

Guide for greener commercial buildings under construction



**By Dr Keith Hampson, CEO
of the CRC for Construction
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THE AUSTRALIAN property sector is evolving. More and more commercial tenants are demanding environmentally sustainable buildings.

Government seems to be leading the way. Most federal, state and territory government departments are now required to rent office space that exceeds certain environmentally sustainable criteria, such as achieving a particular Australian Building Greenhouse Rating (AGBR).

The new Brisbane Square development was originally conceived as a conventional high-grade office building, until Brisbane City Council, a major co-tenant, insisted it attain at least a four-star AGBR, among other

environmental benchmarks.

If this trend increases, how do owners, designers, constructors and people working in sustainable commercial buildings find out about the latest sustainable technologies, business case studies to support this trend or understand the environmental reasoning?

A new Internet-based portal called Your Building is being developed by the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Construction Innovation in partnership with the Australian Greenhouse Office and the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC).

The Your Building portal will be a one-stop knowledge shop.

The site will consolidate available knowledge on sustainable buildings and provide links to other leading organisations and documents. Underpinning this will be a series of case studies and research demonstrating the economic, environmental and social values of creating sustainable buildings.

For those unconvinced by the sustainability push, a recent report by Jones Lang LaSalle entitled *Assessing the Value of Sustainability* creates a compelling case.

A theoretical case study used an A-grade, 30,000sq m building in Sydney's

CBD and spent \$320,000 upgrading it in seven basic sustainability practices. The result: outgoings were cut by 2.2 per cent, the building's value increased by \$3 million and annual energy savings were around \$100,000.

The Your Building portal will detail similar case studies so owners can assess the benefits of going green.

The Your Building portal is being modelled on the highly-acclaimed Your Home website (also developed by the Australian Greenhouse Office), which similarly consolidates existing available knowledge about sustainable solutions for residential properties.

The team behind Your Building has conducted several workshops with key decision makers from the property, design, construction and facility management sectors to help define the project and its outcomes. The latest was in Perth in May.

Tony Stapledon, our project leader for Your Building, said these workshops have been well received and very useful in creating interest in the potential for Your Building. However, we are always interested in hearing from researchers, industry practitioners and organisations wanting to develop content for the site.

Some key areas of the portal are currently being contracted to content developers and the Your Building homepage (www.yourbuilding.org) is expected to be launched in July. The remainder of the content will be developed over the next year.

If that thought interests you, please contact Dr Tony Stapledon at t.stapledon@construction-innovation.info

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The Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Construction Innovation (www.construction-innovation.info) is a national collaboration of 21 industry, government and research partners focussed on creating technologies, tools and processes for the property, design, construction and facility management sectors.