

## Alto Hotel on Bourke Melbourne CBD

### Profile

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

### Recycling and Green Initiatives:

#### Vision

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

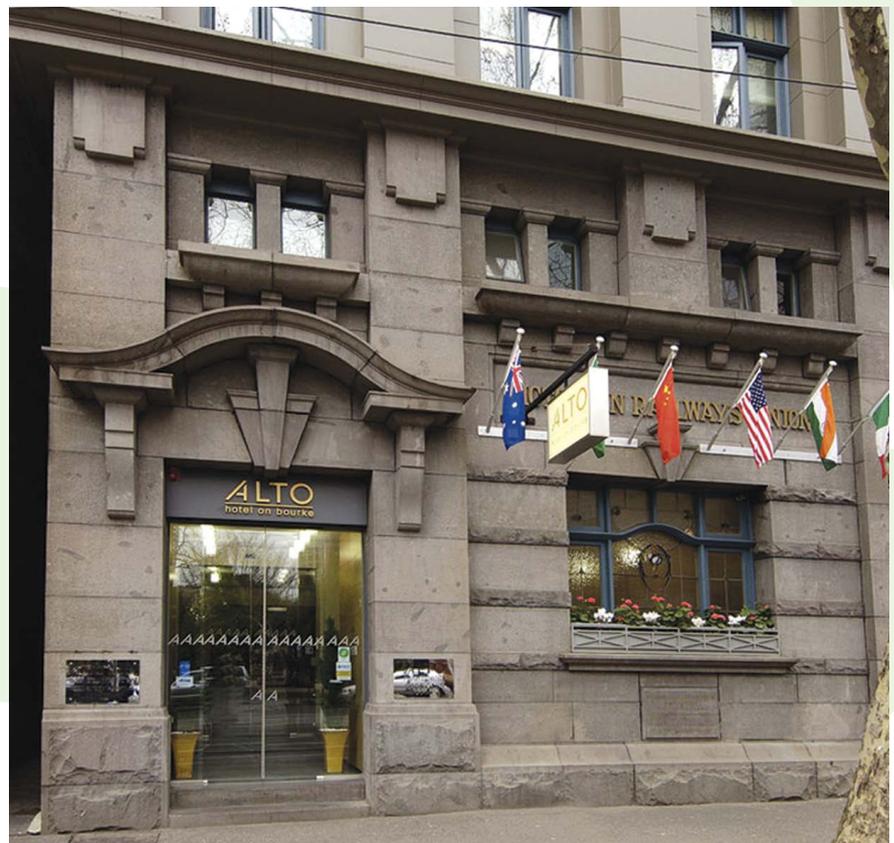
The sustainability ideals held at Alto Hotel stem from the Director's long-term involvement with the tourism industry. Witnessing the negative impacts of tourism developments on the local wildlife and communities along the Spanish coast and the Maldives compelled the Director to pursue sustainable hospitality.

### Planning

With the idea of creating a 'sustainable' hotel in mind, the first stage 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 the hotel's sustainability

program, including audits in safety, waste, energy and carbon dioxide.

To enhance the hotel's sustainability efforts, the 'Alto Green Team' was established. Seven members from different departments, who have demonstrated their commitment to sustainability, work together to coordinate the green business program.



# Greening your workplace



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

## Implementation

To put plans into practice, sustainability ideas and activities are standard agenda items in quarterly management and staff meetings. The Green Team also holds monthly meetings where new initiatives are discussed as well as current consumption levels and ways the hotel can improve its environmental performance.

Over the years a number of initiatives have been implemented that work towards achieving the overall goal of the business.

♻️ 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.
- ♻️ Rooms are fitted with energy saving key-tags that switch off lighting and air-conditioning when guests leave the rooms.
- ♻️ 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.

- ♻️ Hot water is heated 'on demand'; very little energy is spent on storing hot water.
- ♻️ Rainwater is used for toilet cisterns, gardening and cleaning duties.
- ♻️ Water flow restrictors have been applied to all showers and taps, with flow rates of 8 L and 6 L per minute, respectively.
- ♻️ 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 help by separating 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.



# Greening your workplace

- ♻️ There is a library for guests that operates as a book exchange.
- ♻️ Newspapers are complimentary, but must be ordered so that they are delivered only to rooms that require them.
- ♻️ 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.

**'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



## Results and Benefits

As a result of Alto Hotel's green initiatives the hotel has been able to greatly reduce its energy and water consumption, carbon dioxide output, water consumption 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.

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

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

## Challenges

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. For instance, guests are not told to have short showers - instead taps and showers have been installed to deliver water responsibly.

## Future

Alto Hotel believes that sustainability ideals are infinite. The Alto Green Team continues to work towards further reducing the hotel's environmental footprint.



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