Australia and U.K. International Workshops Underline the Strategic Value of FM in the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy

The Global FM International Workshops in Canberra and London stressed the role of facilities management in tackling the new economy's biggest challenges thanks to its strategic and holistic approach to facilities, energy resources and costs. Download the official press release here .

For the first time ever, the Facility Management Association of Australia (FMA Australia) hosted a Global FM International Workshop. The event took place on 17th May, during FMA Australia's annual conference and exhibition Ideaction. Over 70 attendees gathered in Canberra's Convention Centre to listen to the panel of speakers comprising Teena Shouse (Associate at FEA, Global FM Chair), Val Moraes (Managing Director Gregmore Group, Chair FMANZ), Lionel Prodgers (Founder and Director of Agents4RM International), Gene Mcglyyn (Assistant Secretary Building and Government Energy Efficiency Branch Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) and Neal Wood (FMA Australia 2011 Facility Manager of the Year). Duncan Waddell (Managing Director FM Intelligence), Global FM's Board member, moderated the discussion. The different presentations touched upon the difficulty in adapting to the new low carbon economy not only in Australia, but in other countries as well. Gene Mcglyyn explained that energy efficiency needs to become the core business of all sectors of activity in Australia and in the world. This will require a drastic change in culture and way of doing business, but FMers could take this opportunity to show how they can help companies reducing their carbon emissions. Lionel Prodgers regretted that in the U.K. FMers are being bypassed by account executives and sustainability managers. New positions have been created to deal with the energy efficiency and the low carbon regulatory requirements, but FMers have been doing this same job for a long time. Neal Wood shared his experience in Brisbane and indicated that educating people is a fundamental thing to do to shift to the new low carbon economy. Everybody has a responsibility in this transition, highlighted the facility manager of the year in Australia. Nicholas Burt, FMA Australia's CEO mentioned following the event, that *"the international workshop provided a key opportunity for facilities management professionals to gain a truly global insight into this important topic. The workshop was well attended and was a highlight of the conference program. As the first international workshop held in Australia, it was a resounding success and FMA Australia looks forward to working as part of the Global FM team to continue to deliver such opportunities for members locally."*

The U.K. International Workshop also concluded that education is key in adapting society to the new economy. The workshop on 18th June was part of the British Institute of Facilities Management's (BIFM) ThinkFM conference, in London. The panel of speakers included Stan Mitchell (Chairman and CEO of Key FM), József Czerny (Chair of the Hungarian Facility Management Society), Andrew Large (Executive Vice-President of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors) and Mark Andrews (CEO of Faceo FM UK - subsidiary of VINCI Facilities). József Czerny's presentation discussed the obstacles around the lifecycle assessment of facilities, due to the lack of standards and commonly accepted tools to measure the buildings' energy use. Rather than measuring and trying to predict the future, the Chairman

of HFMS encourages facility managers to continue having a strategic and holistic view of the built environment, putting in place long-term strategies for the facilities they are working on. Mark Andrews shared the idea that political change, economic uncertainty, social upheaval and disruptive technology are all playing a role in creating a challenging business environment. Given this context, the facilities management mission should focus on supplying client's growth and performance. FM can respond by making it strategic, being holistic, focussing on sound projects, providing qualitative reporting tools and ultimately improving energy efficiency. The moderator of the event, Iain Murray voiced some of the conclusions of the event. One the main points raised consisted on the need for more international engagement and exchange of knowledge. The FM industry is suffering from the lack of output descriptions about what FM services' delivery can do which results on a limited understanding and recognition about its role and contribution to the new economy.

Following the event, Gareth Tancred, BIFM's CEO stated, *"the role of facilities management in enabling and supporting core business performance is a telling part of how fundamental facilities management is to the world's economy and in meeting the sustainability challenge head on. Our sector plays this key role but central to its success is education and understanding, the development of facilities management professionals around the world and the attraction of new talent into the sector is what will underpin the growing influence of FM. Succession planning is a key challenge in the UK with studies showing significant numbers due to retire in the next 10-20 years, our efforts are focussed on attracting and nurturing talent in the sector through qualifications and development pathways from entry level through to the senior strategic level as part of our efforts enable the advancement of the profession."*