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The National Bank's first sustainable branch sets benchmark



The National Bank's Blockhouse Bay branch

The National Bank Blockhouse Bay in Auckland is home to New Zealand's first 'green' branch which features the latest in sustainable products and design.

The green initiatives include roof lights, renewable building materials, solar panels, a rainwater tank, bicycle storage to encourage alternative transport, natural ventilation, photosensors (detecting presence of natural light and balancing with artificial lighting) and energy efficient lighting, a compost bin and even recycled artworks.

Environmental savings are impressive. Water consumption has been halved by recycling rainwater to flush toilets, energy consumption for air conditioning has reduced by an estimated 19 per cent (or 900 tonnes of carbon dioxide), total branch energy consumption has been calculated at 88 kWh/m² (well below 120 kWh/m² set by NZ Green Building Council as a benchmark) and all suitable waste food will be composted in the back garden.

Property's Ben Eitelberg says the project was ambitious.



Rob Perry, Regional Manager Auckland South, cutting the ribbon

"It's much harder to achieve viable payback on a small site like ours (it's only 300 square metres) than a multi-floor commercial building, because the cost to design and procure sustainable products is higher," he said.

"The building was designed to maximise natural light and fresh air to reduce the need for artificial lighting and air conditioning and a rain garden created to reduce the load on municipal stormwater drainage. In addition, native trees were planted in the car park to improve air quality and minimise the urban heat island effect (the increase of urban temperature as a result of manmade substances such as metal, concrete and asphalt retaining heat thereby increasing the load on mechanical services for buildings).

"Environmental ratings agency NZ Green Building Council has identified the Blockhouse Bay branch as a potential benchmark for calculating future environmentally sustainable design for small retail buildings of similar use," said Ben.

The project took seven months to complete and at its busiest had more than 25 contractors working onsite.

This project was initiated and led by the Property Group but involved a number of other ANZ National Bank business units including The National Bank branch network, Marketing and Corporate Affairs.

"The Marketing, Brand and Communications teams have been crucial in bringing attention to our project. We're at the cutting edge of environmentally sustainable design and they've helped us tell our story," Ben said.

For Ben and other members of the project team it's just the beginning of a program which will continue to introduce green initiatives, of which a number of the sustainable principles featured in the Blockhouse Bay branch are to be incorporated in all new fit-outs and refurbishments. Construction on the next National Bank green branch is due to commence at Gore on New Zealand's South Island this month.

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Ben Eitelberg using the branch compost bin