



TREE CHANGE FOR KOALA

Tuesday 19 May 2009

It's not that Australia lacks great, legendary trees. Heard about the outback mulga, its wood sought after for making spear throwers and boomerangs? Then there's the striking baobab, traditional meeting place for campfire discussions. Of course there's the ubiquitous gum tree or eucalypt, the iconic Australian forest tree.

Yet, cuddly koala Paul D'Arcy left the lush eucalypt forests of Australia to take up the General Manager post at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC). He was a tad apprehensive at first.

Koalas sleep most of the time and spend three of their five active hours eating eucalypt leaves. They are known to become violent when disturbed from their hazy slumber.

"I was relieved to discover that Qatar has its own iconic tree, the sidra, which casts a wonderful shade for napping," said Mr D'Arcy. "And exchanging ideas of course," he hastily added.

The sidra is a beloved icon in Qatari history and culture. The Bedouin, who would use it for shelter and meetings, treasure it. The sidra is also the basis of QNCC's distinct design as well as its corporate identity. The Centre's spectacular steel façade features a soaring, tree like structure. QNCC's logo is symbolic of the tree base, reflecting a strong platform for communication.

And so it transpired that under the shade of a sidra tree, the QNCC's pre-opening team held their first "green meeting" to discuss the stringent requirements of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System.

"We're aiming for Gold Certification," said Mr D'Arcy, huddled with staff under the Sidra like the poets and scholars of yore did.

The LEED System is an internationally recognised benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. The rating system covers sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, innovation and design process.

From gum tree to sidra, Paul D'Arcy's tree change will see him presiding the opening of Qatar's "Centre of Distinction" during the first quarter of 2011.

For further images to support this media release, visit <http://www.qatarconvention.com/centerimages.htm>

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Editors Notes

Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) www.qatarconvention.com

A member of the Qatar Foundation and opening in 2011, at a cost in the region of USD1.2 billion, QNCC will feature a multi-purpose hall for 4000 seated theatre style, a 2300-seat lyric style three tiered auditorium and an additional 57 flexible meetings rooms to accommodate a wide range of events. Plus 40,000 sqm of exhibition space over nine halls, that will be adaptable to seat 10,000 for a conference or banquet.

QNCC is proudly managed by AEG Ogden, one of the largest facility and entertainment management specialists in the world. www.aegogden.com

Qatar Foundation www.qf.org.qa

Qatar Foundation's mission is to prepare the people of Qatar and the region to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world, and to make Qatar a leader in innovative education and research.