

# Profile of a Sustainable Destination: Melbourne

When it comes to promoting a green destination, it takes the right mix of ingredients: research, measurement, and most importantly commitment across a broad stakeholder group.



Sandra Chipchase, CEO of Melbourne CVB, describes how a community of stakeholders who are willing to do something can result in amazing and transformative change. That influential stakeholder group in Melbourne involved the convention and visitors bureau, the convention center, tourism board, and local and state government.

While some of Melbourne's tangible benefits from their sustainability development plan included: securing more business, award recognition, and of course reduction in environmental impacts; there were also many intangible benefits. The social benefits of employee engagement in sustainability programs and the strengthened bonds of the community created a natural draw for meeting organizers. Chipchase comments, "We [stakeholders] want visitors to come and enjoy our destination, while respecting it so it lasts."

So now that we have all the ingredients let's explore Melbourne's recipe for developing and promoting a sustainable destination:

## **1. Align with the city and sustainability programs and offerings:**

Melbourne continues to lead the Australian Business Events industry in environmentally responsible practices because of the importance of the environment across the industry, government and suppliers. This is a shared common goal of all stakeholders.

The City of Melbourne and Victorian Business Events suppliers are continually implementing green initiatives, which are reflected in Melbourne's 'Green Credentials' Report. For example, the Skybus Super Shuttle is Melbourne's airport/city shuttle and Australia's first 'carbon neutral' public transport operator.

## **2. Provide Tools and Resources to Identify Responsible Suppliers and Processes:**

MCVB has designed many tools and programs to reduce the carbon footprint of Business Events held in the city. Major international conferences that MCVB secure are managed by Professional Conference

Organisers (PCOs) who have access to all of MCVB's green tools.

MCVB's free tools for Meeting and Event Organisers include:

The MCVB Event Carbon Calculator, powered by the Carbon Reduction Institute, which calculates the carbon emissions of events held in Melbourne and Victoria and offers advice on offsetting these emissions Melbourne's 'Green Credentials' Report, which identifies the green practices of local Business Events suppliers so that Event Organisers can make an informed choice (well received)



Highlights of the 2010 report, as compared with 2009, include:

An 18% increase in the number of audits conducted and environmental plans developed A 17% increase in the creation of 'green teams' or committees dedicated to guiding initiatives A 12% increase in the number of businesses offsetting their own carbon emissions or offering carbon offset opportunities to their clients A 12% increase in staff education and training pertaining to green issues. MCVB's Green Incentive Website, which includes low carbon impact itineraries, provides advice on planning a green Business Event in Melbourne, and features Victoria's top ten green incentive activities A 'Guide to Planning a Green Event' – in the MCVB Melbourne Planner's Guide. The Green Event Guide includes information on MCVB's assistance in planning green incentive travel programs, a green events checklist and information on green leisure activities in Victoria.

### **3. Measure and market (authentically) the convention centre's green practices:**

The new Melbourne Convention Centre, which opened in June 2009, is a big draw card; it is leading the world on the environmental front – it is the first convention centre in the world to be awarded a 6 Star Green Star environmental energy rating. This achievement is based on a variety of initiatives that create a natural environment, reduce overall energy usage and use minimal non-renewable resources. The centre features: Improved indoor air quality, Maximum natural light, Solar hot water, Displacement ventilation to provide high indoor air quality at low energy consumption, Carpets, paints, adhesives and sealants low in Volatile Organic Compounds to enhance indoor air quality, A black water treatment facility to treat wastewater, rainwater and storm water to Grade A quality for re-use in the centre, The sustainable use of building materials.

### **4. Develop Case Studies of Events (through environmental measurement and ROI tracking)**

The more concrete your examples are (of business won due to specific environmental or social programs in your region) and the actual measurement tracking the more tangible it is for bosses, boards and stakeholders to align with our sustainability platform.



Victoria was also the first Australian State to introduce mandatory renewable energy targets, which has provided a strong boost to the renewable energy sector. The Victorian Government has committed more than \$160 million to drive advances in pre-commercial sustainable energy technologies, such as solar, energy storage, biofuels, biomass conversion and geothermal energy efficiency, again demonstrating that Melbourne and Victoria are leaders in environmental initiatives.

As a result of these and other factors, MCVB was successful in securing The World Geothermal Congress for 2015, which is expected to attract 1,500 delegates.

#### **5. Do your research with Carbon Offset Programs:**

MCVB commissioned research into carbon calculation/offset companies offering services to the Business Events industry. The research, undertaken by Victoria University's Centre for Tourism and Services Research, identified best practice services, including carbon footprint assessments and strategies to mitigate and offset carbon emissions. This research benefits the BE industry, equipping organisations with knowledge on how to reduce their environmental impact.

In achieving carbon reduction and accreditation, it is essential to use an organization recognized by government bodies, such as the Carbon Reduction Institute.

[www.greenmeetings.info](http://www.greenmeetings.info)

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