

# Media Release

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## Melbourne Top Ranked in Asia-Pacific for Sustainability

Melbourne has been ranked the number 1 sustainable city in the Asia-Pacific region for business events in the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index).

Ranked number 13 in the world overall, Melbourne and Melbourne Convention Bureau's (MCB) sustainability performance was evaluated based on the city environmental strategy and infrastructure, city social sustainability performance, industry supplier support and MCB strategy and initiatives.

Melbourne's highest ranking was in the category of city social sustainability scoring 75 per cent, and convention bureau performance achieving a 74 per cent ranking.

The GDS-Index is a platform that aims to promote the sustainable growth of international meeting destinations, highlighting best practices and responsible business tourism. It looks to bring cities together to benchmark and improve the social and environmental performance of the cities and its business events industry.

MCB CEO, Karen Bolinger, said MCB recognises the value of sustainable practices for meeting organisers and delegates.

"MCB actively contributes to, and promotes, the city's sustainability credentials to the business events industry in Australia and globally, and we're committed to making Melbourne one of the world's most sustainable cities," Ms Bolinger said.

MCB's sustainability focus is on driving initiatives across the business events industry, including integration of sustainability proposals across MCB's marketing assets and a dedicated GDS-Index steering committee to bring together stakeholders across the industry to develop and implement collaborative sustainability initiatives for the business events sector.

Top marks were received for Melbourne's hotel inventory and convention facilities being easily accessible via public transport, the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre having third-party sustainability certification, the City of Melbourne's program that supports restaurants with a commitment to sustainability, public bike sharing facilities and subsidised public transport for major conventions.

Ms Bolinger continued that while significant progress has been made, there is more work to do.

"MCB will continue to work collaboratively with all our partners and the business events industry on supporting initiatives that strengthen the city's eco-credentials," Ms Bolinger said.

Melbourne has one of the most ambitious carbon emission reduction targets of any city in the world - zero net emissions by 2020.

This strategy is underpinned by several initiatives including the 1200 buildings program which encourages building owners and facility managers to improve their efficiency and reduce waste by retrofitting their structures with state-of-the-art energy and water technology; as well as the Urban Forest Strategy which aims to increase the canopy cover throughout the city from 22 per cent to 40 per cent by 2040.

City of Melbourne Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood said “Melbourne has the highest percentage of new Green Star buildings in Australia, including the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, who led the way in being the first convention and exhibition centre in the world to be awarded a 6-Star Green Star environment rating.”

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**ABOUT THE GLOBAL DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX (GDS-INDEX)**

The Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) is a prize-winning grassroots Scandinavian initiative that evolved into the first-ever sustainability ranking for event destinations worldwide. A collaborative partnership between ICCA, ICCA’s Scandinavian Chapter, IMEX and MCI Group, it aims to promote the sustainable growth of international meeting destinations, highlighting best practices and responsible business tourism. In a world increasingly focused on responsible business and addressing environmental impact, the GDS-Index helps destinations to engage clients with sustainability, align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and drive the adoption, promotion and recognition of sustainable practices in their city. Currently 38 cities in five continents have joined the process of benchmarking and assessment.

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