



**RMS Traders
Sustainability eBook 2020**

The 2020 Sustainability Digital Awards Gala

For the past 14 years, Architecture & Design magazine has run the Sustainability Awards – Australia’s oldest national sustainability awards program dedicated to rewarding excellence in sustainability across our built environment.

Along with that, we have also organised the Sustainability Summit, a full-day, CPD-point earning educational event that has now become one of the most sought-after annual CPD programs in the industry.

So while this year’s Awards and Summit programs did have their challenges due to the issues we are all experiencing in 2020, the fact remains, that for the first time ever, we managed to provide a digital-only event that was both amazing and highly-popular and one that was also unparalleled anywhere in the country.

On that point, for next year, the planning process has already started and what I can tell you, that as an organisation, once again, we will be forging ahead with an industry-leading

and best-in-class industry event.

So on that note, I’d like to personally thank you for your involvement and interest in our Sustainability Awards program, one that will always be dedicated to promoting sustainability and environmental consciousness in all its forms across Australia’s diverse and vibrant built industry.

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EDITOR, ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

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Q&A with Shaun Palkhiwala

There are some products, in the construction industry, that need no explanation, when it comes to sustainability. Energy efficient products or those manufactured entirely from recycled materials, can often claim green credentials easily, with little effort or innovation required.

But, in a time of climate emergency, where every individual and business must play their part, finding sustainable practices applied in the less obvious suppliers and products is all the more impressive.

One such example, is RMS Traders – a family-owned business supplying stone, tiles and pavers. Here, Shaun Palkhiwala, one of the company's founders, explains how their business is contributing towards a more environmentally responsible industry.

A&D: Please tell me about your experience and current role at RMS Traders.

SP: We're a family-owned business and, over the last 35 years, I've been lucky to see us slowly grow from humble beginnings into the successful business we have today. I've grown-up in this company and while my job title is 'Manager', I wear many different hats and my role changes from one day to the next, depending on what needs to be done. Predominantly, I oversee sourcing and procurement of our stones, as well as the marketing side of the business. I also travel quite a bit, as being able to physically view the raw material overseas, before we import, enables us to keep a close eye on the quality and values we set.

A&D: Why is sustainability important to RMS Traders?

SP: Sustainability should be important to everyone right now – and we're no different. We've already handed this business down

through X generations, and we can't continue to do that unless we – along with every other business – try to reduce our carbon footprint and impact on mother nature.

We source a lot of our stone from India and other countries where poverty and the impacts of climate change are very visible. In these countries, air pollution and scarcity of fresh water are part of everyday life; seeing that brings the importance of sustainability to the fore. It's also by visiting our suppliers in these countries that you can see, first-hand, opportunities to improve sustainability not just at home but at the source of the supply chain. For example, what we consider an acceptable amount of waste may not be the same as our supplier; when we realised that waste was an issue, we created the ROS tile pattern, enabling us to use both large and small pieces of stone, minimising stone wastage in our suppliers' factories.

A&D: Why are you sponsoring this year?

SP: We want to showcase our achievements so far in making our business more sustainable, as an example to others. Sustainable practices can be applied to every corner of this industry – the important thing is to start somewhere and then keep striving to improve.

A&D: How does RMS Traders put its sustainability principles into practice?

SP: We've looked at every aspect of our business to try to make gains that, hopefully, will make a big cumulative impact on our carbon footprint. At our offices, we have solar panels to reduce

energy consumption and at our overseas manufacturing plants we harvest rainwater as well as recycle water used in stone cutting and processing. We've managed to reduce the amount of timber used in our packaging by 50% and we purchase office supplies that are recycled (and then ensure these are also recycled). We've made efforts to reduce our stone wastage with initiatives such as the ROS pattern (mentioned previously), as well as using wastage materials for cobbles, stone feature panels or crushed for use as aggregate in road bases and concrete pavers. We're also focusing on ensuring we support sustainable practices; for example, we don't support use of river pebbles – which can damage wildlife and local ecosystems – but we have recently partnered with Offset Earth to help support initiatives that offset our carbon footprint further. In fact, through this partnership, we've officially been climate positive for more than 8 months!

A&D: What are your future plans?

