

# Sustainable Regions Program



## Airlie Beach Hotel

<http://www.airliebeachhotel.com.au>

The Airlie Beach Hotel first opened in 1968 as a beachside holiday pub for nearby Proserpine residents and local cane farmers and is now owned and operated as a private family business. In recent years the family has embarked on an expansion and redevelopment program that has included the completion of three new stages of development.

The renovation has provided the opportunity for sustainable measures to be incorporated in the design of the hotel, resulting in a dramatic decrease in energy use. Initiatives so far include replacement of energy inefficient fridges as well as installation of a key tag system and water saving shower heads and taps. The hotel is constantly seeking to raise awareness among visitors and new staff members of their commitment to sustainable practices and their responsibility to the environment.

### 1. Getting started

Airlie Beach Hotel first became involved with sustainability in 2009 when invited by Tourism Queensland to participate in the Sustainable Regions program. They saw value in the concept of working as part of a larger operator cluster and receiving advice from qualified sustainability experts.

### 2. Major initiatives

Having signed up to the ecoBiz program through Sustainable Regions, the initial focus for the Hotel was to look at the energy efficiency of all fridges. The Hotel assessed the current energy efficiency of their fridges and replaced old parts to ensure they were running as efficiently as possible.

Airlie Beach also assessed their office practices to identify inefficient practices. Staff were encouraged to use electric equipment more responsibly through simple initiatives such as switching lights and computers off overnight. Excess paper from the printer is used as scrap paper and then also recycled. In addition the printing and copying equipment is fitted with a power saving option, which automatically sets the machines on "sleep" mode when not in use.

As the hotel is currently undergoing some renovations, they have a unique opportunity to implement sustainability initiatives from the beginning in their planning and design of new areas. All new bathrooms are fitted with a flow control and the taps also use low flow taps to reduce their water usage. Energy efficient lighting has been installed in most areas.

In order to prevent guests from leaving electricity on in their rooms when unattended, Airlie Beach Hotel recently introduced a key tag system. The keys need to be inserted in a slot at the entrance of the room to switch the power on. To increase the energy saving measures, air conditioner sensors have been installed in all rooms so that the air conditioner is automatically turned off when the balcony doors are open.

Clearly labelled divided waste bins have been set up in the bar, which allows the hotel to recycle glass through J.J. Richards & Sons.

Situated right on the Great Barrier Reef, the Hotel is conscious about using chemicals which could adversely affect the environment. The Hotel therefore uses fully bio degradable chemicals in the kitchen and housekeeping.



In order to make the visitors more conscious of their impacts on the environment by using water and energy Airlie Beach Hotel display educational signage in all rooms. Furthermore, the staff members are being educated by their team leaders on what it means to act sustainably. Special focus is put on the departments of housekeeping and the restaurant.

### 3. Key outcomes

While they are still awaiting sufficient data to compare the reduction in energy use to date, the managers of Airlie Beach Hotel are beginning to notice a decrease in their electricity costs. They expect this to continue over the coming years and as the renovations come to a close.

The existing recycling system has resulted in approximately 51.90 tonnes of waste being redirected from landfill. Through the ecoBiz program, Airlie Beach Hotel has estimated that by expanding its current recycling program, it could further reduce waste to landfill by 25% (equivalent of 51.9 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e).

### 4. Major challenges

Airlie Beach Hotel's greatest challenge has been to become more sustainable within the confines of their area. One area that the hotel would very much like to improve is recycling. Unfortunately recycling is not available in the area and there are insufficient resources available to conduct their own recycle project.

### 5. Advice to operators

Airlie Beach Hotel wishes for a greater level of commitment from the rest of the community towards sustainability. Pauline Hartwig of Airlie Beach Hotel gives the following advice to operators who wish to become sustainable:

"If you are looking to make your business more sustainable and reduce your impact on the environment, do so in small bites. You cannot change the world in one night!"

### 6. Next steps

The Airlie Beach Hotel will continue to incorporate sustainability initiatives in the renovation of the hotel. They are currently investigating options to collect rain water for the irrigation of the gardens. With the use of tank storage the hotel plans on collecting enough water to be able to cease using tap water for garden areas.

Additionally, the hotel will continue to canvass local support to implement a recycling program in Airlie Beach and the surrounding Whitsundays region.

For further information contact:

Mrs. Pauline Hartwig  
Phone: 07 4964 1999  
Email: [stock@airliebeachhotel.com.au](mailto:stock@airliebeachhotel.com.au)