Green Tourism Futures: Climate Change Responses by Australian Government Tourism Agencies

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Introduction

- National Climate Change Adaptation Framework identified tourism as one key sector vulnerable to impacts of climate change in Australia (COAG, 2007)
- Tourism Ministers' Council established National Tourism and Climate Change Taskforce in 2007

Photo courtesy of Tourism Queensland

Introduction (cont)

- Federal Government tourism initiatives
  - *Tourism and climate change – A framework for action* (DRET, 2008)
  - *Climate change guide: Mitigation and adaptation measures for Australian tourism operators* (DRET, 2009)
- Tourism industry responses to climate change
  - *Climate change: A brief guide for tourism* (QTIC, 2008)
  - *Responding to climate change: Tourism and transport sector position paper* (TTF, 2008)
  - *Climate change and tourism: Responding to global challenges* (WTO, 2008)

Introduction (cont)

- Sustainable Tourism CRC (STCRC) research program
  - *Climate change policies and Australian tourism – scoping study of the economic aspects* (Forsyth, Dwyer & Spurr, 2007)
  - *Climate change and Australian tourism – a scoping study* (Buultjens, White & Willacy, 2007)
  - *The carbon footprint of Australian tourism* (Forsyth et al., 2008)
  - *The carbon footprint of Queensland tourism* (Hoque et al., 2010)
  - *Climate change-induced economic impacts on tourism destinations* (Pham, Simmons & Spurr, 2010)
  - *The impacts of climate change on Australian tourism destinations: Developing adaptation and response strategies* (STCRC, 2009; Turton, Hadwen & Wilson, 2009)
  - STCRC focus on economic impacts, carbon emissions and adaptation to climate change by tourism destinations and operators

Aim of the research

- This research evaluates how government tourism agencies in Australia are addressing and responding to the issue of climate change, in particular by promoting carbon reduction initiatives and carbon offsetting schemes for tourism operators (i.e. mitigation)

Research methods

- Nine government tourism agencies were assessed
  - Federal government – Tourism Australia
  - State governments – Tourism Queensland, Tourism New South Wales, Tourism Victoria, Tourism Tasmania, South Australian Tourism Commission, Tourism Western Australia
  - Territory governments – Australian Capital Tourism, Tourism Northern Territory

- Information obtained from tourism agencies'
  - Corporate websites, annual reports, tourism plans, fact sheets, case studies, media releases, newsletters

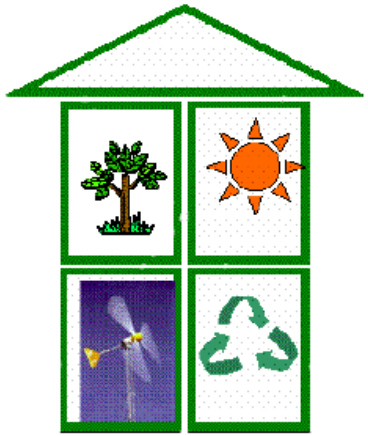
Research methods (cont)

- Focused on specific information relating to
  - Climate change, sustainability, ‘going green’ (eco-efficiency)
- Information was located on corporate websites
  - Using keyword searches,
  - Checking industry resources
  - Reading through tourism plans, strategies and annual reports (since 2007)
- Content analysis was based on
  - Frequency of keywords
  - Key themes
  - Extent of coverage of climate change issues and impacts

Results: Climate change impacts

Tourism agencies mainly focused on:

- Impacts on destinations and increased costs
  - Impacts on long haul travel to Australia and risks to human health and biodiversity (NT)
  - Coral bleaching on Great Barrier Reef (Qld)
  - Higher costs and carbon emissions (NT, Qld, Vic)
- Business opportunities: marketing/competitive advantage
  - Energy and waste efficiency, cost savings (SA, Vic, NT)
  - Promotion of eco-friendly products/destinations, attract green tourists (SA, WA, NT, Tas, Vic)
  - Extended warmer seasons and expenditure (WA)



Results: Responses to climate change

Keyword search of climate change words on government tourism websites

	Tourism Queensland (59 pages)	Tourism WA (23 pages)	Tourism NT (39 pages)	Tourism Victoria (7 pages)	Tourism Tasmania (17 pages)	Tourism NSW (1 page)	Tourism Australia (2 pages)
Climate change	1,415	34	13	18	10	7	13
Carbon emissions	207	18	16	13	6	1	3
Greenhouse gas emissions	211	16	8	16	5	1	3
Carbon offset	259	18	15	13	5	1	5
Carbon credits	291	18	15	12	1	1	1
Carbon footprint	251	18	16	13	5	0	3
Carbon mitigation	191	20	15	13	1	0	0
Carbon neutral	203	19	15	17	6	0	1

Notes: Keyword search of any words, not exact phrase; Keyword search conducted online on 13 October 2010
No responses for SATourism Commission (1 website page mentioned climate change) or AC Tourism using these keywords

Results: Responses (cont)

