

# 'Lateral growth chokes the city'

*Property Weekly* speaks to David Scott, Chairman of the Council On Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat



**T**he wave of new gleaming high-rises set for completion in the months and years ahead will dramatically alter the region's skyline. Their developers are trying to become ever more innovative in their designs and styles in the hope that their structure will stand out from the rest.

But how many of them can truthfully say theirs will be the most energy efficient?

Criticism has been coming from many quarters that high-rise structures will play further havoc in creating energy imbalances.

The time for taking concrete action is already behind us, but given the right mindset on the part of the developer changes can still be effected for marginal gains. David Scott, Chairman of the Council On Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, tells how.

**There is some criticism from developers in the region that they should not be criticized for not following the best practices at this very early stage of the market's evolution. Don't they have a point?**

I don't think it's fair to pick on them. Five years ago the enlightened people were thinking about sustainability such as the UN and the Green Building Councils.

But you could blame people for not thinking about it now. When a city is planning strategies, it is then that they think about what they would like to achieve.

**The other point they make is the region's extreme climatic conditions. Shouldn't there be some leeway in the standards, since presently most of these are related to moderate climatic environments?**

Climatic conditions don't have an impact on energy use. I think that you have to try and figure out what it is that you are try-

ing to get people to accept. Because in this part we have seen it can be 40 degrees outside, but indoors can be 10 degrees. You need systems that operate affectively and you don't have that.

**What initiatives are coming from your end in the medium-term? Are these more of recommendations or do they involve specific certification processes such as LEED?**

We have working groups that are basically working on things such as the safety aspects of tall buildings, seismic designs, fire and safety, progressive clasps, etc.

We also have sustainable groups that are trying to gather best practices information from all over the world which we try and distribute around the world through exhibitions such as the Tall & Green show we are having in March.

**Given your organisation's name and scope of**

**operations, are high-rises the worst contributors in energy efficiency?**

No, I think that with the growth of the world's population there are two options you've got, one is to grow vertically and the other is to grow laterally. And I think the lateral growth chokes the city.

You end up being much more sustainable if you can get a large concentration of people in a small area preferably adjacent to transportation and inter-connected transportation hubs.

**Being self-sustained through mixed-use developments would be a good alternative?**

Have a good mixed-use or offices close to the residential and retail spaces. Inter-connectivity is the core, so have more mixed communities. That would save a lot of traffic and congestion as well.

**While there are advances being made in best**

