



Melbourne's CH2 is one of the greenest buildings in Australia.

Photo: JESSICA SHAPIRO

# Website to share green know-how

**Tina Perinotto**

The tendency to protect proprietary knowledge in green building techniques and technologies will be broken down with the launch of an interactive property website on how to green s commercial building stock, consultants say.

The site, Your Building, has almost 1500 pages of information, with case studies, articles, interviews on how to build new and refurbished green buildings, plus links to other relevant sites.

Eventually, it will be open for online editing in the manner of on-site encyclopedia Wikipedia, which claims 98 per cent accuracy.

The project, launched on Friday, is a joint initiative of the Australian Greenhouse Office, the Co-operative Research Centre for Construction Innovation and the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council.

Concerns about protection of green building know-how have forced the Green Building Council to offer strict protection of propriety information, a move that critics say is counter-productive to faster achievements in the sector.

The construction innovation centre's chief executive officer, Keith Hampson, said Your Building 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.

"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 also 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," he said.

A recent report from ASBEC said buildings produced 23 per cent of the greenhouse gases and that a 35 per cent reduction in these could be achieved from existing technologies and energy efficiencies.

AGO data says the building sector is responsible for up to 40 per cent of total energy use and 12 per cent of water consumption.

Project leader for Your Building, sustainability consultant Tony Stapledon said the site would help prove a business case to go green.

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"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," he 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."

Dr Stapledon said that with green buildings, because it was such a new field there was more knowledge sharing. "People are open to sharing because they know they are still learning and if they are to learn, they have to be open about sharing," he said.