

Environmental and Sustainable Policy

'Sustainable tourism' encompasses the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of the tourism industry. The World Tourism Organisation defines it as the development of a tourism product that "meets the needs of present tourists and host regions, while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future".

The size of Victoria's tourism industry can have a significant impact on the natural and cultural environment. Creating a balance between the interests of tourists, host communities and the environment – and recognising mutual dependency – requires a special approach to guarantee the industry's long term future.

Victoria's estimated 100,000 tourism-related enterprises have a central role to play in fostering sustainable tourism; through sustainable practice in investment, production, employment and marketing. There is an established connection between sustainability and commercial success, because reducing energy consumption, minimising waste and conserving water saves money and so increases profit.

A stronger environmental commitment can give a business a definite marketing and competitive advantage. Nexus Research in 2004 found that 62% of tourists said green accreditation would encourage them to consider one accommodation property over another. There is virtually a new, untapped market comprising visitors who are aware of environmental issues, some of which make consumption decisions based on environmental values. A business demonstrating sound principles and practices can stand out from the crowd.

You can immediately slice 10 per cent off your running costs just by addressing basic things like water conservation, chemical use, energy consumption, waste minimisation and recycling. For example, changing light globes to high-efficiency varieties can slash up to 70% of lighting costs. Depending on the size of business, this act alone could save between hundreds and thousands of dollars a year. When you are prepared to invest a little more time and money the additional incentives really start to make financial – and environmental – sense. There's nothing more disingenuous than a motel room that displays stage 4 water restriction notices, but still uses old style shower roses.

What can you do as a tourism business to reduce the rate of climate change?

Most greenhouse gas emissions are associated with energy use. Reducing energy consumption has two important effects; it will cut your electricity and fuel bills and will make an important contribution to preventing climate change accelerating even faster. By using energy more efficiently or choosing to buy from a renewable source, you can also reduce the impact of increased energy costs on your business. For example, greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by implementing energy conservation measures, such as energy efficient lighting, or using renewable energy.

There are four recommended stages in reducing your tourism businesses' greenhouse gas emissions:

1. Determine Your Carbon Footprint

The first step is to determine the extent of your business's greenhouse gas emissions – your carbon footprint, and then set a target for reducing this footprint. There are many good carbon calculators online. For instance, the [Australian Greenhouse Office](#) has developed a hospitality calculator. It is designed for hotels, motels, pubs, clubs and cafes.

2. Improving Energy Efficiency

Improving energy efficiency not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, it is good for your business's bottom line. An example is replacing incandescent globes with compact fluorescents and reducing unnecessary travel.

3. Purchase or Invest in Renewable Energy

Purchasing or investing in clean energy technologies (wind, solar, biomass, small hydro and co-generation) can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency. Renewable energy, such as from new solar and wind power projects, does not rely upon the use of fossil fuels and thus does not increase greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. There are two ways an organisation can use renewable energy:

- Installation of renewable power generation on site; and
- Purchase GreenPower.

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4. Offset Your Emissions

While reducing energy use should always be the first priority, purchasing carbon offsets is one way to encourage the transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy, and show your support for action on climate change. Once energy use is reduced to the extent technically or financially feasible, carbon offsets can be purchased for some or all of the remaining emissions.

EPA Victoria have prepared detailed guidance on carbon offsets and to provide helpful hints to help navigate the marketplace.

Follow the smart and simple tips on these Tourism Excellence information sheets and you will be well on your way to a greener and more prosperous business future.

- [Bathrooms](#) (305kb)
- [Cleaning products](#) (39kb)
- [Gardens and grounds](#) (78kb)
- [Green power](#) (19kb)
- [Grey water](#) (39kb)
- [Heating and cooling](#) (113kb)
- [Hot water](#) (99kb)
- [Laundry and housekeeping](#) (79kb)
- [Lighting](#) (121kb)
- [Office and administration](#) (92kb)
- [Promotional materials](#) (39kb)
- [Refrigeration](#) (70kb)
- [Restaurant, bar and catering](#) (140kb)

Rebates and funding opportunities exist for businesses that are enthusiastic about being sustainable.

Smart Water Fund

The [Smart Water Fund](#) provides funding for innovative projects in water recycling, water conservation and bio-solids management in metropolitan and regional urban Victoria. For more information call 1800 882 432 or go to the [Smart Water Fund](#) website.

Sustainability Fund

The [Sustainability Fund](#) is designed to support projects that foster sustainable resource use and have economic and social benefits for Victorians. Since 2004, the Fund has provided \$42 million in funding to support 82 diverse projects in schools, businesses, local government and community groups. For any enquiries regarding your application, please contact the Sustainability Fund Secretariat at: sustainabilityfund@sustainability.vic.gov.au

Renewable Energy Support Fund

The [Renewable Energy Support Fund](#) is a key initiative of the Victorian Greenhouse Strategy and aims to facilitate and demonstrate innovative renewable energy projects that contribute to reducing Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions. Please email info@sustainability.vic.gov.au for more information.

Litter Prevention Grants

[Sustainability Victoria's Litter Prevention Grants](#) drive best practice litter prevention activities across Victoria. The grants provide financial support and guidance to projects making lasting litter reductions and changing littering behaviour through education, infrastructure and enforcement. For further information, please contact Leanne Boothroyd via email: leanne.boothroyd@sustainability.vic.gov.au

Enhancing Sustainability in New Investment

This program provides participating companies with financial support to help bridge the gap between "conventional" technology and "best practice", when investing in new capital equipment or infrastructure. For further information email: online.enquiries@diird.vic.gov.au

Public Place Recycling Grants

Public Place Recycling Grants are available for public places managed by local government or state government planning agencies, which achieve high public use. Funding will be allocated for projects which can demonstrate a best practice public place recycling, including infrastructure, communications, evaluation and signage. For further information, contact the Local Government Programs Manager at [Sustainability Victoria](#) on (03) 8626 8700.

For more detailed information on being sustainable and environmentally friendly please visit www.tourismexcellence.com.au

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