

Melbourne to Glow Green for Ecocity World Summit 2017

Melbourne's sustainability credentials are on show to the world with the prestigious Ecocity World Summit 2017 arriving in the city from 12 – 14 July 2017, headlined by Al Gore, Former US Vice President and current Chair of the Climate Reality Project.

Over 800 of the world's leading urban planners, environmental specialists and architects from over 30 countries will gather at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) to discuss and debate urban ecology and sustainable city initiatives.

The city will shine green for their arrival on the evening of 11 July, with iconic Melbourne landmarks such as the Bolte Bridge, the Arts Centre Spire and AAMI Park Stadium lit up in green light to welcome the global doyennes of equitable cities, while shining a spotlight on the issue of ecologically sustainable cities.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events John Eren said Victoria is setting the pace when it comes to sustainable initiatives.

"Melbourne has the highest percentage of new Green Star buildings in Australia, so we're proud to be hosting this important event for the very first time."

"We want to attract the world's brightest minds to our state and work together to deliver a cleaner, healthier future for all Victorians - and that's exactly what we're doing."

Held every two years, this is the first time the Summit will be held in Melbourne, thanks to the city's leading eco-city credentials.

"Melbourne is leading the way in its commitment to a green future, strengthened by the arrival of the Ecocity World Summit. A Zero Net Emissions strategy was implemented over 10 years ago and Melbourne is only one of two cities to have won three C40 Cities Awards," Karen Bolinger, Melbourne Convention Bureau CEO said.

"In bidding for this Summit we could mount a strong case for the event thanks to the City of Melbourne having environmental sustainability at the core of its future Melbourne initiatives.

"Melbourne Convention Bureau supports this by actively contributing to and promoting the city's sustainability credentials to the business events industry and abroad. We are a member of the Global Destination Sustainability Index, an initiative that drives the adoption and recognition of sustainable practices in the business events and the tourism industry," Ms Bolinger concluded.

City of Melbourne Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood said "the Summit will have a strong focus on the practical solutions, policies and big ideas we need to respond to the ecological challenges of a rapidly growing world.

"We know that 50 per cent of the world's population live in urban areas, and cities currently contribute to 80 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. City leaders working with local communities can have a global impact. Whether it's retrofitting buildings to waste management and recycling, innovative solutions and actions are happening right now in cities across the world."

Recognising the ecological impact of bringing together delegates from a range of countries, global and national air transport carbon offset has been encouraged and Qantas is the official offset partner for the Summit. The organisation of the Summit has been aligned with sustainable principles. Additionally, Summit organisers have collaborated with Melbourne Water where local volunteer conservation groups have worked to regenerate wetlands along the Maribyrnong River planting 600 ground cover and shrubs at Newell's Paddock in Footscray. Following the Summit an additional 400 trees will be planted.

"Often legacy outcomes from conferences are realised years after an event has taken place. Here is a tangible and immediate result that will benefit the local community for years to come, before the Summit has even started. It's exciting to anticipate the legacy outcomes that are yet to come following the discussions that come out of the Summit," Ms Bolinger said.

Peter King, Chief Executive, MCEC said the venue is ideal to host an event with such green credentials.

"MCEC is passionate about sustainability. We have been a global leader within our industry for many years, thanks to the architectural genius behind our 6-Star Green Star rating and current sustainability practices.

"When we have the pleasure of hosting a green event like the Ecocity World Summit, it challenges our team to think of new ways we can further improve our daily environmental impact. The lasting and positive impacts that will emerge from this event are what will keep our venue and wider city great," Mr King said.

The Ecocity World Summit was secured by The Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, led by Professor Brendan Gleeson, in collaboration with the Institute for Culture and Society and supported by Club Melbourne Ambassador, Professor Paul James, as well as Professional Conference Organisers WALDRONSMITH Management and Melbourne Convention Bureau. Ecocity is being hosted by Ecocity Builders, University of Melbourne, Western Sydney University, the Government of Victoria and the City of Melbourne. WALDRONSMITH Management is producing the summit.

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