



MELBOURNE CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE (MCEC)

PROJECT DATA

Owner

Plenary Group

Location

Docklands Melbourne, VIC

Size

59,515m² GFA

PROJECT TEAM

Green Star Accredited Professional

Advanced Environmental

Project Manager

Multiplex

Architect

NWHB

Building Services Engineer

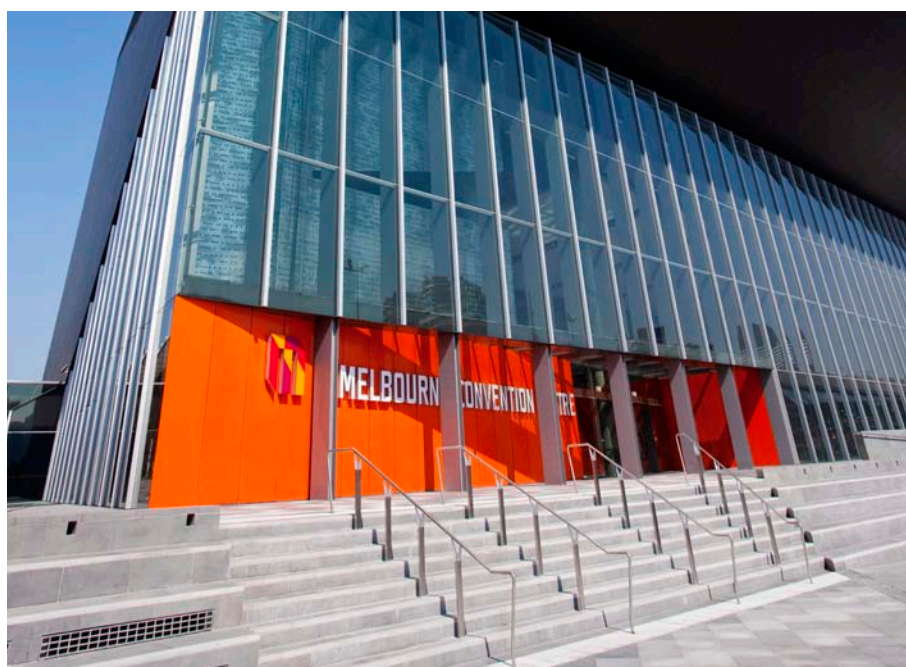
Lincolne Scott

Landscaping Consultant

Aspect

Main Contractor

Multiplex



IMAGE

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)

6 Star Green Star - Convention Centre PILOT Certified rating

green building council australia

6 greenstar

Convention Centre Pilot

The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) became the first convention centre in the world to achieve a 6 Star Green Star rating in 2008.

The Victorian Government, Plenary Group and all contractors showed far-sighted vision to build the world's greenest convention centre. The Victorian Government commissioned the development of the Green Star - Convention Centre PILOT tool specifically for this project; and subsequently the Green Star – Public Building tool was developed based on this pilot project.

Two years since the MCEC reached practical completion, the owners have captured new markets, and future-proofed their assets against changes in government regulation, market expectations and climate.

The MCEC's 6 Star Green Star rating, combined with its excellent design features, have helped position Melbourne in the international market and secure the city's reputation as a true global player within the international events arena.

According to the MCEC's Chief Executive, Leigh Harry, "the venue has exceeded everyone's expectations, setting a new world standard with its innovative environmental design features and raising the benchmark to new heights in innovation, technology, imaginative catering and service options. It's humbling to have the feedback we've received to date."

ONE-OF-A-KIND WONDERS

It's easy to understand why the feedback has been so positive. The MCEC boasts a huge array of world-leading sustainability initiatives which still remain one-of-a-kind today.

These include the eye-catching façade, which towers 18 metres high and is constructed of spectrally-selective glass which reduces heat gain. The façade is complemented by the architecturally-inspired shading device, which protects the façade from the harsh summer sun but allows for passive solar heating during the winter months. This delivers sound levels of thermal comfort and reduces the building's energy use, as well as enhancing the overall image of the building.

SUSTAINABILITY SELLS SEATS

A growing demand for sustainable meetings, conferences and exhibitions is being driven by companies who recognise that green is good for their brand. According to an October 2009 survey by Meetings and Conventions magazine, 56 per cent of conference organisers surveyed enquire about green initiatives when selecting a meeting venue, while another 15 per cent plan to start doing so. Moreover, 51 per cent of respondents said that they had recently increased their focus on green meetings.

At the MCEC, the sustainability features have delivered a marketing dividend, enabling the centre to directly cater to the increasingly important green agendas of event organisers.

