

REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF TOURISM AND COMMUNITIES – OUR LOW CARBON LIVING PROGRAM

PROJECT FACTSHEET



KEY POINTS

- We have developed a community-based program that enables tourism businesses to lower their carbon emissions and enhance sustainability
- Participating businesses:
 - are audited and rated on energy, water and waste
 - are provided with resources and other support to improve efficiency
 - become part of an online community network

Visit the program here:

<https://lowcarbonliving-bluemountains.com.au/>

THE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

Worldwide, tourism accounts for 5% of Greenhouse Gas emissions and makes up 5.6% of Australia's emissions (Dwyer et al., 2010). The effectiveness of establishing sustainable, low carbon tourism has been demonstrated in other countries such as in the Lakes District, UK where a large number of small tourism businesses have achieved significant carbon reductions with the support of a national scheme. Research also suggests that one-third of tourists will selectively choose eco-friendly accommodation (Nurture Lakeland, 2011).

Australia is a popular tourist destination for both domestic and international tourists and thus has the potential to contribute significant energy, waste and water efficiencies through a targeted program that addresses the nuances of the Australian tourism industry.



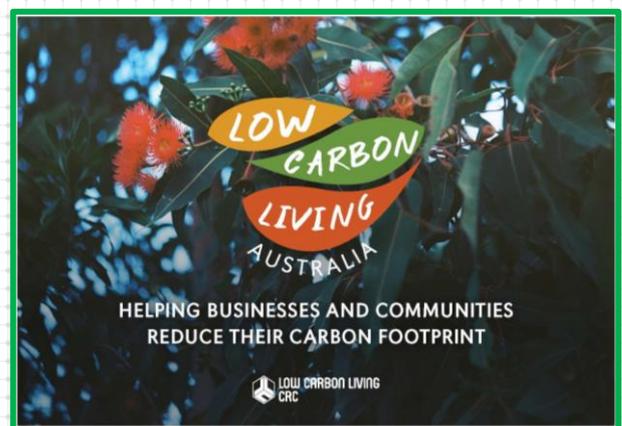
CRC for Low Carbon Living

The CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRCLCL) is a national research and innovation hub that seeks to enable a globally competitive low carbon built environment sector and is supported by the Commonwealth Government's Cooperative Research Centres programme.

With a focus on collaborative innovation, the CRCLCL brings together property, planning, engineering and policy organisations with leading Australian researchers. It develops new social, technological and policy tools for facilitating the development of low carbon products and services to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment. For more information visit www.lowcarbonlivingcrc.com.au/

OUR RESEARCH

Using the Blue Mountains world heritage tourist destination as a case study, we investigated whether a market-based or dual incentive scheme could reduce the carbon, water and waste footprint of the tourism sector.



We established an education and technical support program, and recruited 30 businesses (a 'living lab') that were audited, rated and the results published on a dedicated website. We then monitored

and analysed reductions in water, energy and waste, web traffic and changes in occupancy rates.

RESULTS

We found that a multiple-incentive scheme worked best, that is, undertaking auditing and rating, developing a website and related promotion, and providing education and training. On average the recruited businesses reduced their carbon usage by 10-15% per year.

Our research showed that 82% of visitors and 91% of residents would choose a local business that has made an effort to reduce its carbon footprint.

The dedicated website made it easy for locals and visitors to make smarter decisions about which businesses they supported and how they could reduce their own carbon footprint.

OUTCOMES

Since we piloted the program in 2014, 95% of the businesses have remained in the program and have reported increased revenues. The number of participating businesses has also increased from 30 to nearly 70.

Our project has evolved into **The Low Carbon Living Program**, a community-based initiative that helps businesses and communities] reduce their carbon footprint. The program connects residents and visitors to local businesses who are reducing their carbon footprint by cutting back on waste and reducing energy and water use.

This program empowers everyone to address climate change by making positive decisions about their use of resources, where they shop and what services they support.

WHAT DO OUR PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES THINK?

The Low Carbon Living program is a win/win for not only businesses and their customers, but for our region as a whole. It's a no-brainer. We need this to maintain a healthy, sustainable business economy and environment in the World Heritage area.

Vent Thomas, President, Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber

Over five years of tracking and auditing at Lilianfels we have managed to reduce our energy consumption by 25% per customer.

Huong Nguyen, Director, The Escarpment Group

NEXT STEPS

We are now transferring the program to the Southern Highlands, NSW, a collaboration with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute (BMWHI) and Wingecarribee Shire Council.

PROJECT TEAM

Dr John Merson - Program Director, BMWHI

Dr Alex Baumber - Carbon Analyst, UTS, Sydney

Chris Lockhart-Smith – Auditor, BMWHI

Annabel Murray - Program Manager Blue Mountains

FURTHER INFORMATION

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And visit our project website: <https://lowcarbonliving-bluemountains.com.au/>

REFERENCES

1. Dwyer, L., Forsyth, P., Spurr, R. and Hoque, S. (2010), 'Estimating the carbon footprint of Australian tourism', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18: 3, 355–376
2. Nurture Lakeland. (2011), 'Tourism and Conservation Working in Partnership for a Sustainable Lakeland'. 23 June 2011. <http://www.nurturlakeland.org>. Homepage and Sustainable Tourism: Facts and Figures.

The infographic is divided into three vertical panels. The first panel, 'IF YOU'RE A BUSINESS OWNER', features a briefcase icon and lists four bullet points: undertaking a carbon audit, learning to become more carbon efficient, joining a network of businesses committed to reducing emissions, and becoming part of a community that helps protect the planet. The second panel, 'IF YOU'RE A RESIDENT & VISITOR', features a house icon and lists four bullet points: making informed choices about shopping, reducing one's own carbon footprint, learning simple low carbon changes at home, and helping protect the environment. The third panel, 'IF YOU'RE LIVING OR WORKING IN A TOURIST DESTINATION', features a location pin icon and a paragraph explaining that the program is particularly beneficial for growing destinations that combine a unique identity with low carbon credentials.