

# TAKING ACTION ON FMM

THE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (FM) ACTION AGENDA, NOW AT ITS HALFWAY POINT, HAS HAD SOME SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES AND IS FORGING AHEAD FOR THE SECOND HALF OF ITS STRATEGIC PLAN. **LYNNE BLUNDELL** REPORTS ON THE PROGRESS MADE SO FAR AND THE PLANS FOR 2008.

**The FM Action Agenda was announced by Ian Macfarlane, then Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, in January 2004. The strategic plan and FM Exemplar Project were announced in April 2005, with the implementation phase commencing in August 2005.**

According to the FM Action Agenda's Implementation Board, steady progress has been made during 2006-2007 toward the FM industry's vision of being "... the foremost contributor to a more productive and sustainable Built Environment ..."

The focus of the agenda's strategic plan, FM Action Agenda: Managing the Built Environment, was to promote 20 industry actions across four platforms – Innovation, Education & Training, Regulatory Reform and Sustainability.

Highlights during the implementation year included increased media coverage and conference presentations, an FM Innovation Forum in May, the introduction of Australia's first undergraduate FM degree program,

national regulatory compliance mapping and contribution to the sustainability movement, including the soon-to-be-released *ESD Operations Guide* for owners, managers and tenants.

In the final implementation phase of the FM Action Agenda over the next 20 months the focus will be on completion of the key deliverables across the four platforms.

## INNOVATION

- Facilitate the creation of a web-based FM Innovation Forum web portal to foster the exchange of innovative ideas and information
- Continue the development of the FM Action Agenda web portal including links to other industry groups and case studies
- Encourage the establishment of seminars to assist industry participants to become innovative thinkers
- Complete the research projects focusing on procurement and sustainability,

publishing findings that highlight the contribution of FM to workplace productivity

- Establish a transition plan and make recommendations for future research studies by industry stakeholders.

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Encourage greater collaboration between the Higher Education and Virtual Training Environment (VTE) sectors
- Develop a series of work-based learning activities tailored to one or more trial employer groups
- Monitor the progress of new undergraduate FM degree programs and investigate the scope with other educational providers and the prospect of an online degree program
- Continue to campaign for FM educational needs and career path opportunities awareness via Skills Expos, and formulate recommendations for a future industry education integration plan.

## REGULATORY REFORM

- Release a framework for the streamlining of key compliance areas to achieve some cross-jurisdictional harmony of regulatory requirements, information sharing and setting of national, uniformly accepted standards
- Establish a transition plan and make recommendations for future standards development and maintenance.



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## SUSTAINABILITY

- Communicate sustainability issues to industry stakeholders and the community
- Facilitate collaboration and contribute to research projects
- Develop a *Practical Guide to Sustainability for Operational Facilities Managers* that will provide a simple framework to implement sustainability measures
- Continue to contribute to the "business case" model being developed by CRC for Construction Innovation and others, particularly in respect to management aspects
- Establish a transition plan and make recommendations for future research studies by industry stakeholders.

## FM EXEMPLAR PROJECT

A significant achievement of the FM Action Agenda to date has been the completion of the award-winning FM Exemplar Project: Sydney Opera House research, publications and showcase series.

According to John McCarthy, chairman of the FM Action Agenda, "the FM Exemplar Project has made a significant contribution to the body of FM industry knowledge and has demonstrated Australia's leadership in the FM profession globally."

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The project, which has received a number

of awards, including Project of the Year in the 2007 Association of Consulting Engineers awards, was completed late last year. It represented the output of 23 participants from 10 organisations and focused on three research areas – digital modelling, services procurement and performance benchmarking.

The digital modelling stream featured in

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two recent Arup-sponsored international awards – the Jury's Choice category of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Technology in Architectural Practice (TAP) 2007 Building Information Model (BIM) awards, and the Bentley Awards for Excellence 2007 award for BIM in multiple disciplines.

It involved developing a building information model capable of integrating information from disparate software systems and hardcopy and combining this with a spatial three-dimensional computer-aided

design (CAD)/geographic information system (GIS) platform. This model offers a 3D representation of the building and its component elements and can work collaboratively through an open data exchange standard in order to mine the data for further FM objectives, such as maintenance.

The services procurement stream aimed to develop a multi-criteria performance-based procurement framework aligned with organisational objectives for FM service delivery.

The third stream, performance benchmarking, involved developing an FM benchmarking framework that enables organisations to develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to identify better practice and improvement strategies.

These three research stream outcomes were then aligned within the broader context of Sydney Opera House's Total Asset Management (TAM) Plan and Strategic Asset Maintenance (SAM) Plan in arriving at a business framework aligned with organisational objectives.

According to Stephen Ballesty, managing director of Rider Levett Bucknall and deputy chairman of the FM Action Agenda, the Sydney Opera House was a natural fit for the action agenda as it had an international profile and it gave the whole project substance. He believes progress of the agenda has been exceptional and the achievements have been recognised both by Government and the international FM industry. ➤



Deakin University in Melbourne is the first to introduce the facilities management undergraduate degree course.

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**JOHN MCCARTHY**



**"THE PROPERTY COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE FM ACTION AGENDA BECAUSE IT AIMS TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF BUILDINGS AND THEREBY DELIVERS MULTIPLE DIVIDENDS."**  
**PETER VERWER**

"The Action Agenda is unique in global experience, particularly within the facilities management industry. It shows what can be achieved when government and industry collaborate. Government now considers the FM Action Agenda to be the benchmark that other industries should be judged by," says Ballesty.

The success of the action agenda, says Ballesty, is largely due to the fact that it has been run by people actively involved in the built environment.

"The property industry is a fractured and siloed one and this gave us the opportunity to look at the whole built environment. It was quite a task to get the formula right. We did not want it to be an industry association talkfest. Instead, it has involved broad representation of industry leaders involved in the built environment.

"There was no template provided and while it was confronting to start with a blank canvas, it was also very worthwhile. Industry leaders from property, construction and facilities management have worked together to provide a 'whole of industry' approach," says Ballesty.

## FM EDUCATION FIRST

Another major achievement of the action agenda has been the introduction of the first undergraduate FM degree course at Deakin University in Melbourne. The improved profile of the FM industry through the work of the Action Agenda has been largely responsible for this milestone, says Ballesty.

"We had to push hard for this course and credit must be given to Deakin University for getting it up and running so fast. The conventional wisdom was that FM is a post graduate course and two years ago we couldn't have even had the conversation. Three other universities are now interested in establishing courses."

According to Ballesty, the rise and rise of sustainability in the property industry and the wider community, has given greater impetus to the Action Agenda's work and focus.

"Sustainability is the light on the hill and everything flows through to that. The FM Action Agenda has contributed to work in this area and added a degree of rationale to it."

Commenting on the FM Action Agenda's achievements, Peter Verwer, CEO of the Property Council of Australia, says the program has done much to further the property industry's standards.

"Management is the new black. A well-run building benefits owners and occupants alike. The Property Council supports the FM Action Agenda because it aims to improve the management of buildings and thereby delivers multiple dividends." ☞