

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

ISSUE 1

LAST UPDATE 10.05.2023

MCA ARCHITECTS

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DOCUMENT CONTROL			
MCA Architects			
Document ID: CSR			
Issue	Date	Description	Author
1	11.05.2023	INCORPORATED sustainability policy, philanthropy from IMS manual	JM

REFERENCE - AS/NZS ISO 9001:2015 CLAUSES 5.2.1, 6.2.1, 6.2.2

REFERENCE - AS/NZS ISO 14001:2016 CLAUSES 5.2, 6.2.1, 6.2.2

REFERENCE - AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018 CLAUSES 5.2, 6.2.1, 6.2.2

OUR APPROACH AND GOVERNANCE

MCA Architects is firmly committed to upholding a culture of honour and social responsibility. We recognise that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not only an investment in our long-term success and competitiveness, but also a means to strengthen risk management, attract top talent, and safeguard our reputation. Our comprehensive CSR strategy is integral to the present and future achievements of our company, empowering our team, protecting the environment, and making a positive impact on our local and international communities.

With a steadfast focus on environmental preservation, we remain dedicated to operating with unwavering integrity, building upon MCA Architect's enduring legacy of environmentally sustainable design.

As a diverse architectural firm supporting clients across Australia, we acknowledge the multifaceted nature of CSR and address critical issues such as environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion, ethical supply chain standards, volunteering, and charitable giving outlined in this policy.

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

REFERENCE - AS/NZS ISO 14001:2016 CLAUSE 5.2

VISION

Our approach is 'client oriented', seeking to add value to produce excellent, creative, and sustainable design.

Background

We are facing the two greatest environmental challenges of our time: climate change and an environmentally degraded planet that is increasingly unable to support the growing demand for resources. The profession's contribution to the urgent evolution and application of new ideas to create a built environment that has a positive impact on environmental systems must continue. The building sector is a key part of the climate change problem with 23 percent of Australia's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions accounted for by the residential and commercial building sectors.

Action to change the way we approach the design and management of the built environment is required now. As a global community we need to:

- Understand the impact of our actions to date;
- Continually improve the efficiency of buildings through design and use; and
- Innovate in our design and building procurement processes to move progressively toward a built environment that positively contributes to natural systems.

We believe that the adoption of a range of measures, including voluntary schemes, tax and financial incentives, increased minimum standards and the setting of meaningful targets is necessary.

Commitment to the Environment

As an active member of the design and construction industry we believe we should work to constantly realign construction of the built environment with sustainable best practice:

- Create design solutions that aim for best practice in progressively reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment.
- Reduce energy consumption in the construction, alteration, operation and maintenance of the built environment.
- Develop and choose materials, techniques and practices that have an increasingly diminishing environmental footprint.
- Increase awareness within the construction industry and beyond of the potential for adaptation and re-use of materials and buildings as a sustainable practice.
- Modify design and construction techniques in order to facilitate adaptation and re-use of materials and buildings in the future.
- Create communities that provide equitable opportunities for increased efficiencies in patterns of living
- Create design solutions that minimise the use of water and maximise the potential for water recycling and re-use.
- Minimise the environmental impact of materials use by considering issues such as embodied energy, biodiversity, human health toxicity and the end of life fate of the material. Creating sustainable communities
- Promote the importance and substantial opportunities of sustainable design to clients and colleagues.

