

# Sustainable Regions for Queensland - Magnetic Island Executive Summary



# Sustainable Regions for Queensland Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

In responding to global concern over climate change, Queensland is moving to become a world-leading 'guilt-free' destination. Tourism Queensland is working towards building sustainable destinations and supporting global best practice in tourism through its Sustainable Regions program. As a practical expression of this vision TQ has developed five **goals** for sustainable tourism in the natural environment. These goals directed the development of the Environmental Indicators, including:

1. Reduced average consumption of non-renewable resources by the tourism industry
2. A tourism industry that is responding to environmental challenges
3. A positive Policy environment for sustainable tourism growth
4. Increased visitor awareness of Queensland's unique environment
5. Sustainable use of Protected Areas, a key attraction for visitors to Queensland

This Final Report signifies the conclusion of the Sustainable Regions pilot program on Magnetic Island. The pilot program was delivered in five regions – Airlie Beach, Magnetic Island, North Stradbroke Island, Pioneer Valley / Cape Hillsborough and Winton. Kleinhardt Sustainability and Eco-efficiency Group and The Missing Link Resource Coordinators managed the delivery of the Magnetic Island project.

To commence the implementation of the Sustainable Regions Project on behalf of Tourism Queensland, Kleinhardt undertook 19 audits of tourism and tourism support businesses on Magnetic Island in mid-July 2009. The businesses were a sample of approximately 13% of the tourism industry that exists on Magnetic Island and ranged from attractions and activities; to accommodation houses; restaurants and support services including transport, marketing and promotion.

The program utilised two existing Queensland government initiated programs:

- the Environmental Protection Authority's ecoBiz small business auditing process to provide a consistent mechanism to quantify the current eco-footprint and aid in developing action plans for reducing that eco-footprint, and
- ecoFund, an initiative that provides assistance to offset the eco-footprint of tourism businesses, with the aim of increasing the protected area estate within Queensland.

This is the overarching report of the regions eco-footprint and has been derived using both site and regional data.

The current eco-footprint of Magnetic Island is estimated to be:

**0.425kg/per person/per night**

This figure is arrived at using the ecoBiz calculator and the estimate of total energy consumption and fuel use for Magnetic Island tourism related businesses and divided by the estimated 320 000 visitors annually.

This document reports against the Tourism Queensland Indicators for Sustainability at a regional and individual level by estimating a carbon footprint for the region and the separate businesses as a point against which to measure improvements garnered as a result of effective implementation of the recommendations in the Site and Regional Action Plans. This information will act as a benchmark against which to judge future audit results.

## Sustainable Regions Vision:

"For Queensland to be recognised internationally and domestically as a sustainable tourism destination, where the very assets that attract visitors to the region are managed for the enjoyment of future generations"



# Sustainable Regions for Queensland Executive Summary

The key steps in the Sustainable Regions pilot program were:

- Collaborate with Tourism Queensland to encourage participation and behavioural and operational change;
- Conduct baseline **energy usage, waste generation and water use and carbon footprint calculation assessments**, on site for up to 20 tourism businesses across the Magnetic Island region and provide a **site audit report and action plan to identify and implement actions to reduce the footprint** for each site.
- Encourage business operators to commit to measure and monitor ongoing outcomes and provide ideas on how to achieve change.
- Collect and analyse regional data for delivery of a **final consolidated report** summarizing findings in a way that reports **against the state-wide key environmental performance indicators** identified by Tourism Queensland and how they can effectively **communicate regional action priorities to the broader tourism and world community**. As sensitive material is contained within the final report, it is only available to stakeholders involved in the project.

## Sustainable Tourism Operators

The Sustainable Regions program has been developed to assist individual tourism operators to become more sustainable through cost-effective measures. There are a range of initiatives that Queensland tourism operators can engage in to improve the sustainability of their operations. In the Magnetic Island pilot a total of 19 operators participated.

The Sustainable Regions program was an ambitious initiative to encourage businesses at various stages along the pathway to sustainability to work together to improve their businesses, their region and the reputation of Queensland as a 'sustainable tourism' destination. The pilot phase of the program should be considered a resounding success, with some measurable wins, some lessons, and a clear plan for the future and agreed next steps. Just some of the outcomes from the pilot phase include:

- ✓ 19 Queensland tourism businesses have made a commitment and progressed along the pathway to sustainability;
- ✓ **Carbon Footprints** have been completed for 19 businesses.
- ✓ Operators have invested in new **green initiatives** including:
  - The Magnetic Island Sea Kayak owners were already undertaking their own small scale audits of water use and waste production. This audit has given them the tools to continue with the path of continuous improvement.
  - The operators of Bungalow Bay Resort every wet season replace the Perspex panels in their 2 person bungalows to seal them, thereby increasing the efficiency of the air-conditioning system. In recent months they have implemented recycling education for their staff and clients.
  - The Magnetic Island Bike Hire owner is upgrading the fleet of electric bikes and through the hire of bicycles is encouraging visitors to engage in a healthy, safe, no fuel stay on the Island. Richard is also actively lobbying for more cycle paths and safer walking tracks around the island

