

WESSA and Century City Conference Centre mark milestone with first conference venue to achieve Green Key certification in Africa



Alderman James Vos; Tevya Visser - WESSA Senior Sustainability Manager; Cindy-Lee Cloete - WESSA CEO; Gary Koetser - CCCC & Hotels CEO; Bernard Abrahams, Operations Manager at CCCC; Kelly Alcock - WESSA Head of Education & Sustainability

Cape Town, South Africa – 24 February 2026: The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, WESSA and Century City Conference Centre have marked a milestone moment for the global meetings and events industry, as the Cape Town venue **becomes the first conference centre in Africa and the Southern Hemisphere** to achieve Green Key certification – earning an exceptional 100% audit score in its first year of assessment. This achievement signals more than compliance. It signals leadership.

“For our team, the Green Key certificate together with a 100% audit score is a recognition of consistency and discipline,” says [Gary Koetser](#), **Chief Executive Officer of Century City Conference Centre and Hotels**. “Being the first Conference Centre in Africa and the Southern Hemisphere to achieve this certificate matters, but what matters more is that it proves Cape Town venues can lead globally and set global benchmarks.”

The milestone positions the venue among an emerging group of global leaders demonstrating that sustainability, when embedded into infrastructure and governance, delivers measurable performance at scale.

A signal to the industry

The certification is achieved through Green Key, one of the world's leading eco-certification programmes for tourism and hospitality. Managed in South Africa by WESSA, the programme includes independent audits and annual verification, ensuring that certification reflects sustained performance rather than a once-off achievement.

“This certification is a signal of intent and a signal of value – it shows what is possible when sustainability is not treated as a side project but woven into our everyday strategy and the decisions, we make in doing business,” **says [Cindy-Lee Cloete](#), CEO of WESSA.** “What makes me most proud today is the leadership that invests in both systems and people, and that understands sustainability must sit at the heart of how we operate if we want to remain a successful, resilient organisation. This award is not a final destination; it is the start of a journey that demands ongoing commitment and real courage to go beyond basic compliance, and to keep pushing for better practice every single day.”

Sustainability built into systems, not added as an afterthought

Unlike initiatives that operate as stand-alone projects, sustainability at Century City Conference Centre has been embedded into the design and management of its operations.

From solar generation and effluent water reuse to advanced energy sub-metering and centralised building management systems, “environmental responsibility has been treated as a leadership imperative rather than a departmental function”, **adds Koetser.**

The Green Key audit confirmed full compliance across all imperative criteria, with several operational areas exceeding international requirements. Here are a few key highlights:

- **Rethinking waste, from disposal to design:** Waste management emerged as a standout strength during the audit process. Structured separation systems are implemented across kitchens, back-of-house operations and event spaces, including organic and hazardous waste streams. Clear documentation, robust compliance procedures and strong staff engagement ensure responsible management at source. The shift has moved the operational mindset from asking “how do we dispose of waste?” to “why did we create it in the first place?” – placing the venue on a clear path towards future Net Zero Waste ambitions.

- **Water and energy stewardship in a resource-constrained context:** In a country where water security remains a critical issue, the Centre has prioritised responsible water management through effluent reuse, dual-flush systems aligned with its 4-Star Green Star rating, formal leak detection protocols and continuous monitoring. Energy performance is managed through 100% LED lighting, solar generation, detailed sub-metering and centralised HVAC control via a Building Management System, enabling real-time optimisation without compromising guest comfort. The result is a venue that operates more efficiently, more predictably and with a reduced environmental footprint.
- **Responsible procurement and conscious consumption:** A strong focus on responsible purchasing reinforces the Centre's sustainability framework. Eco-labelled chemicals and consumables are used where possible throughout the facility, supported by documented compliance processes and visual verification. A structured Food Waste Reduction Plan guides procurement, menu planning, portion control and storage, while refill water stations reduce reliance on bottled water and encourage conscious guest participation.
- **Sustainability beyond the building:** Sustainability at Century City Conference Centre extends beyond infrastructure to meaningful social impact. Ongoing partnerships with local organisations support youth development, community upliftment and inclusion initiatives, reinforcing the principle that responsible business must contribute to long-term wellbeing, not only operational efficiency.

For Century City Conference Centre, this milestone is not an endpoint but a foundation.

“Sustainability only becomes meaningful when it is replicated,” **says Koetser.** “Our focus now is on refining what we have built, scaling impact across our portfolio, and demonstrating that responsible conferencing can operate at the highest international standards.”

Attending the certification announcement, Alderman James Vos, Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Growth, welcomed the milestone as a win not only for the venue, but for Cape Town's global competitiveness.

In a media statement issued on 22 February 2026, the City described the milestone as a significant moment for the destination's global positioning, noting that sustainable conferencing is increasingly central to international event selection criteria and long-term economic competitiveness.

The City highlights that milestones of this nature reinforce Cape Town's reputation as a responsible, future-focused meetings and events hub, strengthening the broader

tourism, hospitality and investment ecosystem while demonstrating that local infrastructure can meet and exceed global sustainability expectations.

As global clients increasingly demand verified, measurable sustainability performance, this achievement sends a clear message: African venues are not merely participating in the global sustainability conversation, they are helping to lead it.

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About Green Key Coordinated internationally by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), Green Key is the leading global eco-certification for the tourism and hospitality industry. The programme recognises establishments that uphold high environmental standards through an independent auditing process and continuous improvement.

About WESSA* WESSA (The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa), established in 1926, is one of South Africa's oldest and most respected environmental non-profit organisations. As WESSA marks its 100th year of action for nature in 2026, the organisation continues a proud legacy of advocating for sustainable solutions, conservation, environmental education, and evidence-based policy that supports both people and the planet. Through its diverse programmes and strategic local and global partnerships, WESSA has played a pivotal role over the past century in fostering a culture of environmental responsibility and care across South Africa's landscapes, coastlines, schools, and communities. As the national operator of the Green Key programme in South Africa, WESSA works with partners across the tourism sector to embed sustainability into everyday operations and promote a healthier planet. <https://www.wessa.org.za/green-key/>. * **Media note:** *In all communications, please write as WESSA (The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa).*

About Century City Conference Centre:

Located in the heart of Cape Town, the Century City Conference Centre is one of Africa's leading conference and events destinations, offering world-class facilities, advanced technology, and exceptional service for meetings, conventions, exhibitions, and special events. The award-winning venue features 21 versatile spaces accommodating up to 2,000 delegates and forms part of a vibrant mixed-use precinct in Century City, Cape Town.

Committed to responsible eventing, the Centre holds a 4-Star Green Star certification from the Green Building Council of South Africa and was the first

Conference Centre in the Southern Hemisphere to receive the prestigious Green Key certification through the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA). The Conference Centre has also received global recognition, including GOLD at the Eventex Awards for best Venue,