

RP3010

LOW CARBON TOURISM: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Project objectives

The objectives are to develop a community-based model for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in tourism-dependent regions. This involves an integrated strategy of low-carbon business assessments, education and the creation of incentives for GHG reduction.

Tourism accounts for 5% of Australia's GHG emissions and significant opportunities exist for emissions reduction in tourism enterprises. Moreover, in regions where tourism is the dominant industry, tourism businesses can play a leading role in helping the broader community transition to a low carbon future through the creation of a regional low carbon "brand". The Upper Blue Mountains has been selected as the starting point for this pilot program, which will later be extended to other regions. The Blue Mountains is one of Australia's leading tourism regions, attracting over 3 million annual visitors.

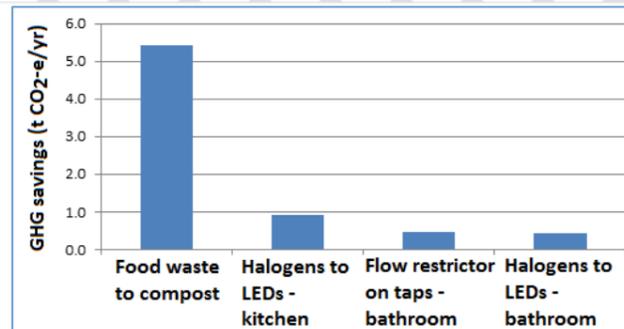
The project involves advising tourism businesses in the Upper Blue Mountains on ways to reduce their carbon footprint, as well as promoting low-carbon businesses through a website, smartphone app, ratings scheme and logo for display by participants.

Progress

Since commencing in September 2013, the project has signed up more than 20 tourism-related businesses, with 16 low-carbon business assessments undertaken. These assessments provide advice on energy, water and waste-related practices that could be adopted, along with modelling showing the impacts of these changes on the business' carbon footprint.

Participating businesses range from small B&Bs and cafes to large hotels and restaurants, and also include galleries, adventure tours and other visitor attractions.

A low-carbon ratings scheme is also being developed in consultation with the tourism industry to rate businesses as Bronze, Silver or Gold based on their record in reducing their



carbon footprint. A smartphone app and website will allow visitors to the region to view each business' low-carbon credentials and earn rewards for choosing those with the highest ratings. The ratings scheme, app and website are on track for a full launch in 2015.



Engaged Communities

7. Living laboratories as low carbon lifestyle narratives

Research Team

Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute:
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Blue Mountains City Council: Nic Moodie

UNSW: Alex Baumber, Paul Osmond & Paul Twomey

Other Partners

BMLOT (Blue Mountains, Lithgow & Opéron Tourism), Gridstone Pty Ltd, OEH, University of Melbourne & Curtin University

Project Start Date: Sep-13

PROJECT DURATION: 2 YEARS