### STEP #1

#### Make a commitment

21 tourism operators signed up to the Sustainable Regions Program

### STEP #2

#### Measure and assess

19 tourism operators have completed baseline assessment

### STEP #3

#### Get recognised

19 tourism operators could become / renew as an 'ecoBiz partner'

### STEP #4

#### Invest in green technology

Operators are either already investing or plan to invest in significant green technology following the program

### STEP #5

#### Offset

Once completed, operators will consider offsetting.

# Sustainable Regions for Queensland Executive Summary

- Aquasearch Aquarium, Shaws on Shore and Bungalow Bay are all engaged with the Townsville City Council Solar Cities Program
- Adrenalin Jet ski recycle their wetsuits at the end of their life to other purposes: new straps for masks and padding for other wetsuits.
- Magnetic Island All Seasons are progressively replacing all their electric hot water systems with solar and/or gas hot water systems and installing security flyscreens on some of their rooms to allow visitors to turn off air-conditioning and take advantage of flow-through ventilation.
- Tuff Trax has designed a rescue canoe to carry bicycles between bays on the island, in concert with the kayaks that they use, to remove the requirement for a vehicle to transport them. They have also designed a safety backpack which incorporates a stretcher, safety gear and communications equipment for the tours.
- Fish'n N Fuel'n management went fishing through the rubbish bins at the fishing wharf to discover that rubbish, mostly plastic bags from his shop formed a significant part of their contents. In response they have researched and purchased "biodegradable" bio-plastic bags to trial in his shop and are offering them to other retail outlets in the area for use.
- Providence Sailing provides a wonderful way to enjoy the Magnetic Island environs – all under wind power! In order to protect the reef the owners do not provide fins on their boat and educate their visitors not to stand on coral or reefs to avoid damaging them.
- Magnetic Sands on the Beach has introduced an awareness program encouraging patrons to reuse their towels and turn off the air-conditioners.
- Tropical Palms Inn has recently painted their establishment with sun reflective coating to reduce air-conditioning energy requirements and have information signage in their rooms telling of their environmental efforts.

## Planned Actions

In just six (6) months the Sustainable Regions Pilot Program has achieved a great deal. Beyond what has already been completed the operators, Councils, Regional Tourism Organisations and local partners have a number of exciting initiatives planned. Outlined below is a summary from the operator and regional action plans:

**Table A: Planned Sustainability Initiatives for Queensland Tourism Operators**

### Measures Recommended to Sustainable Regions Participants

<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educating owners, staff and visitors on sustainable practice</li></ul>
<b>Energy / GHG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacing gas hot water systems with heat pump systems</li><li>• Heat recovery from cool room compressor to heat hot water</li></ul>

# Sustainable Regions for Queensland Executive Summary

- Installing solar panels to generate renewable power
- Replacing inefficient air conditioners and ensuring regular maintenance and cleaning of existing systems (especially in high salt environments)
- Reducing the temperature settings of air conditioners
- Ensuring screen savers have been removed from computers and that all equipment is operating on 'energy saving' settings
- Replacing inefficient gas ovens with efficient fan forced gas ovens
- Purchasing electricity from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind or hydro (Green Power)
- Offsetting carbon emissions from vehicles through green fleet
- Installing insulation
- Installing energy efficient lights/ removal of bulbs in over lit areas
- Ensuring all drafts and air leaks from buildings have been sealed
- Replacing refrigeration seals
- Encouraging greater ownership of electricity use by installing sub-meters
- Collecting consumption information to calculate more accurate carbon footprints
- Training for commercial kitchen staff on energy efficient cooking practices

## **Water**

- Installing water tanks and using high pressure hoses for vehicle washing
- Installing low flow restrictors on taps and water efficient shower roses
- Implementing leaks reporting program

## **Waste**

- Working with suppliers to reduce packaging waste, ensure packaging is recyclable and made from recycled products e.g. bulk, return packing, reusable containers
- Reducing food waste through portion sizes and menu changes
- Reducing plastic waste through collapsible water bladders and offering branded reusable water bottles i.e. 'disposable water bottle free zones'
- Using recycled paper and stationary in office