SP: A big focus for us will be to extend the success we've already seen in minimising product wastage. We're planning to expand the ROS pattern across more product ranges and we're also looking at entirely new product options, such as 'hand-tumbled pebbles'. These pebbles are off-cuts and wastage from production; we sort through the wastage and then start a heavy tumbling process to create an entirely new product from off-cuts. We're also using new techniques, such as hand chopping and rounding to create a new, naturally rounded crazy paving product from our limestone wastage.



Urban & Landscape Award Nominees



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FOR OUR COUNTRY
EDITION OFFICE AND DANIEL BOYD



THE CANOPY PRECINCT
SCOTT CARVER WITH SUPERMANOEUVRE



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Award Winner

URBAN & LANDSCAPE
FOR OUR COUNTRY
BY EDITION OFFICE AND DANIEL BOYD

For Our Country is the inaugural National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial, commissioned by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and is located on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country. The work provides a space from which to contemplate and commemorate Indigenous connection to country and the sacrifice that Indigenous serving men and woman have made in the protection of their country.

A basalt stone field outlines the outer face of the memorial, establishing a collective gathering space defined by a two-way mirror glass veil which captures the landscape and the viewer within a cloud of mirrored lenses.

This reflection is seen to exist on the other side of this veil, establishing an empathetic othering whereby a viewer can witness themselves and their surroundings as existing elsewhere, both in space and time, allowing the contemplation of an indigenous gaze and an indigenous experience of war, conflict and sacrifice.



Black-out at altitude

Design for sensitive landscapes demands a layer of expertise that respects fragile ecosystems and is truly restorative and sustainable. It also requires compliance with complex planning laws and regulatory frameworks.

Alpine Australia sets the background for such expertise and challenges. Architecture at elevation is no easy feat across the seasonal extremes that include high snowfall and blizzards in Winter, as well as intense heat and bushfire risk in Summer.

This compact residential project located at Dinner Plain in the Victorian Alps not far from Mount Hotham ski resort, is an example of how low-impact architecture can be achieved at 1,570m while gently sitting in a very sensitive landscape.

Known as the 'Black Out' house the building was designed by Helen Mathew FRAIA from Mountain Creek Architecture in Mount Beauty, who for several years has specialised in the design of homes, lodges and chalets in Victoria's alpine valleys and ski resorts.

Created as a year-round holiday use for a Bermagui family, Black Out was conceived as a small efficient holiday chalet that talks to the existing Dinner Plain village style without mimicking the existing buildings. In many respects Black Out is a successful but contemporary blend of alpine refuge, club lodge and cattlemen's hut. Mathew has a relatively long history as an alpine bushwalker and skier so she understands the heritage context without being subordinate to clichéd architectural responses.

This wheelchair accessible two bedroom, small footprint dwelling manages to provide a spacious living area with high-raked ceilings and large clerestory windows. Energy efficiency

on a low budget with the main windows facing north for the Winter sun, render the building comfortable and optimised for natural light. Other energy efficiency measures include:

- use of heat recovery units in the living area;
- ducting high-level warm air into the bedrooms;
- high spec insulation to roof, walls and under floor;
- efficient hydronic heating system run through floor slab;
- high quality double-glazed windows; and
- lapping and sealing of all wall and roof membranes.

On the outside, the building is a high-performance snow-shedding abode while ensuring that all snow falls away from pedestrian areas. Highly durable materials and finishes combat against the harsh environment and require minimal ongoing maintenance. Colourbond steel and charred timber cladding provide the ideal 'skin' to circumvent the need for re-finishing.

Design and construction at altitude is a specialised area of architecture that when creatively executed, complements the alpine landscape and enhances occupant pleasure. Mathew's approach provides an intelligent template for adjacent developments without constraining the look and feel of future dwellings.

More information: mountaincreekarch.com



RMS Traders Project

Article: Caulfield Grammar, Wheelers Hill Campus Landscape and Garden

Established in 1881, Caulfield Grammar School is a pre-eminent independent co-educational school in Melbourne, with a rich and proud history.

Wheelers Hill, home to Caulfield's early learning, junior and middle school campuses, enjoys beautiful views across the Dandenong Ranges, providing its pupils with a spacious, natural surrounding environment. When the school decided to redevelop its outdoor landscapes and gardens, one of its top priorities was to mirror the natural beauty of the ranges while promoting sustainable principles.

