

EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW

SCENTRE GROUP

IAN IRVING
DIRECTOR, SCENTRE GROUP
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Scentre Group is a retail property listed entity and is one of Australia's top five commercial construction companies.

Ian was appointed Director of Design & Construction of Scentre Group in June 2014, when the company de-merged from Westfield Australia. Prior to the establishment of Scentre Group he was Director of Design & Construction of Westfield Australia since 2009.

Ian joined Westfield in 2004 as a General Manager of Design & Construction, responsible for the delivery of a number of major Westfield Centre Projects throughout Australia including the management of the Westfield Sydney Project.

What keeps you so passionate about working in the construction sector?

I've been in the construction industry for nearly 30 years and I still enjoy going to work each day. At Scentre Group we develop, design, construct and own – sometimes with joint venture partners – the assets we operate. It allows me to apply my accumulated skills and experience in a totally different context. Our developments provide an essential part of that community's social and economic infrastructure in Australia and New Zealand.

Have you always worked in construction?

No, on leaving school I went into mechanical engineering, working for BHP at Port Kembla for four years before switching to a building degree. I then joined Concrete Constructions. I made the change because construction just always interested me.

What's your 'legacy' development that you've been involved with at Scentre Group?

I talk about Westfield and Scentre Group in the same breath. The legacy project is the Westfield Sydney project in the CBD on Pitt Street Mall, which we started in 2008 during the GFC and completed in 2012.

It was a \$1 billion development and then Australia's biggest. We consolidated under our ownership three adjoining retail properties. It was a complex development and our design and construction team delivered that project in its entirety. It was a genuine world-class mixed use development unlike anything we'd seen in Australia – retail

component, refurbishing the existing CentrePoint office, building and doing the fitout for a 30-floor office tower above the shopping centre – retail operations continued throughout. The project won several awards from the Master Builders Association and for engineering excellence. At that time we were the first 6 Star Green Star Commercial Building Completed.

Briefly, explain the scale of your design and construction department, which operates as a business within a business. Why is this such a major selling point to your clients?

We're a retail property business however within this we run a design and construction (D&C) business that employs over 550 professionals nationally with an enormous amount of intellectual property accumulated. With its D&C business, Scentre Group offers a tailored service, with a speed to market and construction pricing formula unmatched in Australia, as we don't have the problem of trying to procure work.

Our development pipeline is in excess of \$3 billion in planned developments over the next 5-7 years. We're responsible for managing all Scentre Group's infrastructure works from a reception desk through to the largest of our projects anywhere.

What's a typical work day for you at Scentre Design & Construction?

I have executive responsibilities as a director. I am on the Scentre Group executive committee and chair the diversity and inclusion committee. I aim to focus on our business priorities and the real issues that make a difference in our day-to-day business.

What's the average person not know about your company?

We're one of the largest commercial construction companies in Australia – most industry observers would be taken aback by the scale of projects and outcomes we achieve. Most people associate Scentre Group or the Westfield brand with shopping centres, but we have one of the largest multi-disciplined design operations in Australia from engineers to architects.

How has the de-merger from Westfield in 2014 along geographical lines potentially changed the company operationally and culturally?

For some people, it was an emotional departure. However, it was a great opportunity to redefine what the Australian and New Zealand business looks like as a cleanskin. A new company but with the benefit of 50 years of heritage through Westfield. It's allowed us to be more nimble and more responsive to market opportunities in Australia and New Zealand.

What's the value of Scentre Group's developments in the pipeline?

The pipeline fluctuates between \$3 billion and \$5 billion year-to-year, never lower than \$3 billion in my 12 years here. We're currently focusing on projects in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Perth, South Australia and New Zealand.

For more information contact Scentre Group & Construction, 100 Markets Street, Sydney NSW 2000



Westfield Sydney – Pitt Street