# Sustainable Regions for Queensland Executive Summary

- Recycling print cartridges or refill
- Co-mingled waste collection – including training and monitoring of staff and careful placement of colour coded bins or bags and signage
- Including waste management in staff induction
- Inviting staff to input ideas for waste management
- Reviewing chemicals used and suppliers to ensure purchased locally, ecologically friendly and packaging is bulk and recyclable
- Shredding paper for recycling
- Sending food, garden waste and shredded paper to a community farm
- Replacing wax coated or polystyrene/plastic cups with biodegradable or reusable alternatives
- Reviewing brochure production and consider electronic options
- Submission of waste survey to council and supporting the clusters efforts to find solution to accessing a viable co-mingled waste collection for businesses

## **Waste-water**

- Installation of improved effluent treatment systems on vessels
- Investigation to explore option of using bio-cycle water on vegetable and herb farm

## **Magnetic Island Sustainable Tourism Regions – Short Term Actions**

1. Community Education and Involvement in Sustainability through Community Events
2. Townsville City Council is currently supporting the reduction of plastic bags on Maggie Island and investigating options to reduce their use, before resorting to the legal aspect of 'banning' plastic bags.
3. Townsville City Council encourages the planting of local native plants adapted to a dry-tropical climate through regular free native-tree giveaways at community events.
4. Ergon Energy with support from Townsville City Council is currently investigating development of 100kW solar park on Magnetic Island.
5. Townsville City Council, Visy Recycling and Reef Check Australia have partnered together and created the Reef IQ Education Program focusing on recycling and impacts of waste on the reef. Students can also take an education tours of the Visy Recycling Centre.

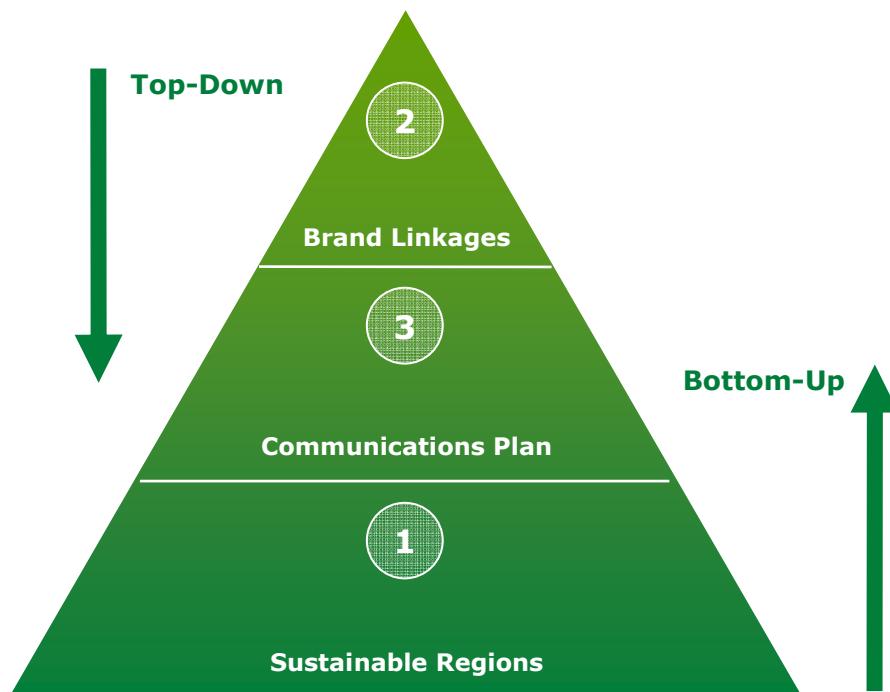
# Sustainable Regions for Queensland Executive Summary

## Next Steps

The pilot stage of the Sustainable Regions program will come to a close with Tourism Queensland coordinating a number of events in the five regions early in 2010. The aim of these events is to recognise the participants in the program and create the momentum needed to continue the program. The integrated approach (Figure A) recognises that 'bottom-up' initiatives such as those identified through the operator and regional action plans need to meet the 'top down' marketing and communications initiatives of the Councils and Regional Tourism Organisations reflected in their Corporate and Strategic Plans. That is, while you can deliver some outstanding projects and initiatives on the ground, the cluster programs rely on consumer marketing and communications to be sustainable.

It is recommended that the next step (Step 2) in the process is a linkage of the five pilot regions to the RTO and Council Regional communication and marketing program. This will require further consultation with both the RTO and Council and will lead to the development of a Communications Plan (Step 3).

**Figure A: Integrated approach to Sustainable Clusters**



### Brand Linkages

- Link to Tourism Queensland and Regional Tourism Organisation
- Establish Identity and Story
- Supported by - Brand rules and creative tools

### Communications Plan

- Linking regional tourism plans and the broader community

### Sustainable Regions

- Clusters with a Starter Kit
- Onsite education and action e.g. recycling, energy and education posters
- Supported by - Operator cluster facilitation including cluster workshops, business rules and links to brand and marketing.