



Alto Hotel on Bourke

Melbourne CBD

Alto Hotel on Bourke is Melbourne's first carbon neutral hotel. Located in the CBD, it offers 4 star accommodation in 50 rooms. Alto Hotel has set a high industry standard with its attention and commitment to sustainable initiatives.

Recycling & Green Initiatives

Vision

Alto Hotel aspires to be the leader in sustainable hotel management in Victoria, with the lowest water and energy use, carbon dioxide emissions and waste to landfill. The Hotel considers all aspects of sustainability and targets its paper, chemical and pesticide consumption, as well as its contribution to the community.

The sustainability ideals held at Alto Hotel stem from the Director's long-term involvement with the tourism industry. Witnessing the negative impacts of tourism developments on the local wildlife and communities along the Spanish coast and the Maldives compelled the Director to pursue sustainable hospitality.

Planning

The first stage in creating a 'sustainable' hotel began in 2004 with construction of a building rich in environmental features, such as extra insulation, double-glazing, water tanks, and water and energy-efficient fittings. Since then, a number of studies and audits have been commissioned to focus Alto Hotel's sustainability program, including audits in safety, waste, energy and carbon dioxide.

Alto Hotel established the 'Alto Green Team' to coordinate the Hotel's green business program. The Team comprises seven members from different departments, who have demonstrated their commitment to sustainability.

Implementation

To put plans into practice, sustainability ideas and activities are standard agenda items in management and staff meetings. The Green Team also holds monthly meetings to discuss new initiatives, current consumption levels, and ways to improve the Hotel's environmental performance.



Some of Alto Hotel's 'green' initiatives include:

- ♻️ 100% of the electricity used is wind generated.
- ♻️ 99% of all light fixtures use energy efficient compact fluorescent or LED globes. Used light globes are recycled.
- ♻️ Air-conditioning uses 'inverter technology', which delivers 6 Star energy efficiency.
- ♻️ 97% of windows are double-glazed, heat reflecting and able to be opened, while balcony glass doors are 20mm thick and heat-reflecting. These measures dramatically lower air-conditioning use.
- ♻️ Rainwater is used for toilet cisterns, gardening and cleaning duties.
- ♻️ Water flow restrictors have been applied to all showers and taps.
- ♻️ All toilets have a AAA water efficiency rating.
- ♻️ Waste is separated into several categories; paper, vegetable scraps, plastic, glass and general.
- ♻️ Rooms are provided with dual-chamber waste bins. Guests are encouraged to separate waste into recyclable and general waste.
- ♻️ Vegetable scraps are composted on-site using an 'Aerobin'. This prevents about 3 tonnes of food scraps from going to landfill every year.

- △ All plastic bottles for toiletries have been eliminated and replaced with refillable, pump-action dispensers.
- △ Newspapers are complimentary, but must be ordered.
- △ Recycled or plantation timber paper is used for all printed items, copy-paper and toilet paper.
- △ All energy, water and waste figures are submitted to external agencies for benchmarking.
- △ Guests can opt out of having their towels and linen changed daily.

Results and Benefits

As a result of Alto Hotel's green initiatives, the Hotel has greatly reduced its energy and water consumption, carbon dioxide output, and waste to landfill. While a one-night stay in an average hotel generates 24-26 kg of carbon dioxide, a night's stay at the Alto on Bourke generates only 13.5 kg. 100% of the Alto's carbon emissions are offset through the Carbon Reduction Institute.

Alto Hotel's sustainability efforts have earned it many awards, including the Conde Nast Traveler World Savers Award 2010 for Environmental Preservation and the Victorian Tourism Award for Sustainable Tourism in 2009 and 2010.

Alto Hotel's commitment to sustainability is also a drawcard for their guests. In 2010, their occupancy rate was 94%, well above the Melbourne hotel average. Another benefit is enhanced staff morale, resulting in high staff retention rates.

Challenges & the Future

At times, Alto Hotel has been challenged to justify many of its initiatives as they may not show an immediate 'Return On Investment'. However, there are returns in other forms, such as customer and peer recognition, and professional pride.

Another common challenge is battling the preconceived notions of sustainable hospitality with many considering 'sustainability' as the opposite of 'luxury'. At Alto Hotel, guests are provided with the same luxuries as normal hotels, however, sustainable alternatives are used wherever possible.

The Alto Green Team continues to work towards further reducing the Hotel's environmental footprint.



Composting vegetable scraps on-site reduces the amount of waste going to landfill

'Environmental action has a profound effect at a local level, which naturally flows onto making a difference at a global level'.

Gary Stickland, General Manager



Make recycling at work easy! Visit BusinessRecycling.com.au to check out reuse and recycling options for around 90 different materials, find out how to choose the right recycler, download signage to help with recycling, and learn what other workplaces are doing to manage waste and improve sustainability.



Planet Ark's BusinessRecycling.com.au is a partnership program that has been funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, and the Victorian Government.



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