Targets, objectives and measurements

Objective	Target	Measure
Reduce wastage, increase recycling	Reduce paper usage (printed drafts), rely on PDF markups. Paper usage limited to hand sketching and final prints.	Reduced waste to landfill
Innovative architectural design that minimises negative environmental impacts, whilst improving social and user outcomes and promotes safety Ensure product and material supply chain has responsible social and environmental practices	BY Q2 2024: 75% products specified to be sustainable 15% less potable water compared to a reference building	GECA certified, or EPD >7 WELS Ratings of at least 5 Star for Taps/Urinals, 4 Star for Toilets, 3 Star (≤7.5l/min) for Showers, 4 Star for washing machines and 5 Star for Dishwashers.
Innovative architectural design that minimises negative environmental impacts, whilst improving social and user outcomes and promotes safety Ensure product and material supply chain has responsible social and environmental practices	Internal Building Finishes 60% of all internal building finishes such as flooring, plasterboard, paints, ceilings, partitions, doors, internal windows or similar (by area) meet a Responsible Products Value score of at least 7. Building Envelope materials 30% of all building envelope materials (by area) meet a Responsible Products Value score of at least 7. Timber used to be FSC certified	Eligible products must be compliant with one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry or Product specific environmental product declarations (EPD); - ISO14001 certification; - Climate Active Carbon Neutral Certification; - Chain of custody certification; and - Third-party product certification schemes - Cradle to Cradle V 3.1/4.0 Bronze-Platinum rating - Green Tag/Green Tag Certified Level A - GECA accreditation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declare 2.0 Red list free - Valid FSC certification, Responsible Wood (AS4708) - , or PEFC chain of custody
Low VOC emissions	<p>BY Q2 2024:</p> <p>All surface coatings, and other volatile organic compound (VOC) emitting products including adhesives, sealants, carpets, carpet tiles and carpet underlays, will be selected to contain low or no VOCs to reduced occupants' exposure to harmful emissions.</p>	<p>Accompany statement/certificate.</p> <p>Product VOC test certificates that demonstrate the compliant emission levels</p> <p>Product certificates that demonstrate certification under a recognised product certification scheme or recognised standard</p> <p>Invoices and proof of purchase to demonstrate costs of compliant materials</p>

Energy efficient design

This is a critical first step toward achieving our carbon reduction objective. They are a basis for a deeper conversation with the team and client about how the building is intended to work.

Energy Performance

Lighting Power Density (LPD) is measured in watts per square metre of installed lighting. This is a great indicator of a project's energy performance. Projects with a lower LPD will use less energy. MCA Architects goal is to set for LPD of 25–50 percent better than code.

Windows

Windows are a major indicator of total building energy use. A Window-to-Wall Ratio (WWR) above 40 percent will provide no additional benefit for daylighting but will cause significantly higher conditioning loads. Keeping the WWR between 30 percent and 40 percent will set the stage for both good daylighting and energy performance.

GPO Loads

Very efficient buildings tend to have a great percentage of the energy coming from GPO loads. Scheduling nonessential GPO loads to turn off when not in use can be a primary strategy for reaching 50 percent reduction.

Water reduction

Indoor water efficiency

Use low-flow fixtures. Every major fixture manufacturer has low-flow fixtures. From faucets to showerheads to toilets, there are options for every application. Specify dual-flush toilets, ultra-low-flush urinals, waterless urinals, or composting toilets where applicable.

Outdoor water reduction

Reduce or eliminate irrigation demand. If irrigation is needed, best practice is to use collected rainwater and to feed it through a drip system that is weather smart (inactive during or just after a rain event)

Process water reuse

- Depending on the project, process water might be used in buildings for industrial or manufacturing purposes (or, in a more typical way, for washing dishes or clothes).
- Select water-efficient dishwashers, washing machines, and water fountains.
- Condensate from HVAC systems should always be captured and used for another purpose, such as irrigation or flushing toilets.

Recapture/reuse of greywater

Best practice is to use all water for multiple purposes before releasing it where applicable.

Rainwater/stormwater use and management

- Best practice is to catch rainwater to use for irrigation. If water collection is not part of the project scope, create a “water collection ready” plan so that a collection system can be installed easily in the future.
- The majority of stormwater should be managed where it falls. Projects that manage their stormwater on-site put less pressure on the municipal water system, help to recharge the groundwater supply, and generally keep our water resources cleaner.
- Because all building sites have some amount of impervious surface, all stormwater cannot be managed on-site without some storage. Options for stormwater storage include above-ground cisterns, below-ground cisterns, or infiltration basins. Stormwater that flows on a site’s surface should be slowed down as much as possible with plants or physical obstacles.

