

Case study – Sydney Masonic Centre



Conference and function centre's light bulb moment

Sydney Masonic Centre (SMC) has undertaken numerous energy saving initiatives in recent years, including replacing the main plant with a building management system in 2008. When an energy audit revealed the centre could cut its energy bill by nearly \$190,000 a year by installing new lighting, Operations Manager Doug Fyfe was delighted.

SMC is a landmark building in Sydney's CBD. Designed in the 'brutalism' style by architect Joseland Gilling, the building opened in 1979 and was extensively renovated in 2004, when a tower was added. It has 16 function rooms across eight levels.

In his 10 years with the conference and function centre, Operations Manager Doug Fyfe had put many energy-saving initiatives in place. But he was intrigued when he found out about the Office of Environment and Heritage's Energy Saver program in the lead-up to the Energy Efficiency Council's Annual Conference at the centre in December 2010. Was there anything further that SMC could do?

Within a matter of weeks a subsidised energy audit had systematically inspected the 5000 square metre conference centre from roof to basement. And while the report ▶

In brief

The Sydney Masonic Centre is an iconic Sydney conference and function centre, built in the Seventies and renovated in 2004. While the building's management team has routinely looked for ways to conserve energy, they were delighted when an audit identified opportunities to cut their electricity and gas bill by nearly \$190,000 a year and further improve the venue's green credentials.

Results

- Annual reduction in carbon pollution of about 737 tonnes (634 tonnes from lighting).
- Estimated total savings of around \$189,000 a year (more than half from lighting).
- Return on investment in 3.6 years.



- ▶ acknowledged the good work that had been done to conserve energy and cut carbon pollution, it identified further action that SMC could take.

'With an annual energy bill nudging \$300,000, our management team has always been acutely aware of the importance of conserving energy and containing costs,' says Fyfe. 'The energy audit was wonderful because it took our energy initiatives to the next level, especially when it came to the centre's lighting.'

'The energy audit was very thorough and looked at every aspect of the centre, from the rooftop exhaust fans to the wiring to the basement car park ventilation. 'The recommendations were simply presented, well laid-out and clear, which made it easy for our Chief Executive Officer to put forward a business case for remedial works to the Board. I'd highly encourage any business to take up this offer because it can only help reduce costs.'

'We contributed \$4500 towards the cost of the audit, which was money well spent.' SMC's energy audit identified eight business cases for energy improvements. They included retrofitting new lights, resetting the chilled water temperature, changing the speed of car park exhaust fans, installing a fresh air cycle to one of the function rooms and putting building systems, such as hot water, on timers – to ensure they were turned off automatically when the centre wasn't in use.

Fyfe says that while the remedial works will cost around \$600,000, they are expected to generate cost savings of around \$190,000 a year and

will pay for themselves in just over three-and-a-half years. 'More than half the savings will come from changes to the light fittings,' says Fyfe. 'For example, we had this magnificent mercury dome light in one of the foyer areas that was put in as a feature 30 years ago and really chewed up electricity. We've replaced the internal light fixtures with energy-efficient LEDs reducing the amount of electricity it uses.

'As a functioning business, our main challenge now is finding suitable times to do the remedial works in between bookings.' Business Development Manager Scott Cooper says the work will also help improve the building's existing green credentials. 'As a conference and function centre, a green policy is no longer a nice to have but a business essential,' says Cooper. 'It's something clients expect a venue to have. So not only can an audit identify ways to contain costs and conserve energy, but it can also improve your venue's sell ability.'

Your next step

To find out how your business can access an energy audit contact the Energy Saver team:

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Visit savepower.nsw.gov.au/business