

Green buildings get boost from report

Government study finds eco construction offers financial, health benefits and a bright future

by Anne Gibson

Green buildings are worth 40 per cent more than conventional buildings and are much cheaper to maintain and more efficient.

So says a report from the Ministry for the Environment which commissioned a study on sustainable buildings from David Fullbrook and Quentin Jackson of building science and engineering e Cubed Consulting and Graeme Finlay of architects Warren and Mahoney.

The authors found green buildings more economic to run and healthier and more comfortable to work in because they offered tenants and occupants cleaner air and more natural light.

Warren and Mahoney said more than \$100 million worth of development by the company's clients was now being developed under a green protocol and the demand for environmentally sustainable commercial and community buildings was rising steadily.

The authors of the ministry study found soaring electricity costs and more user charges like carbon taxes would mean green buildings would become increasingly attractive.

"The future for sustainable building in New Zealand is bright," the authors concluded.

Ian Mitchell of property consultants DTZ in Wellington said the demand for green buildings was rising, particularly from the Government sector which required its new buildings to meet standards of efficiency and

lower energy consumption.

The ministry study found green buildings more intrinsically economic to run over their whole lifetime because of reduced waste and more efficiency in the use of land, energy, water and materials.

People working in these buildings were more productive and the structures were more adaptable, durable and flexible.

The report highlighted the need for the state to pave the way but said the success of the concept would ultimately rely on commercial developers.

"Government and the public sector can play a leading role in sustainable building but the longer-term success of sustainable building will also depend on its adoption by the private sector," the report said.

Large commercial projects which have won the Property Council's prize for green buildings — sponsored by the Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority — include Landcare Research's building on the University of Auckland's Tamaki campus which took the prize last year for measures which include composting toilets, reduced-flow toilet handbasins, rainwater collection and an on-site wind turbine.

The 2004 winner was the Gore Multisport Complex which used waste heat from an ice rink to heat an adjacent swimming pool.

■ New Zealand's Green Building Council was set up last year.

Its establishment chair is Peter Dow of Wellington and its website is www.nzgbc.org.nz



FIVE TO FOLLOW

A Government study focused on five green buildings, held up to be some of the country's most advanced:

- The University of Canterbury's mathematics, statistics and computer science building, a \$22 million 11,500sq m development.
- Christchurch City Council's South Christchurch Library, a \$4.6 million 2400sq m project in Beckenham (pictured above).
- Albany Junior High School on Auckland's North Shore, a \$22.2 million 8633sq m project on Appleby Rd.
- Waitakere Hospital in Henderson, a \$35 million 14,700sq m project on Lincoln Rd.
- CentrePort/Statistics NZ Building in Wellington, a 9300sq m project on Hinemoa St.