

Flannery Centre to be a star performer

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By Brendan Arrow

THE first sod may have only been turned yesterday, but Bathurst's Flannery Centre could become one of Australia's most environmentally friendly buildings.

Greenlight Consulting Service, Caoimhin Ardren managing director said the plans for the \$7.5 million world-class carbon efficiency skills centre has the development on the cusp of being Australia's 12th building to receive a six star green rating.

Mr Ardren said if the Flannery Centre achieved the six star rating it would mean the building is considered one of the best in the world for energy efficiency.

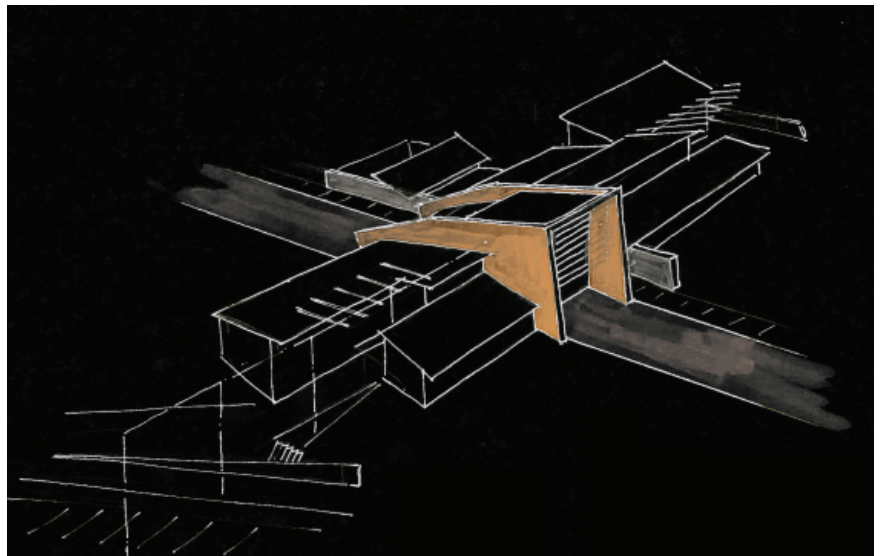
"This building is on the threshold of being five or six stars," he said.

"The critical matter to get sorted out at this point in time is the amount of energy that can be produced on site, which is largely a budget issue."

Adding to Mr Ardren's excitement is the fact that the ideas used to make the Flannery Centre so efficient could be adapted in other constructions without significantly increasing the cost.

"What is exciting about this building is that we are achieving these higher green ratings within a tight budget," he said.

"With unlimited funds it is easy to reach a high energy efficiency rating but this building will cost similar to ... a normal office building.



Initial sketches of the Flannery Centre

"While the design process does take some more time, the cost doesn't have to be high in order to be environmentally friendly."

Named after the 2007 Australian of the Year, Professor Tim Flannery, the centre will be built on a three hectare site on Panorama Avenue with the project expected to be complete by March next year.

The centre will be a place where individuals and organisations can do sustainable technologies training in a range of qualifications. The centre received \$5 million from the Federal Government to make it a reality.

Members of the community will also be able to learn how to do everything from creating compost to installing solar panels.



FINAL CHECK: Crawford architects Paul Godsell and Tony Gray look over the final plans of the new Flannery Centre with Central West Group Apprentices and Skillset chairman Scott Ferguson and CEO Ben Bardon. Photo: PHILL MURRAY

Yesterday Central West Group Apprentices and Skillset CEO Ben Bardon and Chairman Scott Ferguson turned the first sod.

For Mr Bardon, the low key ceremony signalled the start of some quiet celebrations with the planning process now complete.

“It is a really exciting time to finalise the work and have the building underway. It is something we’ve been looking forward to for a few months now,” he said.

“The Central West will be the real winner as the Flannery Centre becomes a hub for the community as we respond and adapt to changes in our environment.”

Mr Bardon added once the centre is complete it is hoped environmentally conscious individuals and organisations will use Flannery Centre to develop a better understanding of climate change.

“A lot of the projects that we will be offering will be online programs and some of the courses ... will be available for individuals and businesses throughout Australia and the world internationally,” he said.

“I think we’ll form a network of organisations similar to ours and facilities similar to ours, because the nature of the changes that we’re facing are so huge that we’ll have to collaborate.

“I don’t think we’ll going to be doing it alone here, I think it’s going to be core business and so we’ll be looking to partner up with those adopting the change early.”