



## The "Green Collar Worker" Defined

How do you define "green collar worker"? How do you categorise them? How many of them are there?

Sydney, 26 May 2009 A new report has been released which attempts to define the elusive Green Collar Worker. The term is increasingly being used to describe people working in the environmental and sustainability sectors, but until now there has been no attempt to define just who these people are.

The report examines a range of different definitions from government and industry around the world, and attempts to establish the common ground between them. It then develops a taxonomy, or categorisation, which defines the different types of green collar worker in Australia and New Zealand.

The report was produced by sustainability consultancy Connection Research, for the Environment Institute of Australian and New Zealand (EIANZ), and the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW (DECC). The EIANZ is releasing the report today.

We believe the emergence of the green collar workforce is one of the most fundamental shifts taking place in the labour market today, says Tom Davies, NSW president of the EIANZ. A lot of research is needed to understand this group, so governments and industry can develop strategies to ensure they have the necessary skills to meet the many challenges that we all face, such as global warming and higher energy costs.

We hear figures of anything between 50,000 to 300,000 green collar workers in Australia. But the figures are just guesswork. The fact is, its impossible to know how many there are until we define them.

The report is the latest phase of the Evolution or Revolution project, an initiative by the NSW division of the EIANZ to engage the wider environmental profession, to define green collar workers, and what they need in order to improve their capacity to better address environmental and sustainability issues.

We want to draw a line in the sand, provide some rigour around a definition, and catalyse the development of metrics that will help move Australia towards a more ecologically sustainable economy. We believe this report is an excellent start, says Tom Davies.

The report makes a key distinction between jobs in the environmental sector and the sustainability sector. The first is concerned more with practical action, the second more with policy and process. It also takes into account skills levels and which industries green collar workers are employed in, by building on Australian Bureau of Statistics and Statistics New Zealands standard ANZSIC and ANZSCO industry and job coding systems.

You can download an electronic copy of the report from Connection Researchs website <http://www.connectionresearch.com.au/GCWT09.htm>

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