

Case study – The GPT Group



5 star rating thanks to 5 star training

Office buildings in Sydney just got that bit greener thanks to energy efficiency training for staff. Participants learnt to analyse and interpret energy data more effectively during the training, improving the energy ratings of two Sydney buildings by around half a 'NABERS' Energy star each.

NABERS rates the impact of operating a building on the environment and compares it with similar buildings. The GPT Group has a history of ensuring its office buildings run to the highest NABERS Energy ratings with many of them achieving 5 stars or higher. Training for building operations staff significantly improved energy monitoring skills which resulted in staff identifying ways to save up to half a NABERS Energy star at both Workplace6 and MLC Centre.

'We had a network of submeters to monitor energy use but in some cases individuals were unsure how to read the meter information and create a connection to what they knew of the plant and equipment in the building,' Bruce Precious, National Sustainability Manager – Operations for The GPT Group, said.

GPT had not been able to identify training that would be site and system specific enough to provide maximum benefit to the site teams. So, GPT partnered with training provider Sustainable Business to participate in the Energy Efficiency Training Program, a joint initiative of the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Department of Education and Communities in New South Wales. Training was customised for teams of operations managers as well as mechanical, electrical and controls subcontractors working in six GPT buildings in the Sydney CBD.

In brief

This project was developed by The GPT Group in partnership with Sustainable Business, The Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Heating and with technical support provided by Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL).

A team of property managers, operations managers as well as mechanical, electrical and controls sub-contractors from six GPT Sydney CBD buildings were trained.

The training was successful because:

- it was conducted in short sessions over a period of time (4 x 2 hour workshops over 8 weeks)
- on-the-job tasks were the focus of the training i.e. reading and responding in real time to sub meter data
- technical support and coaching were provided by JLL in between sessions
- the building management teams included sub-contractors which improved communication
- participants shared practices and learnings between the six building teams.



- ▶ 'Being able to customise the training was critical. We could run the training to our own timetable in our own buildings so site teams were fully engaged and hands on,' Mr Precious said.

Trainees reviewed daily energy use and energy meter maps to diagnose how equipment was using energy. They investigated opportunities to implement more efficient practices, reduce running hours, loads and even technology upgrades that might result in energy savings. Between workshops, trainees were given practical assignments to help reinforce the learning concepts.

'Our energy management systems can send a simple daily email to the building operations team showing daily energy consumption. The training ensured that everyone on the team could quickly and easily identify any abnormal performance information. Involving maintenance contractors was an added bonus as it allowed them to contribute their ideas and knowledge to the team,' Mr Precious said.

Taking ownership of energy use knowledge has made a big difference to the teams. Keeping tenants comfortable while keeping energy expenditure and energy related greenhouse emissions down is a challenge the teams are now better able to manage.

'Providing shared and accepted goals amongst the operations teams along with tools to monitor progress allows the operations staff to genuinely operate as a team,' Mr Precious said.

As a result of the training, further energy savings projects were identified in Darling Park 2 and 580 George Street. Tuning of operational times of some plant and rescheduling security 'walk throughs' to ensure lights are switched off are some of the simple projects that were identified. These actions should enhance the NABERS ratings of the buildings.

Plans are in place to save more than 28,000 kilowatt hours of electricity at the MLC Centre where control of lighting in stairwells is under review. Recommissioning of CO2 sensors in the Workplace6 carpark is estimated to save another 30,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year by varying fan speed to meet the need for ventilation.

Results

- energy use being reviewed and responded to more frequently
- two buildings increased their NABERS energy rating by 0.5 star through reduced energy consumption
- further energy efficiency projects identified and implemented.

'Tracking the performance of our buildings on a daily basis through effective submetering systems allows us to be much more confident about achieving challenging NABERS Energy targets.'

Bruce Precious, National Sustainability Manager – Operations for The GPT Group

Your next step

To find out how your business can access support contact the Energy Saver team

Email energysaver@environment.nsw.gov.au

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