

## VICTORIA BECOMES 2<sup>ND</sup> BIOSPHERE-CERTIFIED CONFERENCE CENTRE IN NORTH AMERICA

New 360-degree virtual tool showcases VCC's many meeting, sustainability and Indigenous features

**Victoria, B.C. (Jan. 12, 2024)** – Greater Victoria's largest conference facility, the Victoria Conference Centre (VCC), is starting the new year by celebrating becoming only the second conference centre in North America to receive Biosphere certification and launching a new [360-degree virtual tour](#) that showcases the sought-after venue's numerous meeting, sustainability and Indigenous features to meeting planners worldwide.

The Responsible Tourism Institute's Biosphere certification is the most highly sought tourism sustainability certification due to its credibility, its recognition worldwide and its alignment with the United Nations' [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#), the [World Charter for Sustainable Tourism +20](#) and the [COP21 Paris Agreement](#) to combat climate change. The value of certification is tremendous as meeting planners increasingly consider factors like local quality of life, environmental impacts, and how a destination, its DMO and its tourism sector affects and serves local communities when making decisions about where to locate a conference.

Destination Greater Victoria's sales and marketing management of the VCC reflects the significant role the venue, conferences and events play in Greater Victoria's visitor economy. In 2023, the VCC alone hosted 141 events, including 54 large-scale conferences (five US-based and 49 Canadian) and 87 local meetings, tradeshow and events. According to Business Events Victoria, the division of DGV responsible for the sales and marketing of the VCC, the venue helped generate 83,500 delegate days, 22,000 room nights and more than \$35 million in business sales, while supporting almost 15,000 jobs.

"Coming out of the pandemic, one key DGV strategy was reestablishing and expanding foundational year-round business, particularly in the meetings and events sector," says Paul Nursey, CEO, DGV. "Thanks in part to the many VCC upgrades funded by the City of Victoria, our business events team has increased VCC's business to where we project it will be five per cent greater than 2023 this year."

Hosted on DGV's website, the new 360-degree virtual tour provides stunning aerial views of VCC, downtown Victoria and surrounding hotels, and the sunny shores of the Inner Harbour and James Bay. Inside, the viewer is taken on a guided tour of the VCC's main entrance, totem atrium, Level 1 and Level 2, as well as Crystal Carden. By clicking on-screen arrows, views can also easily travel throughout the venue to view each room's décor, furniture, AV capability and room capacity.

"We're delighted to launch our website's new 360-degree virtual tour," says Miranda Ji, Executive VP of Sales and Business Development, DGV. "In addition to giving meeting planners an excellent sense of just how bright, modern and functional a space VCC is, it really shows how this beautiful facility is capable of hosting just about any conference or meeting in an unforgettable setting."

Owned by the City of Victoria, the VCC is a carbon neutral facility that operates at the platinum level of BOMA BEST Building Environmental Standards and is recognized as one of Canada's best buildings in energy and environmental management and performance. Over the past decade, the VCC has reduced its carbon footprint by 70 per cent through a wide range of best practices including real-time energy management, waste diversion, recycling, LED lighting, equipment upgrades and more.

“Over the past two years, numerous aesthetic, safety and sustainability upgrades were made to the VCC to enhance the event experience for conference organizers and delegates,” said Kerri Moore, Director, Business and Community Relations, City of Victoria. “An additional 200 sustainability actions were completed over the past year to earn VCC’s Biosphere certification. As a result, we’ve significantly enhanced Greater Victoria’s reputation as a socially, economically, and environmentally conscious destination to visit.”

Among the 200 sustainability-focused actions taken to earn Biosphere certification, were:

- Ensuring the safety of VCC employees and customers through extensive ongoing training in emergency response protocols;
- Reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions per delegate day by 50 per cent of 2012 levels;
- Committing to using green products and reduce landfill waste (e.g., bottle fill stations and sustainable purchasing policies for VCC supplies);
- Sharing sustainability best practices with facility operators through associations such as BOMA BC (Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia) and Greater Victoria 2030 District; and
- Producing an annual Sustainability Report that is shared with the public and stakeholders.

For CEO Paul Nurse, VCC’s Biosphere certification is an excellent beginning to what he believes will be a very positive year for Greater Victoria’s visitor economy.

“2024 is already moving ahead at a quick clip and we’re starting the new year with a solid brand foundation,” says Nurse. “From conferences and events to sport tourism events and more, we’re anticipating a big year as we celebrate our 50th year of serving Greater Victoria residents and businesses.”

**About Victoria Conference Centre:** Victoria Conference Centre is owned and operated by the City of Victoria. As the second largest facility of its kind in British Columbia, its mandate is to generate economic benefit for the City of Victoria focused on non-resident delegate days through city-wide and multi-day conferences which typically require accommodation with one or more accommodation partner. With 77,000 square feet of meeting space, 21 multi-purpose meeting rooms, a large exhibit hall and 400-seat lecture theatre, the VCC can host 2,000 delegates or small, intimate gatherings.

**About Destination Greater Victoria:** Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) has proudly served as our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing and management organization for half a century. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2024, we continue to work hand-in-hand with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria to promote, enhance, and manage our vibrant destination. We look forward to another 50 years of supporting the visitor economy that brings vitality to our region. For more information, visit the Destination Greater Victoria [website](#).

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**Photos:** available [here](#)

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