Response to climate change (CC) by state government tourism agencies

	Tourism Queensland	Tourism Victoria	Tourism Tasmania	Tourism WA	Tourism NT
Website	'Sustainability & Climate Change'	'Tourism Excellence'	'Climate Change'	'Climate Change'	'Going Green' 'Outback Offsets'
Climate Change Information	What's the fuss about CC? What must I do? What can I do in my business? Who can help? The Facts: Buzz words, Case studies, Fact sheets, News & media, Resources & key links	CC & your tourism business, Planning for CC impacts, What can you do as a business to reduce the rate of CC? Further information	CC & sustainable tourism, Tools & tips, Certification schemes, Industry examples, Green marketing, Green events & venues, Consultants, Useful websites	CC, Industry examples, Consultants, Tools & resources, Green marketing, Green events, National Action Plan	Going green, Getting started, Greening your business, Get help to go green, Certification programs, Green news, Outback Offsets
Climate Change Fact Sheets	Understanding CC Offsetting Your Carbon Footprint				CC Overview How Will CC Impact Tourism? Carbon Offsetting

Results: Responses (cont)

Carbon mitigation or reduction

- Main carbon reduction tools suggested for tourism operators
  - Climate Action Certification
  - ecoBiz
  - Earthcheck
  - Greenhouse Challenge Plus
- Key drivers for carbon reduction initiatives
  - National action plan on tourism and climate change
  - State policies or actions plans on climate change
  - Impacts of climate change, higher costs of proposed carbon pollution reduction scheme, growing consumer awareness of climate change and impacts of travel (e.g. carbon emissions)

Results: Responses (cont)

Climate change tourism programs

- Tourism Queensland – Sustainable Regions Program (2009) and Tourism Environmental Indicators (2010)
- Tourism Tasmania – Green TEA (2009) and Green Tourism (2010)
- Tourism WA – Carbon Footprint Pilot Study (2009)
- Tourism NT – Outback Offsets (2008/09)

carbon footprint™

green Tourism

CER
Certified Emission Reduction

Results: Responses (cont)

Climate change in tourism strategies

- Tourism Queensland – *Queensland Tourism Strategy 2006-2016* and *Tourism Action Plan to 2012*
- Tourism Tasmania – *Tourism 21 Strategic Business Plan 2007-2010*
- Tourism NT – *Five Year Tourism Strategic Plan 2008-2012*
- SA Tourism Commission – *South Australian Tourism Plan 2009-2014*
- Tourism Victoria – *Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan 2009-2012* and *Victoria's Nature-based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*

Results: Responses (cont)

Carbon offsetting

	Carbon Offset Information	Carbon Offset Providers
Tourism Australia	Creating a 'green' experience (energy saving technology, renewable energy, tree planting)	Carbon Offset Guide Carbon Neutral, Cleaner Climate, Climate Friendly, Climate Revolution, CO2 Australia, Easy Being Green, Elementree, Greenfleet, Green Globe
Tourism Queensland	Offsetting Your Carbon Footprint fact sheet Qld carbon offsets (forestry, renewable energy, energy efficiency)	Climate Friendly ecoFund Qld Greenfleet Australia
Tourism NT	'Outback Offsets' Carbon Offsetting fact sheet (renewable energy, energy efficiency, forestry, landfill gas, waste diversion) Australian offsets	Carbon Offset Guide Carbon Offset Watch EPA Victoria Greenhouse Friendly LMS Generation (Outback Offsets)

Results: Responses (cont)

	Carbon Offset Information	Carbon Offset Providers
Tourism WA	Green marketing (business, consumers) Green events (offset with trees)	AustraliaCarbon, Beyond Neutral, Carbon Conscious, Carbon Neutral, Carbon Planet, Earthcheck, EC3 Global, Greensense, Carbon Offset Guide, Carbon Offset Watch
Tourism Victoria	'encourage recognised carbon offset programs' (renewable energy)	Greenfleet Australia GreenPower EPA Victoria
Tourism Tasmania	Green event policy (renewable energy) *Tourism 21 Plan* Tas. offsets - parks & environment (plant native species)	Carbon Reduction Institute (NoCO2) Climate Friendly Hydro Consulting Greenhouse Friendly Greening Australia Sustainable Living Tasmania
Tourism NSW	Go Green (tree planting)	CO2 Australia Greenhouse Friendly NSW Greenhouse Gas Reduction Scheme
Tourism SA	Green SA (tree planting)	Greening Australia

Discussion/conclusions

- In Australia, government tourism agencies are addressing climate change issues by promoting
  - Sustainability measures (i.e. energy,water,waste reduction)
  - Carbon reduction initiatives
  - Carbon offsetting schemes
- Most pro-active tourism agencies in responding to climate change issues
  - Queensland
  - Northern Territory
  - Victoria
  - Western Australia
  - Tasmania

Discussion/conclusions (cont)

- Climate change tourism responses are more developed by tourism agencies in Australian states
  - With climate change policies
  - Destinations vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (e.g. Great Barrier Reef, Qld)
  - Dependent on long haul travellers (Qld, WA, NT)
- State government tourism agencies
  - Recommend carbon offset projects based on forestry or renewable energy
  - Are implementing many actions suggested in STCRC report *The impacts of climate change on Australian destinations: Developing adaptation and response strategies*

Discussion/conclusions (cont)

- Future research
  - What can be done to support and ensure best practice responses to climate change are adopted by all Australian government tourism agencies
  - Compare with international tourism agencies to determine most effective methods for encouraging uptake of carbon reduction and offsetting initiatives by tourism operators
  - How carbon footprint studies and carbon offset projects affect travel behaviour and decision making by tourists visiting key Australian (and international) destinations

Photo courtesy of Tourism Queensland

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