability to other stakeholders?

For Ryan Morrison it was participants asking, “What’s next? How do we take another step?”

Ryan is the CEO of Eastbay REAP, one of 13 Rural Education Activities Programmes around Aotearoa, which help connect the local Eastern Bay of Plenty communities to lifelong learning opportunities. He is also Deputy Chair of REAP Aotearoa, who have as the collective of REAPs made a national commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in rural Aotearoa – a rights-based way to look at important issues for our future.

Ryan sees the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a context for bringing REAP’s commitment to accessing quality education to life. He came to the Sustainability Leadership Programme (SLP) with a good knowledge of sustainability, and a

desire to bring more people and organisations in the community along on the journey. He planned a series of sustainability collective impact workshops, and needed support engaging diverse audiences.

Ryan became part of a LeaderLab group of peers who met regularly during SLP to discuss sustainability challenges. Through this he was able to trial pitch the workshop series and its content before he went to his local community.

“The access to a wide range of leaders was a huge help, because it meant I wasn’t just looking at the project through my own lens,” says Ryan.

“Using the SLP LeaderLabs was quite literally a testing laboratory for ideas, which helped me to move further with the notion of engaging others with the SDGs. My peers on the course helped me determine what that would look like in practice.”

Ryan says the goal of the workshops was to help members of the wider community consider sustainability as part of their everyday life and work.

“With my LeaderLab group we came up with this apolitical framework. It’s not about us. It’s not about funding or agendas or egos. It’s about how we all want to improve education,” says Ryan. “In the workshops with the community, I found that once people stepped back a little bit, to see how they are actually contributing to a sustainable community, they could see that they were part of something powerful.”

Ryan says that even for those who understand leadership models, the SLP offers something different and valuable.

“Leadership can be a bit of a lonely place in terms of not always having people to bounce ideas off – especially things that are innovative or emerging where you want to build on the input and energy of others. What SLP offered was a group of people ready to go deep and share and unpack, and that was really rich.”

Ryan says the SLP combined personal values insights with practical tools.

“It’s a really good blend of leadership theory and sustainability tools, with learning and discussion built in,” says Ryan. “It covers many of the contemporary leadership models, which help you genuinely distil your own leadership purpose and values as an individual. If we understand what’s driving us to make change or to lead, it will make us better at leading.”

This ultimately built on Ryan’s framing of the sustainable development workshops as values-

driven conversations. “To get people to connect with and contribute to something like the Sustainable Agenda 2030, they need to see the ‘WHY’ behind it – something SLP focuses on.

Ryan adds that the course offers specific analytical tools or frameworks around sustainability. “We got straight into applying frameworks to our projects,” says Ryan.

Ryan says he recommends the course for someone who wants to be reflective about their leadership, and where it needs to go, and who also wants to take action towards a better future state.

“If you want to really get deep about your own leadership style and what drives you, and connect that with making a difference using sustainability, this is a great programme, because it’s going to give you both.”



The Sustainability Leadership Programme is Australasia’s most comprehensive sustainability leadership course. Run in partnership by the [Sustainable Business Council](#) and [Catapult](#) this short course gives you the tools and confidence needed to make a measurable impact. [Find out more.](#)