

MEDIA RELEASE

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USC recognised for green achievements

The University of the Sunshine Coast has become the first Australian university campus to be fully certified under a green rating.

The entire campus, located on a 100 hectare site 100 kilometres north of Brisbane, has achieved EnviroDevelopment certification across six key areas of sustainability: ecosystems, waste, energy, materials, water and community.

USC Pro Vice Chancellor Mike Hefferan said the university was thrilled to be recognised for its commitment to environmental sustainability.

“From the outset, the university’s goal has been to lead by example in the areas of campus planning and development, sub-tropical architecture and all operations that have environmental impact,” Mr Hefferan said.

“There has been a commitment to develop an institution of unique character, an ‘environmental sanctuary’, dedicated not only to maintenance, but also to enhancement of native flora and fauna, along with a direct responsiveness to the locale and the landscape.”

National EnviroDevelopment Manager Kirsty Chessher said the university’s accreditation in all ‘six leaves’ of sustainability was an exceptional achievement, which has set the bar for green practices in university campuses.

“This is a terrific achievement for the University of the Sunshine Coast and establishes the university as a real leader in the field of creating environmentally sustainable centres for higher learning,” Ms Chessher said.

“Australia has a proud history of beautiful architecture in our older universities. It is a sign of the times that the focus of university design now turns to innovation and future proofing the environmental impact of these facilities,” she said.

“It is also appropriate that much of the science associated with pioneering higher levels of sustainability, which is largely generated by our universities, be applied directly to modern university design.”

The University’s location adjacent to the ecologically sensitive Mooloolah River National Park has placed importance on the managed development of the site, including the need for structural, landscaping and waste management strategies to minimise impact on the national park.

Wildlife corridors have been created to allow safe movement of animals such as eastern grey kangaroos (*macropus giganteus*), a common sight at the campus due to its open spaces and proximity to the national park. Areas of natural grazing have also been preserved.

In 2010, USC's carbon emissions were 34 per cent lower per equivalent full-time student than the standard benchmark. In the same year, the campus' potable water consumption was 57 per cent lower than the standard benchmark. The benchmark is set against data from at least 60 universities across Australia and overseas.

SMART meters have been installed in all buildings on campus to allow real-time data analysis of power and water usage in each building and all on-campus irrigation makes use of harvested stormwater.

A natural axis has been developed that orients buildings approximately northeast, in order to strike a compromise between an ideal due-north orientation for solar control and the preferred direction for the capture of cooling breezes.

Universal design has been incorporated throughout the campus to cater for people of a range of abilities and ages, creating an inclusive community.

A comprehensive waste management strategy covering all aspects of construction, building and operations has been in effect since the commencement of the university's construction.

The campus features an integrated bus exchange, the second-biggest facility of its kind on the Sunshine Coast, which is projected to accommodate a total campus population of 15,000 by 2021.

A 15-hectare site on campus has been revegetated with threatened native vegetation, relocated from a nearby residential development site. The habitat is one of the largest projects of its kind in Australia.

Food outlets throughout the campus provide recyclable cutlery made of 100 per cent corn starch, which break down easily in soil. Compostable cups are also used in all campus outlets selling takeaway drinks.

Ends.

Media: For more information on EnviroDevelopment contact Kirsty Chessher, National EnviroDevelopment Manager, on (07) 3229 1589. For more information on the University of the Sunshine Coast contact Terry Walsh, Media Relations Manager, University of the Sunshine Coast, on 5430 1160 or 0407 002 467.