

Sustainable offices – is it worth going green?

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One would imagine sustainability would drop down on bank executives' priority lists as the current economic climate places increased pressure on the financial industry.

However, BNZ has invested significant time and money in to making its New Zealand offices green to reach its ambitious goal of being carbon neutral by 2010.

The Green Building Council believes making a building green can bring an improvement of up to 7% to bottom line profitability.

BNZ has been a landmark client for the Green Star Rating Tool for Interiors (Pilot) while the tool develops. As more buildings are rated, Green Star tools are becoming increasingly recognised within the industry as a sign of a building's long-term value.

Following its Australian parent company NAB's effort to make all its offices carbon neutral by 2010, BNZ contracted Wendy Jones as project manager to ensure its three key New Zealand buildings are as sustainable as possible.

Quay Park One, on Quay St in Auckland's CBD, was built and developed by Manson TCM with Beca to achieve a Green Star rating of five stars.

"Our major direct environmental impacts arise from our building use, so it makes sense to actively work in this space," Ms Jones says. "Manson wanted a four star rating for the Quay Park building, but we pushed for five."



BNZ QUAY PARK ONE: The building's lobby (at left) and its built-in coffee shop

Ms Jones can say that BNZ expects approximately an eight-year payback on the added cost of going green while cautioning, "We don't know yet what the wearability of new materials will be."

The average operational savings for a four star building are \$6-7 a square metre, \$7-8 for five stars and \$9-10 a square metre for the world-leading category of six stars.

Green Building Council chief executive Jane Henley says the financial benefits of a green star rating also include staff attraction and retention.

"Taking into account energy and water cost savings alone, the recommended minimum [rating] standards therefore have a short payback and a positive nine-year net present value."

BNZ's new Auckland headquarters at 80 Queen St, a \$240 million development

built by Brookfield Multiplex, is scheduled to be completed in October 2009. The bank has given naming rights of 80 Queen St to Deloitte, which is leasing 10 of the building's 20 floors. BNZ will occupy seven storeys of the 11,500sq m building.

Wellington BNZ staff are to be located at offices within the 5 Office Green Star Rated 18,000sq m Harbour Quay building from July this year.

BNZ is aiming for green star ratings with all three of these office projects, with branches to follow suit.

"We need to apply similar principles in branches, utilising sustainable products and energy management where possible," Ms Jones says.

Submissions for the Interiors pilot rating tool close April 16.

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