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## Property industry uses online social networking to go green

Better known as the plaything of Generation Y, online social networking technology has been put to use by the commercial property sector, which today launched a new \$1.5 million online encyclopedia and networking tool to help create green and profitable commercial buildings.

Designed to function as a wiki – a collaborative web tool – *Your Building* was unveiled at Stockland's sustainable new headquarters in Sydney's CBD, a world class office fit-out focussed on improving the company's environmental footprint.

*Your Building* creates an online community whose members can add their own content, post comments, listen to podcasts and contact each other through their personal profiles – similar to the way a growing number of people use forums such as Facebook to communicate with friends and network with new people.

A joint initiative of the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO), the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for *Construction Innovation* and the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC), *Your Building* uses Internet links to pool thousands of individual sources of information on current sustainability practices, regulation, technological innovations and case studies in a single location. How-to guides on developing businesses cases for green developments and refurbishments also feature on the site.

CRC for *Construction Innovation* Chief Executive Officer, Dr Keith Hampson, said *Your Building* – an industry first - would encourage the commercial property sector to share its ideas and experiences, fuel debate on important sustainability issues and ultimately highlight how business could profit from sustainability.

"Your Building is a terrific resource for the entire industry that gives everyone, whether you are a property owner, developer, tenant, designer or manager, the unique ability to collaborate in a single online community," Dr Hampson said.

"Previously, sustainability was thought to conflict with business priorities – this is no longer the case. Healthy, sustainable buildings also make excellent business sense."

Dr Hampson said the resource was an important educational tool for the industry.

"A key priority now is to build the future capacity of the industry to tackle the environmental challenges Australia faces - to ensure we have a pool of talented, forward thinking young architects, designers and engineers who can take Australia's commercial property industry into the future. Your Building will prove a valuable tool in developing young talent."

According to the AGO, the building sector has a significant impact on the environment, accounting for 10 per cent of Australia's greenhouse emissions, 12 per cent of water consumption and up to 40 per cent total energy. Activities around buildings produce 40 per cent of landfill waste and 40 per cent of air emissions in Australia.

Dr Tony Stapledon, project leader of *Your Building*, said the site would help tackle barriers to successful business cases by demonstrating how to lower development and capital costs, reduce liability and risk, increase tenant productivity and give buildings a green premium.

"Creating green buildings which reduce environmental impact can have enormous benefits for the owners, the occupiers, the employees, the business, as well as benefiting the city and the natural environment. Importantly, they do not necessarily cost more than normal buildings," Dr Stapledon said.

"There is a huge wealth of knowledge out there on environmentally and economically sustainable buildings – but until now, none of it has been easily accessible. The job of *Your Building* is to make it easy, and profitable for the industry to go green."

*Your Building* is sponsored by Architectus, Arup, BlueScope Steel, Boral, Building Commission, Connell Wagner, Fletcher Insulation, Leighton Contractors, Stockland and Szencorp.

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