

Celebrating the official opening of The Bendigo Centre

Frequently asked questions

Everything you wanted to know about the construction of the Bendigo Centre

Did Probuild use any new building techniques?

Andrew Zinner, Construction Manager: The design of the building called for services to be installed beneath the floors and above the ceilings, requiring a different construction system to be adopted. The use of the under-floor air highway system is unusual in Australia, because most buildings do not have the raised floor required for the ductwork.

How did Probuild ensure levels of the new headquarters aligned with the existing Fountain Court?

Andrew Zinner: The alignment of levels is something that is resolved by meticulous surveying and is just part of the detail that we attend to for every job.

Who provided the “landmark crane” during the building construction?

Andrew Zinner: The crane was provided by Probuild. It had a 64-metre jib and was 11 towers high. It was on site from December 2005 until April 2007.

How many people were employed during the construction & fitting out process?

Andrew Zinner: The maximum number of people on site at any stage of the project was just under 300. During the total construction period, more than 1000 people worked on the site. There were between 50 and 60 different contractors, owing to the complexity of the project. One of the more unusual contracts was for the access floor for the installation of the under-floor air highways that feed the air conditioning.

Did Probuild demolish the old buildings which made way for the new building?

Ben Dahlstrom, Site Administrator:

We used local contractors, Hopleys, for the demolition of the old building. Both the steel and the concrete from those buildings were recycled.

Did Probuild have a special team to supervise the environmental sustainability features of the building?

Andrew Zinner: The ESD features were supervised by Probuild as part of our standard quality assurance procedures and project management systems.

What are the “outstanding sustainable features” of the building?

Andrew Zinner: This is a tough question because there are a number of really great sustainable features and together they greatly increase the environmental performance of the building. The high-performance double-glazing that is used throughout the building provides views for most of the people working there and reduces the need for artificial lighting.

The shading screens on the western and northern façades reduce glare and installation was extremely interesting. There was substantial window tunnel testing undertaken to ensure that the pierced shades would not whistle in the wind. The tests at Monash University identified a whistling problem with the initial prototypes, so the diameter of the holes in each shade and the positioning of the shades to the façades were modified to ensure that no whistling noise would be created. Installation time was reduced because Probuild, with its sub-contractor Permasteelisa, devised a method to prefabricate

the shades - they were mounted to window panels and fitted in one installation.

The under-floor air conditioning provides fresh, clean air at low pressure, and the number of outlets enables areas to be controlled locally to suit individual needs. There are also operable roller blinds, which are controlled by the sun's position to reduce heat transfer and glare. These features add to the comfort levels of the building's occupants and minimise the energy required to control the internal ambient temperature. Another feature is the solar panels located on the roof that complement the building hot water services.

Did you use local suppliers to provide a range of products?

Ben Dahlstrom: As far as possible, local suppliers were used. Kencor Constructions Fixing, Abbott Supplies, Hip Pocket, Boral Concrete, Reece Plumbing and One Steel are just some of the local firms that supplied the project.

Did Probuild have a special team to supervise the environmental sustainability features of the building? How many people were involved in that team?

Andrew Zinner: The ESD features were supervised by Probuild as part of our standard quality assurance procedures and project management systems.

What type of foundations were used? Was the creek a problem?

Ben Dahlstrom: A concrete-filled piling system was used for the foundations and they were set more than three metres deep. There were no water problems as such, but we did encounter ground

water from the original creek bed of Bendigo Creek and we liaised with the local authorities on the management of that.

Any unusual or interesting happenings that you encountered during construction?

Andrew Zinner: This is the first major regional project that Probuild has undertaken that required such a large site office to be maintained at a distance from our Melbourne base. Because of the staged nature of the job, the construction program was very long, extending over three years. We committed a team of key staff to Bendigo for the duration of the construction, and encouraged them to participate in the life of the Bendigo community. The materials, equipment and vehicles that are required for a site office were largely purchased from local suppliers, and we recruited locally for our staff and site workers.

Now that the project is nearing completion, we have been told by some of members of the local construction industry that the industry experience gained by those who have worked on the project has had benefits for all construction in Bendigo. That makes us feel pretty good, because we would like to think that we have given something back to the community.