For the garden's lead design team, Urban Discoveries, every aspect of the project needed to be underpinned by sustainable practices. Selecting suppliers with a similar commitment to the environment was key, and the design team chose RMS Traders based not only on the quality of its stone products, but because of its credentials as a family business committed to sustainability.

Despite challenging weather conditions, a tight timeline and budget – as well as the fact that the project needed to be completed within a fully operating school – Urban Discoveries and RMS Traders worked together to deliver a stunning outdoor space, designed collaboratively by and for Caulfield's pupils.

Featuring decks, seating and bush huts made from plantation spotted gum and treated pine, as well as logs sources from a local timber mill,

the team paid close consideration to materials used throughout the project.

RMS Traders supplied materials to create a stunning yarning circle centre piece within the school grounds, using cement-stabilized rammed earth; a mixture composed of two-thirds 20mm quarry waste and only 6% cement. The landscape also featured RMS Traders' ROS bluestone and crazy pavers, specifically designed to minimise waste. Furthermore, a creative approach material re-use and repurposing resulted in a mere six cubic metres of waste for the entire project. Old bricks were donated to one of the school community members, crushed rock was repurposed in footings and bases, soil was repurposed into garden beds and timber off-cuts were repurposed and incorporated into 'loose parts' play items.

The finished landscape is a tribute to the beautiful Dandenong Valley Parklands, with an 300% increase in newly planted trees – creating an additional 2,000m² of natural shade – as well as an impressive array of indigenous and native shrubs, trees and grasses. The new environment provides pupils with a constantly evolving and flourishing space in which to play, learn and become closer to nature.





SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2020 / RMS TRADERS / SUSTAINABILITY eBOOK 2020

Streetwise and sustainable

Public places are an essential space for so many different reasons and activities. They help to connect and refresh while often providing respite from the daily workplace routine.

Public places are also highly accessible and evolve over time as communities and individuals enjoy the positive qualities of urban landscapes.

Yet these spaces involve more than sharply designed lawns, concrete or paving punctuated with vegetation. Street furniture in all its forms plays a vital role in rendering public places attractive, functional and user-friendly at human scale.

Street Furniture Australia is a noteworthy local manufacturer that understands the value and purpose of street furniture, and how it can help to animate public places. Led by directors Darrel Conybeare and William Morrison, Street Furniture Australia is a longstanding pioneer in the street furniture design movement in Australia. Their design partnership, spanning 40 plus years has significantly shaped public environments through their attention to how and where street furniture enhances urban and not so urban landscapes.

At a landmark moment, Conybeare and Morrison designed the Plaza Seat in 1978, and in response to growing demand for well-designed urban furniture products. In 1986 they established the brand Street Furniture to design and fabricate an emerging street furniture portfolio that would help to reflect a strong sense of place.

In their own words they talk about the need to “bring enjoyment to all those who create, build, maintain and use public places”.

Street Furniture Australia also talks about design quality and how this extends to environmental management and sustainability.

Their measures and practices demonstrate a coherent and comprehensive approach to responsible design, waste minimisation and recyclability, repair and spare parts, and sustainable timber.

An indicator of formal company commitment to enhanced integrated management is in part reflected through Street Furniture Australia’s independently certified systems covering:

- Quality Management ISO 9001:2015
- Environmental Management ISO 14001:2015
- OH&S Management ISO 45001:2018 and AS/NZS 4801:2001.

Local production is at the core of maintaining quality control and delivering environmentally improved street furniture products. The core range of products is manufactured in Street Furniture Australia’s Western Sydney factory.

However it is the serious attention to thoughtful design that underscores the company’s approach to product development and manufacture that speaks to safety, ergonomics, functionality, low maintenance and extended product life.

If the intent of Street Furniture Australia is to improve the quality of daily life of public citizens using public spaces, then the company’s commitment to durable products that enhance shared landscapes is to be admired and commended.

More information: streetfurniture.com



SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2020

RMS TRADERES

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2020



ROS Bluestone Tiles – an innovative approach to minimising stone waste

When it comes to sustainability, there are many different approaches that can help businesses and individuals to lessen their impact on the environment; but one of the easiest – and most effective – methods is to minimise waste.