Passive design

In order to reduce Carbon Emissions and approach a more sustainable design, we use the principles of Passive Design.

In our design approach, priority is given to:

- Massing
- Materials
- Orientation
- Roof design
- Penetrations
- Orientation of glazing, and sun shading are our major passive strategies. In colder climates, primary glazing should be on the south, to collect beneficial solar radiation. In warmer climates, primary glazing should be on the north, to avoid harsh summer sun. For the most part, windows should be shaded on the south, east, and west in all climates.
- Envelope air tightness is just as important as insulation.
- Provide operable windows so that the building can benefit from fresh outdoor air when the weather is agreeable.

Onsite renewables (solar, wind, water)

- Use of solar PV systems where applicable
- Solar hot water units.
- Reuse greywater and rainwater as described above

Materials, finishes, fittings & fixtures selection

- Use of sustainable materials – Carbon neutral or negative where available
- Specifications to consider material disposal with a sustainable approach

- Support local suppliers

Office reduction

MCA Architects is committed to minimise the environmental impacts in the areas of waste and energy usage at the workplace. We have refined our office practices to reduce paper usage and printer cartridge waste. Through the use of laptops and simple infrastructure we reduce kWh energy usage in the office.

Further we separate rubbish and use the appropriate/labelled bins including:

- - Recycle
- - Soft Plastic
- - General Waste
- - Batteries
- - E-Waste
- - Ink Cartridges

Greenhouse gas emissions reduction (transportation)

At MCA Architects, we are strong advocates for sustainable transportation and are committed to reducing our environmental impact. We actively encourage our staff to utilise public transport for their daily commute. Public transportation not only helps alleviate traffic congestion but also reduces carbon emissions and contributes to a cleaner and greener environment. We provide support and resources to assist our team members in making informed decisions about public transportation options, including providing convenient access to public transit routes. By prioritising public transport as a preferred commuting choice, we demonstrate our commitment to fostering a sustainable workplace and actively participating in the larger goal of creating a more sustainable future.

Ongoing training for staff

MCA Architects is committed to best practice and the future of architecture.

MCA Architects prioritises environmental sustainability and incorporates life cycle assessment (LSA) and the concept of whole life carbon (WLC) into our practice. Our approach aligns with the 2021 NSCA, which draws upon the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSED) definition of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD).

MCA Architects actively supports our staff by fostering their professional development through access to a diverse range of Formal and Informal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Training and resources. We encourage our team members to leverage MCA-funded resources such as AIA A+ membership, Acumen resources, SPUN Architects Network training events, Wood Solutions Sustainable Wood Webinars, and NSW ARB Sustainability CPD training events. Furthermore, we provide additional resources and training events from suppliers to enhance our knowledge in areas such as sustainable design, materials, supply chains, life cycle assessments, and cradle-to-cradle data. This comprehensive approach ensures that our team is equipped with the latest insights and skills to drive sustainable practices in our architectural projects.

WORKFORCE POLICIES

Health and wellness

We believe that the health and wellness of our employees are paramount. We are committed to developing a wellness program, promoting work-life balance, and creating a supportive environment that encourages physical and mental well-being. Through initiatives such as wellness workshops, access to fitness facilities, and mental health resources, we strive to empower our employees to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

Competitive pay

We recognize the value of our employees and the contributions they make to our organization's success. We are dedicated to offering fair and competitive compensation packages that reflect industry standards and consider individual performance and market conditions. Our goal is to attract and retain top talent by ensuring that our employees are fairly compensated for their skills, knowledge, and expertise.

