



EARTHCHECK

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The Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre has been using the EarthCheck tool to benchmark the success of its many environmental and social initiatives for over six years.

The Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre is committed to exploring new and innovative ways to reduce the impacts of its operations on the environment and broader community. This commitment was formalised with the launch of the Centre's 'EcoWise' sustainability program in 2004 which is voluntarily implemented by a group of committed staff members. The Centre has now commenced developing a framework in readiness for ISO 14001 accreditation.

The Centre's major achievements to date include:

A 47% reduction in water consumption

A 51% reduction in the volume of waste sent to landfill

Maintaining EarthCheck best practice levels for over six years within chemical and paper product categories

Development of a Green Event Guide that is available for organisers of events through their website

THE SYDNEY CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE

The Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre is Australia's largest venue for conferences, exhibitions and special events. It is superbly located on the waterfront in Sydney's most popular visitor precinct, Darling Harbour. The site is renowned for its flexibility, which enables it to manage events of any size and complexity.

The Centre has 33 superbly designed and equipped meeting and function rooms that can be easily configured to suit the requirements of any event. The Centre has two auditoria, seating 3,500 and 1,000 people, plus an addition 27,200 m2 of exhibition space. Other facilities include an in-house audio visual department to manage event lighting, sound and vision, advanced communication solutions such as wireless Internet, networking and video services, contemporary and innovative cuisine and undercover parking for 900 cars.



KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

REDUCING THE USE OF FRESHWATER AND WASTEWATER GENERATION

A series of water saving initiatives have been implemented by the Centre that has resulted in a 47% reduction in water consumption, that's a total savings of 8.69 ML over 3 years. Initiatives implemented included:

Measuring and monitoring:

Eighteen sub-meters have been installed to monitor water consumption throughout the Centre and to identify any abnormalities that may indicate unnecessary wastage, leaks or faults. Each meter has a data logger that takes readings every 15 minutes, which is transmitted to a data warehouse

Water efficient fixtures:

Installation of waterless urinals and sensor taps in refurbished toilets

Installation of 165 dual flush low volume toilets in refurbished toilets and low flow shower roses (9L/min) in change rooms

Eliminating the need for cooling towers:

The site saves a considerable amount of water and energy by using seawater as a heat exchange to remove heat from the Centre's air conditioning system, negating the need for cooling towers

Water efficient equipment and practices in kitchens :

Along with replacing inefficient dish washers and ice-making machines the Centre also encourages water efficient kitchen practices through training and signage. For example kitchen staff:

- ensure taps are not left running during food preparation
- use water efficient pre-rinse sprays that use less water and have better cleaning efficiency
- minimise the number of pieces of cooking equipment they use to reduce cleaning requirements
- use scrubbing machines to clean floor areas to reduce mopping requirements

Reducing water used for cleaning:

To ensure water is not wasted during cleaning operations, the Centre purchased a number of sweeper-scrubbers to clean external entrances and all cleaners are trained in water efficient cleaning practices. The site's dry cleaning company has also been selected on the basis of its environment performance

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre has reduced its energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in a number of ways including encouraging greater responsibility by event organisers and patrons for their energy consumption, using green power sourced from renewable energy sources, installing energy efficient lighting and control systems and replacing inefficient equipment.

Energy consumption has reduced by almost 7% from 2004/2005 to 2007/2008 with savings of 2,300 GJ over 3 years. Initiatives include:

Encouraging greater individual responsibility:

To encourage individual exhibitors to take greater responsibility for their energy consumption meters have been installed on each of its exhibition pits and clients are provided with a summary of their energy use profile. The Centre offers advice to revisiting exhibitors with abnormally high consumption levels on ways they could reduce the amount of energy they consume

The Centre has also developed a 'Green Event Guide' that is available for organisers of events on the Centre's website

Using electricity generated from renewable energy sources:

The Centre encourages exhibition organisers to offset their event's greenhouse gas emissions. Offsets are calculated based on the floor area used. The emissions are offset via Country Energy's Green Power program. The Centre itself offsets all its electricity consumption in its administration offices with 100% green power

Energy efficient lighting:

Lighting consumes a moderate proportion of the Centre's total energy use. To improve the Centre's lighting efficiency it has installed both lower wattage bulbs and a control system that allows for greater flexibility in lighting levels and hours of operation. Initiatives include:

- Replacing 500W high bay light fittings in the Centre's exhibition halls with 400 W bulbs which are connected to a digital control system. The control system provides four levels of standard light: 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% with each level providing a corresponding energy saving
- Replacement of old metal halide lights with energy efficient 54 W fluorescent tubes in the centre's car park
- Installation of LED (light emitting diodes) bulbs in the Audio Visual Department that use 10% of the energy of previous performance lights

