

BEYOND GREEN RATING

Senator the honourable Penny Wong Minister Climate Change and Water, Australia, the Acting High Commissioner Andrew Ford, Presidents and representatives of allied professions, industries and government agencies.

Distinguished guests, members of the media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning and welcome to the Green Design Forum and the preview of Malaysia's Green Building Index.

In around June or July last year, PAM received a request from a developer to jointly research and develop a green rating for Malaysia. PAM took up the challenge and felt that it would be better for the professionals to do it by themselves. Dr Tan Loke



Mun volunteered to lead the sustainable committee, probably out of his guilt to atone for all the damages he had done to the environment! A committee was formed. The idea of a Malaysia green rating system was mooted with BIPC and we got their support. Experts from ACEM like TL Chen and Looi were co-opted into the committee. Instead of reinventing the wheel, we thought it might be more effective in learning from Singapore and Australia. Singapore because they are our immediate neighbours. Australia because of our personal connections dating back to our student days there, and the CH2 Building in Melbourne.

Through Interface Carpets' Ray Anderson – an inspiring green industrialist, I met one of Tan Tian Chong's staff. And through AutoCAD and BCA's sustainable seminar, I got to meet Tan Tian Chong, the Director of BCA Singapore for Green Mark. Tian Chong was very kind and gracious in sharing with us their Singapore experience. And we were surprised to learn that it was started by just about 5 people when we were told by SIA it could have been 50! That gave us hope as we are small and unlike BCA, we are not funded by a rich government.

Through Dr Tan's contact with Prof Allan Rodger, another early pioneer of the green movement in Australia, we were connected with Trudy-Ann, the chairperson of Australia's Green Building Council for Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia. The committee then went to Australia in November last year and visited a number of green buildings such as the famous CH2 Building there.

Through these studies, we learned that Singapore had adopted a top down system where it is mandatory by law for buildings to be green rated. While in Australia it was private sector driven and not compulsory. And in Malaysia, we think we will end up something in between.

All this means that through the sharing of knowledge, insights and first hand interactions with designers, legislators, building managers and end users, our committee had accelerated our learning process so that we could target to launch our rating system by April this year and for you to preview it today.

Today, as we celebrate this historic event in soft launching our green rating tools, I think, to be truly green, we must go beyond just green rating of buildings.

As architects, it is important that we contribute in the green movement by designing greener buildings for the future. However if we are serious about taking care of the environment, we may be surprised to know that, just 3 areas of our life contribute to 75% of the environmental damages. They are, in order of priority:

1. the food we eat
2. how we travel
3. the water and energy efficiency of our houses and gardens

I learned this from a book “Green is Good-Smart Ways to Live Well and Help the Planet” by Rebecca Blackburn, another Australian.

It is hard to believe but true. The book suggests that we could save more of the world, and faster, simply by not eating meat than through designing green buildings. She says that eating 3 kilogrammes less red meat (i.e about 5 meals of steak) is equivalent to reducing household water use by half! Congratulations to all the vegetarians in the audience. You have done a lot more in greening the earth than what we are just starting to do.

In 1969 Buckminster Fuller, the architect, engineer, inventor, philosopher wrote a book called “Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth”. I first heard about Bucky in the 70’s when Lim Chong Keat got him to build a Geodesic Dome in Penang’s famed Komtar. 2 weeks ago while in Sydney for a holiday, I chanced upon Bucky’s book. As I started reading it, I wished I had read it much earlier, I wished many of us had read it much earlier.

In the book, Bucky investigates the great challenges facing humanity, and the principles of avoiding extinction. And he talks about how “to make the world work for 100% of humanity in the shortest possible time through spontaneous cooperation without ecological offense or the disadvantage of anyone”. And how to use innovative design to create technology that “does more with less” thereby improving our human lives.

Today, sadly, Bucky’s thoughts are even highly promoted by some motivational training programmes but not the design communities. Let’s re-learn from Bucky how we could guide our “Spaceship Earth” toward a sustainable future.

In order to promote and test our tools we are also in the process of signing MOU’s with foreign and local universities in encouraging the students to use the Malaysian Green Building Index in their projects. In Australia, we are talking to University of Tasmania through Prof. Roger Fay, another pioneer of green design. And in Malaysia, we are talking to UPM and USM, both with eminent green advocates, like Dato’ Prof. Ar Dr Elias etc.

Today, we want to thank the Malaysian Sustainable Building Committee for graciously agreeing to work with PAM and ACEM on this rating project. And we are happy to announce that the protem committee for the Malaysia Green Building Council was officially formed at PAM Centre just last night. And Dr Faridah who was the president of the previous Malaysian Sustainable Building Committee was elected as the president of this new Protem Committee. Congratulations to the Protem Committee, and we hope the committee could get the approval from ROS before the launch of the Malaysian Green Building Index in April this year.

For an event like this to happen, we have many people to thank. First, we want to thank Penny Wong and her family members and friends, who got us connected. We want to thank the sponsors, Johnson Suisse and Bluescope Steel for financing this event. The media for the coverage and publicity. Dr Tan and his Sustainability Committee members. Boon for coordinating the event while most of us were away on Christmas and year end holidays. ACEM, MSBC, BIPC, the Australian High Commission, PAM Secretariat and all those involved, including you the audience for making this event a reality.

Let me now introduce our very special guest to you.

As we all know, Penny Wong was born in Malaysia and moved to Australia when she was eight.

You can find her illustrious biography in the internet.

Penny Wong was a lawyer in Adelaide and worked as an adviser to the Carr Government in New South Wales before she entered the Parliament.

She was elected as a Labor Senator for South Australia in November 2001 and began her term in July 2002.

In December 2007, Penny was appointed to the Federal Cabinet in the new Rudd Labour Government as the Minister for Climate Change and Water.

Penny is responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of the Government's climate change and water policies including the design and implementation of the Government's Emissions Trading Scheme. And today she's going to talk to us on "Moving to a Lower Carbon Future – Perspective from Australia". Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Penny Wong.

Ar Lee Chor Wah
PAM President