

Meetings Industry Responding to Sydney's Green Initiatives

The Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre has reported increasing interest in its green initiatives, with demand for renewable energy at events on the rise.

According to Centre Chief Executive Ton van Amerongen, the active promotion of GreenPower, a government accreditation program for renewable energy, has generated an enthusiastic response from the industry with an increasing number of large events opting for renewable energy in 2009.

These include the Reed Gift Fair Sydney, one of the largest exhibitions held at the Centre, which used almost entirely GreenPower at its February event and 3rd International Cerebral Palsy Conference 2009.

The Centre has given organisers the opportunity to select GreenPower through a simple ordering form since early 2007 as part of its ongoing program to promote environmentally friendly practices in the business events industry and make them readily accessible to clients.

"Whilst we have offered GreenPower for a few years, we've noticed an increased interest in this option over recent months," Mr van Amerongen said.

"I believe this reflects a groundswell of awareness about corporate responsibility. By choosing GreenPower, organisers not only demonstrate that they're doing their bit for the environment, they also reduce their carbon footprint, so we're very pleased to be able to offer it for any event held at our venue," he said.

Under the Centre's Green Power system, clients have access to simple calculation tools to work out the cost of the power and are provided with a certificate recognising their commitment.

The Centre has been a leader in environmental practices in business events over the past five years. It was one of the first two convention centres in the world to receive the international Green Globe benchmark accreditation for its environmental programs and is now the first Australian venue, and one of only a handful worldwide, to be undergoing the accreditation process to become a silver Green Globe benchmarked venue.

In late 2008, the Centre became the first convention centre in Australia to introduce a dedicated environmental professional to its team, setting a new standard for environmental best practice with the appointment of Simon Gazey as its Environmental Officer.

At the same time, the Centre received the Events Association of Australia's inaugural Best Green Initiative Award. Announced in December last year, this accolade recognised the continued success of the Centre's environmental program, Ecowise, and its ongoing focus on working with clients to raise environmental standards.

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