

## Media Release

### Jerry Schwartz takes action to boost hospitality industry's green ratings by supporting World Green Council initiative

Australia's largest private hotel owner, Dr Jerry Schwartz, is aiming to boost Sydney's ranking as a premium destination for major meetings and events by helping launch the **World Green Council** – a body that accredits hotels for their team's green credentials.

In the latest Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index – the leading sustainability benchmarking and improvement programme for **meetings and events destinations** around the world – Sydney was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> (with a 73% performance) just behind Melbourne in 8<sup>th</sup> place (with a 74% performance), both some 20% behind the leading destinations in Europe, led by Gothenburg with a 94% rating.

"It would be easy to say that Sydney and Melbourne are performing well, but the rankings show that both cities can perform better – and the hospitality sector needs to lead the way," said Dr Schwartz, who owns eight hotels across Sydney, and 14 in total across Australia.

"Environmental sustainability is not just a 'feel good' measure, it has serious economic implications. Today, sustainability is a major factor in cities winning global business events. The majority of international event clients now list sustainability in their specifications, yet Sydney isn't living up to its picture-postcard image."

Over 14 million visitors a year come to the harbour city, contributing over \$16.7 billion in 2017, but in their wake leave behind a trail of trash. Some 47% of Sydney's commercial waste comes from the hospitality sector, of which only 50% is recycled. The impacts are substantial since the hospitality sector needs lights, air conditioning and ventilation 24 hours per day, and consumes vast amounts of energy and water, while discarding tonnes of leftover food from their venues and waste from guest rooms.

Dr Schwartz believes that the quickest way to improve the performance of the whole sector around Australia was to improve awareness amongst staff.

"You can spend a fortune on solar panels and LED lighting – and these are all good – but if your staff are well trained that can make a huge impact on a daily basis," he said.

To address the issue, Dr Schwartz teamed up with training authority Danny Bielik to launch the World Green Council to deliver staff training programs that promote sustainable practices.

"Whilst most sustainability organisations focus on buildings and facilities, the World Green Council will enable hotels to focus on their staff practices too," says Dr Schwartz.

World Green Council has established itself in Singapore with a view to a global rollout of this standard.

With one in ten workers worldwide now directly or indirectly involved in the tourism and hospitality sector the impact of improving staff practices can be felt immediately.

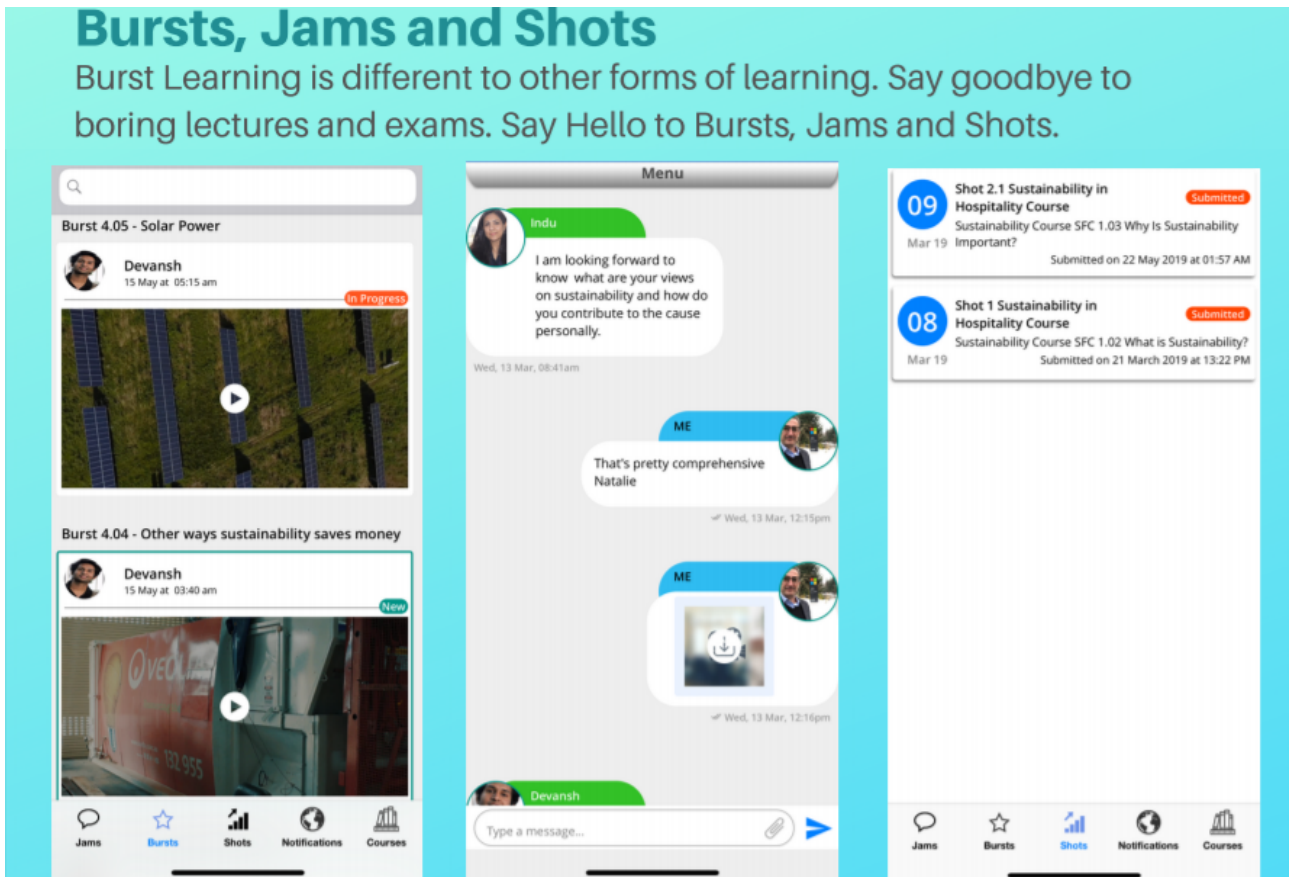
Hotels will receive Silver, Gold or Platinum accreditation based on the number of staff who complete the Certificate course.

Danny Bielik, CEO of Burst Learning, who designed the course said: "Trained staff feel more committed to taking personal action to support sustainability measures. There is a great deal of satisfaction in being able to reduce environmental impact, while still maintaining the highest guest standards."

However, Mr Bielik said there were challenges to training vast numbers of people in a sector with high levels of part-time and casual workers who were very busy, and had vastly different backgrounds and educational levels.

“Taking staff away from their jobs to attend classes wasn’t going to work and online learning has traditionally been a problem, since the workers needed to sit in front a computer for hours,” said Mr Bielik.

The solution was to deliver the training via mobile.



After piloting the course at three of Dr Schwartz’s 15 hotels, Dr Schwartz decided to launch the World Green Council and make it responsible for delivering the course and the accreditation worldwide.

“The tourism and hospitality sector is one of the fastest growing industries in the world,” said Mr Bielik.

“We believe that the industry can really benefit from active-learning methodology. We’re proud to be associated with Jerry Schwartz who shares our vision that education is a key driver in achieving sustainability in our industry.”

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