

Shellharbour shines

> Shellharbour City Council is providing a shining example to local businesses and councils around the country on how to reduce their environmental footprint by switching to energy-efficient lighting.

The council will save more than \$7500 per year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 57 tonnes per annum with the installation of Save-It-Easy adaptors.

Mayor David Hamilton said the lighting efficiency upgrade was an important part of the council's vision which is firmly focused on sustainability, and will deliver significant energy savings and environmental benefits to the city.

"Shellharbour City Council is committed to reducing energy consumption throughout its operations and in 2002 adopted the Shellharbour City Council Environmental Policy which ensures environmental issues, including energy conservation, are considered in all council documents, plans, procedures and policies," Cr Hamilton said.



In 2007, the council developed an Energy Savings Action Plan for its 10 most energy intensive sites as a requirement of the *Energy Administration Amendment (Water and Energy Savings) Act 2005*.

Shellharbour Council environmental officer, Levi Gibson, identified a number of council buildings with older style fluorescent lighting and saw an opportunity to improve energy performance, light output and extend maintenance cycles.

"We sought the most convenient, cost effective and least disruptive method to install new energy efficient 'T5' 28 Watt lamps, which offer an

approximate 30 per cent energy saving over the old T8 36 Watt lamps," Mr Gibson said.

The conversion was simple, thanks to innovative technology provided by Sydney firm, Ilum-a-Lite.

Ilum-a-Lite CEO, Mark Rutherford, said by fitting Ilum-a-Lite's Save-it-Easy adaptors to each end of the smaller T5 tube it can be fitted to an existing T8 light fitting.

The council considered the Save-It-Easy solution was the most sustainable lighting solution as it did not require the replacement of existing working fittings. This not only increased the ease of installation, but also limited disruption to the council's daily operations.

Save-It-Easy adaptors and T5 lamps were installed in the council's main office area, as well as Shellharbour Indoor Stadium.

A baseline audit revealed that lighting comprised 23 per cent of Lamerton House's total energy use. The retrofit will save 5.6 per cent of the building's total energy usage and offers a return on investment of around 30 months.

Mr Rutherford said it took two Ilum-a-Lite contractors the equivalent of four days to complete the upgrade.

"The new T5 lamps have double the life expectancy and only a third of the mercury content of the old T8 lamps they replaced, making them even better for the environment," he said.



Office fitout update

To find out more about the trends in office fitouts and future trends, **Katrina Ganin** spoke to **STEPHEN PARKINS**, director, Apex Executive Interiors.

What are the trends for office fitouts and interiors?

SP: Over the last few years the trend has been towards open office workstations over individual offices. This has forced people to make a change in their work methods and practices, more so the baby boomers who were greatly influenced by the older hierarchical systems. In the private sector the main reason for this particular trend seems to be the need not only to make the best of the office space available, but also to bring management and staff onto a common level so there is not a feeling of person x being more valuable to the company than person y. Our clients as a general rule want the most out of their fitout that their budget can afford them – "more bang for their buck". In today's economic environment private companies seem to be fitting in larger quantities of smaller workstations, to make the most of the leasable area.

Is the situation different for the government sector? Are their drivers different?

SP: The government sector tends to display a much greater focus on the environmental impact that office fitout has on the planet than the private sector. With regard to size of workstations and offices, space is more generously allocated in government projects than it is in the private sector. In reality the government's target of 15 square

metres per person compared to the general designed building allowance of 10 square metres per person in the private sector means that they potentially could be consuming as much as 40 to 50 per cent more resources per person than the private sector market.

What are the trends for office fitout in the government sector?

SP: Cost and quality is always an issue, as it should be. It is the public's money being used to fund projects. The environmental impact plays a tremendous role in the selection of materials on government projects as do local content. As far as floor layouts are concerned, actual offices in the government sector are still more predominant than in the private sector due to the hierarchical nature of operations and sometimes the need for increased confidentiality.

What are the future trends?

SP: I see the future of office fitout in Australia moving in a more environmentally and staff-friendly direction in the coming years. Wireless technologies will take a greater foothold as more people embrace the benefits of its freedom. Working from home is already a trend that I see growing and Australian organisations need to accommodate this change. Other major factors will be flexible working hours.