

# Media Release



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## **New study reveals sustainable building a top performer**

A new study on workplace satisfaction has highlighted that tenants are very forgiving of common building problems involving heating, cooling and lighting, when a building is sustainable.

Australia's highest rated sustainable building, the Szencorp Building at 40 Albert Road, South Melbourne, recently completed its second Building Use Study, which benchmarked it in the top 4% for overall building performance in Australia.

The study is especially interesting as it follows up on an earlier study from 2006 and allows comparisons to be made.

While the building achieved excellent results in a number of areas including design, image, and perceived productivity and health, the study also uncovered that 86% of staff were unhappy with the temperature within the building.

Despite an increase in occupants by nearly 50% since 2006, tolerance of the building's shortcomings, such as temperature, was high partly because tenants appreciated that the building was highly energy efficient and also because tenants had a reasonable amount of control over their working environments.

Szencorp Building owner and developer, Mr Peter Szental, said he was pleased that three years on since the building's completion, it was still performing to its design intent and was considered by the tenants as a great place to work.

"The study results prove that the Szencorp Building continues to be an exceptional sustainable building, but it is also clear that we have a number of improvements to make to increase tenant satisfaction," Mr Szental said.

"It's essential to conduct assessments on building performance, from staff satisfaction through to energy, water and waste performance, and then continually refine the building from these results.

"The 'warts and all' approach we take for publicly reporting our performance results demonstrates my strong support for mandatory performance disclosure as proposed by the Commonwealth Government starting in 2010.

"Building owners should learn from our mistakes, consider replicating our successes, and be honest about their own building's performance," he said.

The 2009 study compared the Szencorp Building against 55 Australian and 81 international office buildings. Key findings from the 2009 study included:

- The Szencorp Building was the highest scoring Australian building in the international sustainable buildings benchmark dataset, achieving a 'Good Practice' rating for overall performance.
- Perceived productivity was in the top 9% of Australian buildings, but this was actually a 1.5% decrease from the 2006 results, which showed a 13% increase in productivity. Building Use Studies research shows only 30% of buildings have positive productivity ratings.
- Tenants rated the Szencorp Building's image and design as very positive, placing it fourth in the Australian dataset for image.
- The speed at which problems such as temperature were addressed rated better than the national benchmark.
- The 2006 study revealed tenants were very happy with the level of artificial and natural light, but the 2009 study showed that the tenants believed there was not enough natural light.
- 86% of staff were dissatisfied with ventilation, 70% were dissatisfied with cooling and 79% dissatisfied with heating. However, forgiveness for these matters was also high.
- Travel to work by bicycle increased from 5% in 2006 to 11% in 2009, but over 50% of staff still travel to work by car, showing the importance of behaviour programs alongside good building design.
- 54% of tenants said they felt "more healthy" working in the Szencorp Building.
- The Szencorp Building's overall performance rating improved from 76 to 80 out of 100.
- Szencorp needs to facilitate tenant education of the building's controls, such as heating, cooling and lighting, and the ability to influence these controls.

Monica Vandenberg from Encompass Sustainability, who conducted the study, said Szencorp's decision to release the results – good and bad – was admirable.

"Szencorp's disclosure of its study results so that others can learn from its lessons is fantastic for the sustainable building industry and others should be encouraged to do the same," Ms Vandenberg said.

The Szencorp Building remains Australia's highest rated sustainable building with a 6 Star Green Star rating from the Green Building Council of Australia, and 5 Star NABERS ratings for energy and water. It was Australia's first 6 Star Green Star office building retrofit and has won numerous awards. Its tenants are Szencorp, Energy Conservation Systems, Closed Loop and the Banksia Environmental Foundation.

The full Post Occupancy Evaluation Report can be found on the Szencorp Building's website:

[http://www.theszencorpbldg.com/PDFs/Szencorp%20Post%20Occ%20Study%202009\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.theszencorpbldg.com/PDFs/Szencorp%20Post%20Occ%20Study%202009_FINAL.pdf)

For more information about the Szencorp Building visit: [www.theszencorpbldg.com](http://www.theszencorpbldg.com)

## **ENDS**

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