Minimising waste provides a front and back end benefit; when less of a product is needed, there is less energy and resources required, as well as less unused product going into landfill.

Waste management is becoming an increasing concern in the construction industry, which contributes an estimated 20 megatonnes of waste into landfill each year (RMIT, 2019). In the tiling and paving trade, where many suppliers quote ‘acceptable wastage amounts’ of up to 15% per project, wastage is a serious issue – which is why RMS Traders created its innovative ROS tiling pattern.

First launched in RMS Trader’s hugely popular Bluestone tiles, the ROS pattern (named after the company’s three founders, Rorie, Olivier and Shaun) is an innovative solution to the astronomical amount of stone waste produced by Australia’s construction industry.

Based on a combination of the three most economical tile sizes (400x400, 600x400 and 800x400), cleverly positioned to optimise an aesthetic appearance of elongated space, while significantly simplifying the installation process and minimising the amount of cutting and wasted stone off-cuts.

All tile cuttings are made from the same block, conserving energy and water consumption during production. Not only does this approach create less wastage during installation, but it increases cost-efficiencies as all ROS patterned tiles are delivered pre-cut – easy to handle and ready to lay.

Already hugely popular with architects and designers, for its ability to emphasise a free-flowing look and feel to outdoor spaces, the ROS pattern enables customers to make a more eco-friendly paving choice without compromising on style, texture or quality.

Packaged for the planet

Workplace interiors constantly evolve to meet organisational and client needs. In many cases they also reflect brand values and specific qualities associated with a company's products and services.

For companies that manufacture and market environmentally improved products, the opportunity to extend their environmental commitment to their buildings and facilities demonstrates genuine intent. In other words, sustainable design applies regardless of scale, size or format.

As a global leader in packaging and resource recovery, Visy is an example of how sustainability plays out across all its operations and activities.

With more than 120 sites across Australia, New Zealand and Thailand and trading offices across Asia, Europe and the USA, Visy understands the business of packaging like few other companies. Their vision is to be the global leader in creating sustainable packaging solutions for a better world.

So when A1 Office was engaged to create Visy's new workspace at Essendon Field in Melbourne, the scope to ensure a future-proof interior translated into clear sustainability design considerations. They were looking for an efficient and flexible environment that fostered collaboration, promoted diversity and empowered teams to thrive, whilst at the same time limiting the impact on the environment.

Dana Moussaoui the Design Director from A1 Office designed bespoke joinery pieces using GreenTag rated Laminex boards and laminates that can be dismantled, relocated and re-used with ease. Areas with existing concrete were exposed and polished, then sealed with a low VOC, water-based epoxy. Ecooustic panels from Instyle were applied to the walls of the 'Google rooms' to improve the acoustic properties of the space.

Noteworthy use of technology to aid in multi-site communication and connectivity was also integrated thus reducing the need for Visy employees to travel interstate and internationally while feeling good about lower carbon emissions.

A comprehensive approach to specifying greener products, materials and finishes was also achieved across different applications with highlights including multiple GreenTag certifications:

- Flooring by Carpets Inter EcoSoft Range
- Woven Image Terrain Range
- Kitchen stools and Chairs from the Butter Collection by DesignByThem (80% recycled plastic and included in an 'end of life' program)

- Benches Side Tables and Stools from the Confetti Collection by DesignByThem (100% recycled plastic that are made from post-consumer and factory waste)
- Joinery built with MDF boards and laminates by Laminex (Green Tag Gold PLUS Green Rate level A)
- Low VOC paints by Dulux
- Instyle Ecooustic Panel Axis range (Green Tag Green Rate level A, 100% PET)
- Armstrong ceiling tiles Second Look range (Green Tag Green Rate level A, low VOC)
- Billi Quadra tap (Green Tag Green LCA Rate Gold)

A coherent approach to sustainable design and healthy interiors requires a receptive client with vision and ambition. As a result, the synergy between A1 Office and Visy fulfilled a design brief that respected the environment, the space and the end-users.

More information: a1office.com.au or: a1office.com.au/spaces/transformation-of-the-month-sustainability-meets-style



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