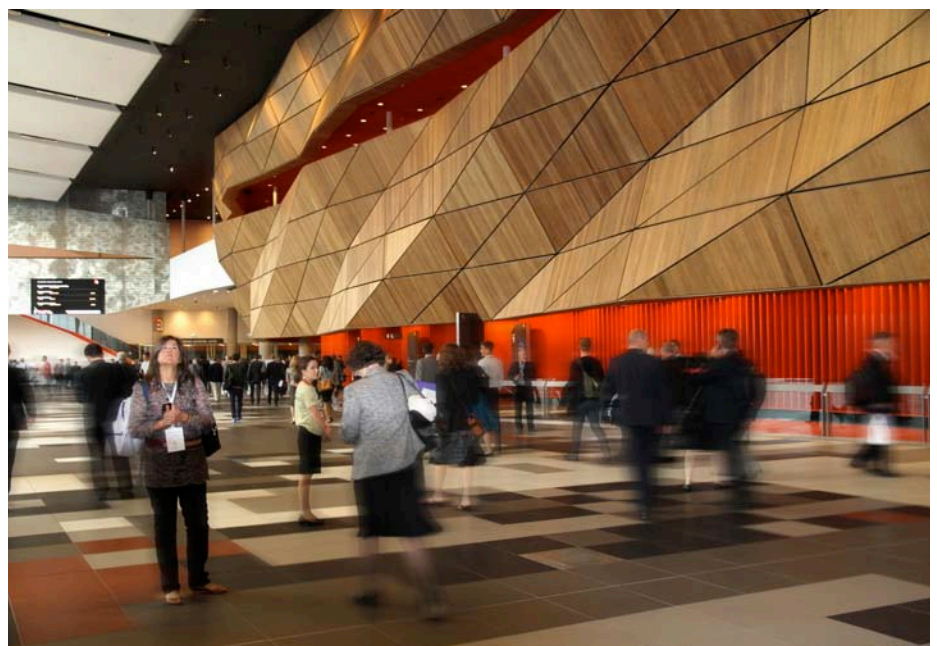
According to Professor Robert Lamb, Australian Synchrotron Director, his team were able to secure their bid to hold the 10th International Conference on Synchrotron and Instrumentation because of "Melbourne's acknowledged worldwide reputation as a centre for scientific excellence; having one of the world's latest third generation synchrotrons; and the newly developed state-of-the-art 6 Star Green Star rated Melbourne Convention Centre."

GREEN TEAM

To deliver consistent environmental performance from the building, the MCEC has created the appropriately named M-Green Team. This dedicated team is responsible for implementing new strategies to benchmark and progress MCEC's environmental performance. The team also raises awareness among clients and meeting planners about running sustainable events, by providing a whole host of green information and a green event checklist on how to incorporate green solutions into their MCEC-based events.

Banksia Environmental Foundation spokesperson, Owen Probert, says the MCEC team went out of its way to make the Banksia Awards in 2010 an environmental success. "The MCEC was extremely helpful in the sustainable planning of the Awards. Its willingness to measure the waste arising from the night was particularly impressive as was the option of purchasing 100 per cent green energy for the entire building for the event."

MCEC Front of House Manager and M-Green Team Chairperson, David Howie, says that their job is made easier as "the 6 Star Green Star rating raises community interest and leads to users actively requesting details of the 'green' architectural features with the emphasis on keeping events as 'green' as possible."



STRIVING FOR PERFECTION

It's not only clients that are raving about the facility; the MCEC's facility managers are also extremely happy, as the building's technology allows it to flex easily with demand, while the building users guide, developed to Green Star standards, has ensured that all team members have an informed and consistent approach towards building usage.

To maintain optimum performance and deliver the best environmental outcomes, the facility management team is constantly tweaking the building's central plant and building systems. In order to understand the impact of these changes, Plenary Group collects data on all of the facility's operations to establish a baseline from which it can drive improvements. They will have enough data by 2011 to produce a reliable baseline which will help to deliver optimal operational performance across the Centre's entire events calendar.

At present, the biggest sustainability issue facing the team has been the Centre's overwhelming popularity. With the schedule booked solid for the next five years, the team has rarely had the chance to utilise the set-back conditions which reduce energy consumption when not in use. Nevertheless, this is without doubt a challenge that every major centre around the world would love to encounter.

GREEN ENHANCES PRESTIGE

A range of international reports have found that green buildings are more likely to attract grants, awards, subsidies and other incentives that demonstrate environmental stewardship, increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The MCEC's innovation and ingenuity has been rewarded with dozens of awards, including the 2010 Victorian Architecture Medal, the prestigious Banksia Foundation Built Environment Award 2009, the 2010 Australian Construction Achievement Award, as well as recognition by the Design Institute of Australia for its contribution to Victoria's next generation of public amenity.

20:20 HINDSIGHT

With the MCEC now operational for more than two years, would the project team change anything? What challenges would be easier to overcome today?

The key challenge, according to Director of Operations, Chris Connelly, was working with a Green Star rating system still in its infancy. "As a result, our work was unique and pioneering as the rating tool was developed specifically for this project. Since then, the whole Green Star process and assessment tools have become much more sophisticated, with a larger pool of experienced Green Star Accredited Professionals on which to draw, so our challenges were largely about being one of the first projects to apply Green Star to a project – and the first to use the convention centre and public building project rating tool.

"Many of the great sustainability features of the MCEC's design are not easily seen by the building users and are therefore harder to appreciate," Connelly adds.

"Importantly, many of the elements of the Green Star rating are not in themselves complex or difficult to implement, however what the MCEC project did was to implement them in a uniquely-designed building, rather than a simple office block, on a scale not really seen before - and this is what makes the project special."

