



Environmental sustainability at Sydney Harbour YHA

Sydney Harbour YHA is the first purpose built environmentally sustainable YHA in a central city location. The organisation operates eco-hostels in rural areas, such as the Grampians and Apollo Bay in Victoria and the Blue Mountains in NSW.

The pursuit of sustainability is a core value of YHA. Whilst YHA has had an Environmental Policy in place for more than ten years, the need to design and operate businesses in a sustainable manner has become increasingly important over the last decade.

For the development of the Sydney Harbour YHA the objectives of YHA coincided with those of the landowner, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and high environmental design targets were set. To achieve these an Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) consultant, Team Catalyst, has been involved throughout the design and development phase of the project and significant environmentally sustainable initiatives have been incorporated into the YHA design. These include:

- solar hot water
- 80,000 litre rain water retention/detention tanks with this water re-used for toilet flushing (and potentially laundry)
- a gas generator to supply up to 70% of the hostel's peak energy demands
- key-card activated lighting and air-conditioning for guest rooms
- natural ventilation for guest rooms with air-conditioning turned off when window opens
- air-conditioning only activated in rooms upon guest request and automatically turned off at 10am unless otherwise requested by guests
- sliding external shutters for bedroom windows
- energy efficient lighting
- sub-metering for energy to monitor usage by area
- 3A or greater WELS rated products for taps, showerheads and WCs
- water meters to monitor major water use areas
- no car parking and storage for up to 10 bicycles
- low VOC and low formaldehyde building materials used
- recycled rubber flooring
- recycling of glass, paper, plastic, batteries, clothing
- external areas of hostel being closed after 10pm to limit noise
- acoustic treatment of roof-top plant areas
- external lighting to fall on a surface (no spill)
- minimising the building footprint by raising the structure off the ground on pillars

There is currently no Green Star rating for tourist accommodation in Australia. The ESD consultant has adapted the Green Star rating scheme for commercial buildings and is confident the initiatives above will make the building the equivalent of a 5 Green Star property. However, use of the term 'Green Star' cannot be applied to properties that cannot be officially assessed by the Green Building Council of Australia.

YHA is part of the world's largest budget accommodation network, Hostelling International, which provides more than 4,000 YHA/Hi hostels in more than 60 countries. Renowned for its unique properties, YHA hostels include heritage castles, log cabins and beach houses. A membership based organisation, YHA provides travellers with quality accommodation and the opportunity for personal growth through travel, fostering cross cultural understanding and environmental responsibility. YHA is a not for profit organisation, with profits invested in the accommodation network and the experience it provides.

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