

## Sustainability science: introducing collaborative learning processes to environmental research programmes

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Sustainability science recognises the need for closer links between science and its stakeholders and a cyclical learning approach to problem solving grounded in real-life situations. However, current attempts to achieve this have done little to alter the status quo. Particular barriers include institutional bias against meaningful participation, a research culture which promotes one-shot approaches to problem-solving, an emphasis on linear forms of information transfer and a lack of knowledge about multi-sectoral engagement. As social researchers within a fundamentally biophysically oriented research environment our work has been to explore the opportunities for facilitating collaborative learning approaches to environmental problems (<http://social.landcareresearch.co.nz>). In this paper, examples of new practices for linking stakeholders and scientists in the areas of nutrient water contamination, catchment management, biodiversity protection and global climate change will be used to illustrate our current learning on the processes for enacting sustainability science. This includes addressing questions of trust, and capacity building for stakeholders and researchers alike, and looks at stakeholder analysis and formative evaluation as potential processes for promoting change within science and stakeholder relationships.