

Media Release



27 May 2009

Travel to green buildings not so sustainable

Just because a building is sustainable, does not mean its tenants are committed to using environmentally friendly transport options for travelling to and from work, a recent workplace satisfaction study has found.

Australia's highest rated sustainable building, the Szencorp Building at 40 Albert Road, South Melbourne, recently completed its second workplace satisfaction study, which evaluated transport to work, as well as perceived productivity and healthiness, and tenant satisfaction with heating, lighting and cooling.

The study found that 61% of tenants still travelled to work by car despite the building's convenient location to public transport and the provision of bicycle lock-up facilities, showers and lockers on-site.

Only 11% of tenants cycled to work, 14% caught the tram, 8% travelled by train, 3% rode on the bus and 3% walked to work. Of those staff who drove to work it was either for convenience, lack of access to public transport near their home, or because they travelled long distances.

Szencorp Building owner and developer, Mr Peter Szental, said these results proved that behaviour change programs were required to help sustainable buildings perform to their design intent.

"As a 6 Star Green Star rated building we had to meet strict criteria to encourage alternative modes of transport but despite this more than half of the Szencorp Building's tenants choose to drive to work," Mr Szental said.

"Compared to our 2006 workplace satisfaction survey, in which 77% of tenants drove and only 5% of tenants cycled, we are doing much better at encouraging staff to leave the car at home.

"We are now investigating The Green Training Company's online educational program to enhance our staff's understanding of environmental issues and why we all need to make changes to our behaviour in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," Mr Szental said.

Szencorp's Group Manager Corporate Affairs, Mark Lister, leads by example when it comes to cycling to work. Apart from his 18km round trip to and from work and riding to business meetings, Mark also often drops off his three young kids to crèche, kindergarten and school on the way.

"The kids love travelling in the two-seat bike trailer and baby seat, and it's also teaching them from a young age that we don't need to rely on cars," Mr Lister said.

In 2008 Szencorp realised it needed a low emissions car to complement its zero emissions building, so the company developed Australia's first Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV)

with the University of Sydney. Staff needing to travel during work hours can use the PHEV, giving them the option of leaving their car at home.

According to TravelSmart Australia, cars contribute to 8% of national greenhouse gas emissions and the fuel used by cars has increased by 19% from 1990 to 2003, while their related emissions increased by 25% in the same period.

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 performance. The Szencorp Building 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 workplace satisfaction study can be found on the Szencorp Building's website: http://www.theszencorpbldg.com/PDFs/Szencorp%20Post%20Occ%20Study%202009_FI_NAL.pdf

For more information about the Szencorp Building visit: www.theszencorpbldg.com

ENDS

For more information or to arrange a photo or interview contact:

Merrin Morrison
Public Affairs Manager
Szencorp
Mobile: 0400 829 601
Email: merrin.morrison@szencorp.net