

Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort and Spa

Under the guidance of the Environmental Committee and the Marriott International's Environmentally Conscious Hospitality Operations (ECHO) program, the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa has made simple changes to many elements of its operations. These changes have resulted in significant cost savings such as a 15% reduction in electricity costs, 22% reduction in gas consumption and, a 45% reduction in water consumption.

The Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa is one of the Gold Coast's leading conference and incentive venues and prides itself on offering environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral conferences and events. Since 2007, Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa has won more than 11 major environmental awards acknowledging the Resort's approach to sustainability. The Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa has an Environmental Committee that is responsible for workshopping and implementing innovative ideas to meet the hotel's goal to reduce their environmental impact.



GETTING STARTED

Guiding the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa in reducing their carbon footprint has been the Marriott International's Environmentally Conscious Hospitality Operations (ECHO) program. ECHO focuses on water and energy conservation, clean air initiatives, wildlife preservation, "reduce-reuse-recycle" waste management, and clean-up campaigns. The Resort's

approach has been guided by this program and the in-house Environmental Committee's goal of operating equipment in the most efficient manner possible.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

Over the last seven years, the property has implemented a number of initiatives to reduce, reuse and recycle energy, water and waste. They include:

- Establishing an Environmental Committee to guide the Resort's activities to reduce their environmental footprint;
- A chiller optimisation project to reduce electricity use and costs;
- Installation of water flow restrictors in all taps and showers;
- Replacement of inefficient dishwashers;
- Installation of an ozone laundry system that has replaced chlorine as the primary disinfectant;
- Use of a fabric whitener that has reduced the number of pre-wash and rinse cycles needed, while still using cold water;
- Replacing 95% of the incandescent lamps with compact fluorescent lights;
- Modifying lighting controllers to take advantage of ambient light;
- Modifying air conditioning controllers to suit the time of day/month/year; and,
- Managing use of peak and off-peak electricity use.

KEY OUTCOMES

The outcomes from implementing these sustainability initiatives have made the Resort's efforts extremely worthwhile. Not only has the Resort received numerous accolades, but it has experienced:

- 15% reduction in electricity costs;
- 22% reduction in gas consumption; and,
- 45% reduction in water consumption

MAJOR CHALLENGES

Despite their commitment to sustainability, the journey has not always been easy for the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa. Operating 24-hours, 7-days-a-week has at times made implementing new processes and systems very difficult. Consideration of the needs of Resort guests has been paramount and as a result work is often undertaken in off peak season and after hours. Projects are also divided into smaller allotments to reduce impact.

ADVICE TO OTHER OPERATORS

Ken Duddy, Director of Sales & Marketing at the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa says that the countless awards the resort has received are a

testament to the hard work of the Environmental Committee and all of the Resort's operating units. Ken stresses the importance of having a unified approach to sustainability across all sectors of a hotel's operation and ensuring staff are constantly working together to employ methods that preserve the natural surroundings and resources.

NEXT STEPS

Next at the Resort is the installation of a rainwater/bore water harvesting system. The system will include a treatment plant which will remove iron contaminants from the bore water. While the water is currently being used in water features and for irrigation purposes, treatment of the water will make it suitable to be used in the Resort's main swimming pool. Further to this, the Resort & Spa has new eco-friendly targets in place for the next two years which will further reduce the Resort's carbon footprint and increase the sustainability of the operations.