

Increasing Regulation of Business

Across the globe, Governments are responding to the call to reduce our collective carbon footprint through regulation. The Federal Government 'Green Paper' (known to most as the Garnaut Report), for example, is just one of a raft of international responses to the threat of human-induced climate change. Within Australia tourism businesses should be aware of the following policies and programs:

- Obligations under the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the National Greenhouse Reporting and Energy Scheme thresholds
- Coastal Management Plans
- Changes to Local Government Planning Guidelines
- Queensland Development Code – Sustainable buildings affecting lighting and water efficiency
- Queensland Plumbing and Drainage including use of grey water, onsite sewerage
- Government Solar Bonus Scheme

This factsheet provides an overview of the regulatory requirements for Queensland operators and includes links to further information.

Australian Regulations Affecting Tourism Businesses

[Australian Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme](#)

The 'Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme' (CPRS) is the Australian Government's response to limit carbon pollution while minimising the impact on business and households.

There are two distinct elements to the CPRS– the cap on carbon pollution and the ability to trade. The cap achieves the environmental outcome of reducing carbon pollution. The ability to trade ensures carbon pollution is reduced at the lowest possible cost.

The trading scheme was scheduled to be introduced in early 2010 however is now not scheduled to be introduced until after 2012 (the end of the current commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol). For more information visit the Department of Climate Change website¹.

[National Greenhouse Reporting and Energy Scheme \(NGRES\)](#)

The National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 establishes a mandatory reporting system for corporate greenhouse gas emissions and energy production and consumption. On 1 July 2008 a phased approach to reporting was commenced and is based on established thresholds for 'facilities' and 'corporations'.

The Government has opted for broad sector coverage with around 1,000 companies compulsorily included in the scheme. The threshold is for companies who generate 25 ktCO₂-e or more a year of direct emissions. To help you get a sense of which types of tourism operators will need to report, benchmarks provided through the Earthcheck program of the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC), show average carbon produced by a range of tourism facilities (this does not include the overall corporations emissions, just the individual facilities):

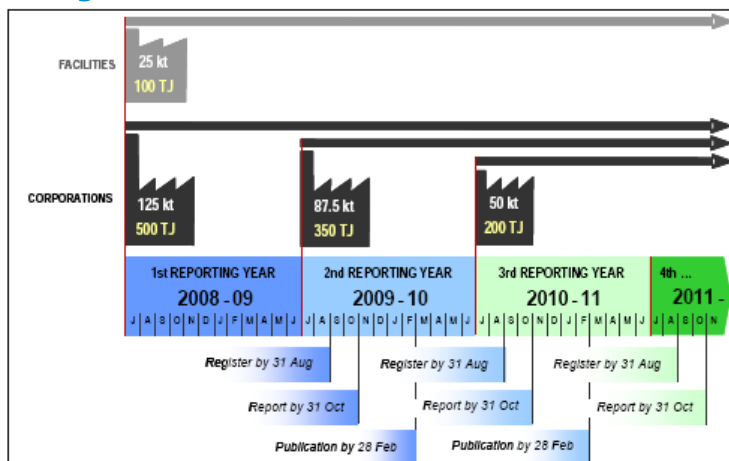
- Mega-international airports = 150,000 tonnes per annum (tpa)*
- Large resorts, conference centres, and cruise ships = 25,000 tpa*
- Average 150 room hotel = 1500 tpa
- Tours and activities = 200 tpa
- Spa facilities = 100 tpa
- Administrative offices = 25 tpa

¹ Australian Department of Climate Change <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/>

Your Regulatory Requirements

Only those marked with the * will be required to report emissions. Of course, these are only industry benchmarks and the only way to be sure is to calculate your carbon footprint using a recognised and nationally compliant carbon calculation tool. Refer to the Measuring and Offsetting your Carbon Footprint Factsheet for more information on carbon calculators.

Figure 1: NGERs reporting thresholds



Source: Department of Climate Change, 2007

What Help is Available?

The Australian Government has recognised that there will be adjustment costs for businesses as they move to a low carbon economy and the Green Paper outlines programs to assist business through the transitional period. Possible assistance to the tourism industry will include the [Climate Change Action Fund](#) which will provide partnership funding for a range of activities including:

- Capital investment in innovative new low emissions processes
- Industrial energy efficiency projects with long payback periods
- Dissemination of best and innovative practice among small to medium sized enterprises

The Queensland and Federal Governments have also developed numerous programs to assist households and small business owners in adapting to climate change. They include:

- [Solar Bonus Scheme](#)
- [The Solar Homes and Communities Plan](#)
- [Solar Hot Water Rebate Scheme](#)

Local Government Changes Affecting Tourism Businesses

Local Governments are adopting a variety of approaches to responding to Climate Change. As each Council's regulatory and planning requirements differ, it is important that operators contact their local council to find out what is required of them. In particular operators should look out for changes to:

- Building codes and regulations
- Coastal development regulations
- Tree clearing / vegetation management
- Plumbing and drainage regulations
- Sustainable development grants

Your Regulatory Requirements

Factsheet 2.3: Your Regulatory Requirements

Outlined below are examples of initiatives undertaken in the Brisbane, Townsville and Sunshine Coast Regional Councils around sustainability.

Council	Local Planning Regulations
Brisbane City Council	<p>Natural Assets Local Law 2003 - helps to protect natural assets, including bushland, areas, wetlands, waterway corridors and trees in urban areas.</p> <p>The Climate Change and Energy Taskforce Final Report – A Call for Action (2007) Brisbane City Council will review and potentially amend policy issues relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stormwater and flood-related infrastructure requirementsProvision of shade and weather protectionAccess to roofs for solar and embedded electricity generationWalking and cycling planning and infrastructureMandatory footpaths for all new developmentThe provision of bike lockers, showers and changing facilitiesGreater integration of commercial development and public transportUrban agriculture and Green RoofsBarriers to food production within the city. <p>Further the report calls for a policy to establish no net loss of vegetation through development by requiring satisfactory compensatory planting for any clearing.</p>
Townsville City Council	<p>As part of its long-term commitment to proactively respond to climate change, in 2007 Townsville successfully became Queensland's only Solar City. In collaboration with industry partners including Ergon Energy, this program informs and educates the Townsville community about energy supply, use and conservation.</p> <p>To progress their vision of a Sustainable Townsville, Townsville City Council's Integrated Sustainability Services also hosts regular community workshops and events, such as the Smart Home and Lifestyle Expo.</p>
Sunshine Coast Regional Council	<p>Local Law No 19 – amended in 2007. Under Local Law No 19, significant vegetation has been mapped as Vegetation Preservation Areas (VPAs). A Permit to Damage Vegetation will be required to carry out damage to native vegetation.</p>

In order to prepare for the likely changes that Governments will make to planning laws and regulations, businesses (suggested for consistency of language) should aim to incorporate environmentally sustainable development (ESD) principles into their operation. Many local councils and government agencies and departments throughout Australia provide information on ESD:

- [Environmental Protection Agency](#), Queensland Government
- [Department of Sustainability and Environment](#), Victoria Government
- [ACT Planning and Land Authority](#), Australian Capital Territory Government
- [Brisbane City Council](#), Queensland
- [City of Yarra](#), Victoria