The large Bayside Convention Centre has also been fitted with new light fittings and a lighting control system that automatically adjusts to the amount of natural light available throughout the day. This initiative saves approximately 15% of the energy used by the previous lighting

Replacing and retrofitting old inefficient equipment:

Replacement of two of its main escalators with energy efficient escalators that, when not in use, firstly slow down and then stop. The escalators will gradually start back up to its normal operating speed when sensors detect people approaching. It is estimated that the energy efficient escalators consume 50% less electricity than the older models

Replacement of an ageing inefficient electric steam generator with a modern gas fired steam generator. Since natural gas generates one third of the emissions of electrical hot water heating systems, the Centre's greenhouse gas emissions were also further reduced

The Centre's full time maintenance staff monitor and maintain the vast array of onsite equipment. This allows for planning of preventative maintenance around events and a quick response time to problems when they arise

SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING AND SOLID WASTE RECYCLING

The Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre has reduced the volume of solid waste by 51%, cutting 562 cubic metres (m3) of waste over 3 years. The Centre formed a partnership with its waste contractor, WSN Environmental Solutions and identified 9 waste streams that could be processed to deliver an assortment of recycled materials. The following initiatives have been introduced:

INITIATIVES:

All packaging used in the Exhibition Cafés and Convention Centre is made from recyclable materials

Office printers default settings are for double-sided printing. The office has also introduced paperless reporting such as electronic payslips and monthly reports

Plastic bags used in the Uniform Room are biodegradable. Reusable bags are also being trialled

Recycling and Waste Stations were introduced in the Exhibition Halls for use by event organisers and their delegates

Installing custom built compactors for the different waste streams. Food waste is placed in a refrigerated compactor that reduces the number of waste collections required due to food decomposing. Food waste is transported to a specialist recycling plant for conversion to green fuel, which it uses in purpose-designed power stations

Fresh food left over from events is donated to OzHarvest and shared with people in need

Spent light bulbs and tubes are collected and forwarded to a plant which recycles the glass, aluminium and mercury

The Centre has bottle crushing units in most of the servery's so that used bottles are crushed and sent off-site for recycling

Food deliveries in Styrofoam packaging are no longer accepted by the Centre. Instead, deliveries arrive in recyclable and reusable packaging thanks to the cooperation of the venue's many suppliers

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT

The Centre supports a number of national and international community events and charities that support children with special or medical needs and their families.

The Centre participates in business community events including:

Business community events:

Business Clean UP Day which is designed to assist businesses to improve the quality of the environment and work towards reducing waste. A group of staff members from the Centre with the support of the Centre's local waste contractor removed rubbish that had accumulated in unseen pockets of the local area and parkland

Walk to Work Day which encourages regular walking habits for better health, cleaner air, less traffic and increased use of public transport. The Centre staff are encouraged to meet at destinations away from normal drop off points and complete the remainder of the journey on foot. The Centre arranged three locations in different directions so all staff could participate

World Environment Day: The Centre conducted its own internal event for staff giving information on what they can do at home and work and showed the achievements of some individuals within the company that have embraced an environmental challenge e.g. worm farms, hybrid cars, etc

Global Corporate Challenge: The Centre sponsored staff to participate in teams to challenge people to increase the amount of walking and cycling they do and monitor it through the corporate global challenge website

In addition to business community events, the Centre also sponsors several charities including:

Charities:

Variety Children Christmas Party for 5,000 sick, disadvantaged and special needs children. The Centre has provided the space, services and staff volunteers to help at this event for the past 15 years and has been recognised by the International Variety organisation for this support having received the Variety International Corporate Award for 2008

Giant Steps which was founded to help educate children and families experiencing autism

RedKite who provide financial assistance, emotional support and education assistance to children, young people and families living with cancer

Ronald McDonald House Charities who create, fund, operate and support programs that help seriously ill children and their families while they receive medical treatment, and assist recovering children return to normal life

REDUCING THE USE OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

The Centre is committed to using biodegradable cleaning products and pesticides to help protect waterways in the Darling Harbour precinct and beyond.

The Centre has achieved best practice, under the EarthCheck program, for over six years in its use of biodegradable/ eco-labelled cleaning and pesticide products. It has achieved this by working closely with its supplier to ensure chemical products are suitable for the application while also being safe for the users and the environment.

All cleaning staff are trained in the use of cleaning products to minimise environmental impacts. Specialist pest contractors are engaged to ensure that the pesticides used are in the correct quantities and locations to maximise effect and minimise the impacts on the environment.

GLOBAL CORPORATE CHALLENGE®

