

Learning from Global Experts in VMC

For those familiar with Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), the journey toward innovation has been anything but straightforward. Over the past decade, many businesses have stumbled, often by rushing into factory builds, taking on excessive risk before products were market-ready, and failing to secure a robust development pipeline.

So why is Freecity's strategy committed to 'Innovating Future Living' through high-rise Volumetric Modular Construction (VMC) in the Living Sector, despite risks being so high?

Clearly, we believe the rewards more than outweigh the risks and our measured approach to build capability and learning from partners over the last 3 years has built this confidence. Many of you would know the other side of the story, the performance challenges our industry has faced (particularly post-COVID):

- Huge increases in construction costs (particularly for apartments)
- Construction productivity for dwellings falling by +50% over the last two decades
- The building industry has reduced construction capacity (particularly for Strata apartments; and the continued challenges we have in construction quality.

VMC offers solutions in all of these areas!

To deliver on this promise, Freecity operates a fully integrated business model. Our development arm is backed by in-house construction and modular procurement capabilities through our 100% owned business: Space Labs Australia; a leader in innovative Volumetric Modular Construction.



IBIS Hotel Perth

Suker Yang, Director Modular Development at Space Labs. Suker has been procuring modular VMC from China for over a Decade. Previously developing Australia's largest VMC Building; the IBIS Hotel, a 19-storey, 252 room hotel in the Perth CBD. Freecity is now building the new tallest VMC Building in Australia at Macquarie Park at 20 levels (we will share more about this landmark project ahead) and this is now the second generation VMC at Freecity.

Our journey has also been enriched through collaboration with global modular architecture leader HTA Design, whose portfolio includes over 5,000 high-rise modular homes and more than 10,000 modules. Among their achievements is the world's largest VMC building: Enclave at Croydon in the UK, comprising 937 units.

We're excited about what lies ahead!



Steven Mann
Chief Strategy Officer,
Freecity



Bringing Global Modular Expertise to Sydney

Welcome to Simon Bayliss - Managing Partner of HTA Design

Over the past 15 years, HTA Design has been at the forefront of modular housing in London, a city, like Sydney, grappling with rapid urbanization and a widening gap between housing demand and delivery. The result: rising costs, growing inequality, and pressure on long-term livability.

At HTA, we've chosen to focus exclusively on housing, driven by a deep passion for creating better homes in vibrant communities. With a team of 250 architects and designers, we've built unmatched expertise across housing typologies, tenures, and construction methods, both in the UK and increasingly, around the world.

When approached by Freecity a little over a year ago, we immediately saw the depth of their commitment and the significant progress already made towards becoming established as the leading VMC developer in NSW. Freecity's extensive research into the global modular housing market had naturally led them to London, where the modular market is relatively mature with more than 30 mid to high rise modular buildings completed over the past decade or so. Almost half of those have been designed by HTA Design, including two of the tallest modular buildings in the world at 44 and 50 storeys. One of these, Ten Degrees in Croydon designed for Tide Construction and delivered by their sister company Vision Volumetric for global BTR operator Greystar, delivered 546 built to rent homes with amenities, from our first concept sketch through to hand over in less than 4 years, and just 28 months on site.



Simon Bayliss
Managing Partner,
HTA Design

42%

Reduction in construction programme

41%

Reduced CO2 emissions

97%

Factory waste recycled

86%

Reduction in vehicle movements

86%

Reduction in construction waste on-site

Above is a comparison of the performance metrics during construction of HTA's Ten Degrees with traditional builds, which shows large productivity gains and outperformance.

Modular construction doesn't just save time, it delivers higher quality, fewer defects, and significant sustainability gains. Studies show up to 40% reduction in embodied carbon, less waste, minimal site disruption, and near-zero accidents.

Over the past year, we've worked closely with Freecity to share our expertise, advocate for modular innovation in Australia, and adapt our approach to NSW's unique development landscape. Our network here is growing rapidly, with developers and manufacturers increasingly confident in VMC's potential.

On the back of this opportunity, we took the plunge to establish HTA Design Sydney, bringing together our UK VMC expertise with highly experienced architects in the local market and beyond, from which look forward to continuing advising Freecity, and many others.