



## Rene van Berkel PhD

Director and Chair of Cleaner Production  
Centre of Excellence in Cleaner Production

### Overview

Rene van Berkel holds the position as inaugural Professor of Cleaner Production and Director of the Centre of Excellence in Cleaner Production. The Centre is part of the Division of Resources and Environment at Curtin University of Technology. Rene is also the founding Convenor of the WA Sustainable Industry Group – a multi-stakeholder professional platform working towards a clean and competitive Western Australia, and research leader in the Collaborative Research Centre for Sustainable Resource Processing. He also works as an Eco-Efficiency champion to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

In his current role Rene is responsible for the management of the Centre of Excellence in Cleaner Production, which operates with state government support to promote the application of Cleaner Production and Eco-Efficiency in Western Australia, in particular among small to medium sized enterprises. He established and delivers a postgraduate program leading to a professional Master of Cleaner Production. Moreover, Rene established and now manages an applied research program, focusing on the minerals, energy and agribusiness sectors. His main current research interests are industrial ecology, sustainable technology development, application of life cycle assessment to primary industries and customisation of Cleaner Production and Eco-Efficiency methods and metrics.

Prior to joining Curtin University of Technology Rene worked for 10 years with the University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands), as leading researcher, trainer and consultant on Cleaner Production and sustainable development issues. He acted as consultant to several multilateral organisations (including United Nations and European Commission), multilateral financial institutions (including World Bank and Asian Development Bank), many Dutch national and regional government bodies and the private sector.

Rene van Berkel graduated from the Agricultural State University of Wageningen (The Netherlands) a Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences (Environmental Sciences and Engineering) in 1985 and was awarded a Masters of Agricultural Sciences (Environmental Sciences and Engineering) in 1988. He obtained his PhD (*'Cleaner Production in Practice'*) in Environmental Sciences in 1996 from the University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands).

## **Current Portfolio**

Professor van Berkel is in charge of developing and managing Curtin's academic effort on Cleaner Production and Eco-Efficiency. This includes:

1. *Teaching*: including postgraduate program in Cleaner Production and undergraduate unit in Sustainable Production and Consumption, supervision of postgraduate research students and development of new courses on sustainability management (post graduate) and engineering sustainable development (undergraduate).
2. *Applied Research*: The Centre provides Curtin's main link to the CRC for Sustainable Resource Processing and leads in eco-efficiency and indirect ecology research for the minerals processing industry. Consultancies are undertaken to support the small business program and to facilitate Cleaner Production consideration in large companies.
3. *WA Sustainable Industry Group*: Convening and facilitating the WA Sustainable Industry Group (WASIG), organising learning-by-sharing activities for participants on the business case and agenda for sustainable development, liaison with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and promotion and administration of the WA Cleaner Production Statement
4. *Small Business Program*: information dissemination, industry liaison and training and assistance to small to medium sized enterprises, local government and other stakeholders to facilitate the uptake of Cleaner Production technologies, practices and policies in Western Australia (with funding support from the Western Australian Waste Management and Recycling Fund)

## **Recent Achievements**

Professor van Berkel has been pivotal to the success of the Centre of Excellence in Cleaner Production in putting Cleaner Production and Eco-Efficiency on the agenda of business, government and non-governmental organizations in Western Australia.

Specific achievements since joining Curtin University of Technology in 1999 include:

- Developed postgraduate course in Cleaner Production, leading to a professional master degree, including development of course contents, course materials and delivery (1999 – onward)
- Supervised two PhD students in Cleaner Production related research (1999-onward)
- Provided leadership for the establishment and consolidation of the WA Sustainable Industry Group to a multi-stakeholder platform for promotion of the business case and agenda for sustainable development. Co-ordinated the development of the WA Cleaner Production Statement, including the establishment of a Register of Signatory Organisations and recruitment of Signatory Organisations (87 by November 2003) (1999-onward)
- Initiated research project on the application of Life Cycle Assessment for Australian grains (with funding from the Grains Research and Development Corporation) (2002-2004)
- Initiated research project on the application of Cleaner Production principles and tools for the Australian coal industry (for the Collaborate Research Centre for Coal and Sustainable Development) (2002-2003)
- Contributed to research and business planning for the successful bid for a new Collaborative Research Centre on Sustainable Resource Processing (2001 - 2003) and since 2003 research program leader.

## International Contributions

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While employed at the University of Amsterdam, Rene has been involved in the design, management and implementation of a great diversity of research, training and consultancy projects, such as:

- Cleaner Production demonstration projects in particular for Dutch small and medium sized industries from different sectors of industry, including food processing, metal products, metal finishing, chemical, hospitals, paint and ink manufacturing, public transport and retail industries
- Support to the establishment of a network of National Cleaner Production Centres in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular in China, India and Tunisia
- Background study on strategies and mechanisms for promoting Cleaner Production investments in developing countries, with particular emphasis on Guatemala, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Vietnam
- Survey of climate relevant technology and technology information needs among developing countries and countries with economies in transition
- Comparative evaluation of national technology needs assessments for environmentally sound technologies, covering Costa Rica, Pakistan, Republic of South Africa, Swaziland and Black Sea Region.

## Awards

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In 2003 Prof van Berkel was awarded a Curtin Student Guild Teaching Excellence Award in postgraduate lecturing. In 2003 he was also selected as a finalist in the individual WA Environment Awards.

In 2000, Prof van Berkel gained finalist status in the inaugural Environment Australia Greensmart Partnership Award, for promoting environmental improvements and innovations in the building sector. The WA Sustainable Industry Group (WA SIG) convened by Professor van Berkel was finalist in the education category of the 2001 Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Awards in Western Australia.

In 1996 and 1997, Rene van Berkel received an Industrial Ecology Fellowship Award from the Lucent Technologies Foundation in collaboration with the National Science Foundation (USA). In 1994, 1995 and 1998 he was awarded with an Industrial Ecology Faculty Fellowship from the AT&T Foundation (USA).

## Direct Contact

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