Target	Measure	Status
Above average pay for Students and Interns	1. 5% above ACA Architecture award rate	Achieved 2023 for all staff
Above average pay for Grad Architects & Arch Technicians	2. Above average to max range compared to Hays Salary guide for current FY (Sydney) 3. Above average to Average of Highest range from ACA National Salary Survey for 2022	Achieved 2023 for all staff
Above Average pay for Experienced Architects and Leaders	4. Above average to max range compared to Hays Salary guide for current FY (Sydney) 5. Above average to Average of Highest range from ACA National Salary Survey for 2022	Achieved 2023 for all staff
Above Average pay for Interior Designers and Interior Architects	6. Above average to max range compared to Hays Salary guide for current FY (Sydney) 7. Above average to Average of Highest range from ACA National Salary Survey for 2022	Achieved 2023 for all staff
Above Average pay for Office Support staff	8. Above average to max range compared to Hays Salary guide for current FY (Sydney)	2023 – partially achieved

Flexibility and family support

We understand the importance of a work-life balance and the unique needs of our employees. We are committed to providing flexible work arrangements that allow for personal commitments and family responsibilities. Our policies and programs aim to support parents and caregivers, including paid parental leave, flexible work hours, and flexibility to work from home part-time to promote family-friendly practices and wellbeing.

Diversity and social inclusion

We believe in the power of diversity and inclusion to drive innovation, creativity, and success. We are dedicated to fostering a workplace that celebrates and respects individual differences, including but not limited to race, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and disabilities. Our goal is to create an environment where all employees feel valued, heard, and included, enabling them to contribute their unique perspectives and talents.

In alignment with the diversity of gender and ethnicity in Sydney NSW, the MCA Architects team in early 2023 is comprised of 10 staff with 50%/50% men to women ratio, and 7 out of 10 staff have an ethnically diverse background.

Professional development

We are committed to investing in the growth and development of our staff. We provide ongoing training, formal/informal educational opportunities to support their professional development. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and providing the necessary resources, we empower our employees to reach their full potential, enhancing their job satisfaction and contributing to our overall success.

For Architectural staff this includes access to resources and events such as:

- AIA A+ membership,
- Acumen resources,
- SPUN Architects Network training events,
- Wood Solutions Sustainable Wood Webinars,
- NSW ARB CPD training events,
- Software training events
- Supplier presentations and webinars
- Practice of Architecture Learning Series
- Benchmark and historical architectural site visits

For administrative staff this includes

- Business administration training,
- ISO-certification training
- Software training events

Safe workplace

We prioritise the safety and well-being of our employees above all else. We strive to maintain a safe and healthy working environment by adhering to rigorous safety standards, implementing preventive measures, and promoting a culture of safety awareness. We encourage open communication, prompt reporting of hazards or incidents, and provide the necessary resources and training to ensure a safe workplace for all.

Our OH&S Management system is third-party certified to ISO-45001 and outlines detailed strategies and policies to

- Protect the wellbeing of staff in the workplace
- Educate, equip staff for safety on worksites
- Maintain a healthy culture of respect and care
- Communicate and consult with staff regarding improvements to safety and wellbeing

PHILANTHROPY

MCA Architects is deeply committed to making a positive impact on our society, both locally and internationally. We actively engage in community and welfare initiatives, regularly volunteering our time and resources to support those in need. Additionally, we contribute a portion of our profits to various causes and prioritise supporting emergency relief efforts during large-scale disasters. Through our unwavering dedication, we strive to create a better and more resilient world for all.

Financial support

Financial support to Not-for profit organizations that provide direct assistance to socioeconomically vulnerable individuals, low-income households, and hurting communities in Australia and Worldwide. Specific goals we have set as a company include:

- Providing discounted services (15%) to not-for-profit and religious-based organisations for our architectural services
- Charitable donation of 2% of profits to local Foodbank/Foodcare program for the economically vulnerable
- Supporting vulnerable children and communities through World Vision
- Giving to emergency relief

Volunteering

MCA Architects leadership seek all staff to be engaged members with their community through volunteerism. Our goal by January 2025 is to log a combined 500 hours of volunteering amongst our staff.

END OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY POLCY
