

Tourism Operators RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE



"By efficiently sharing information on the best 'green' products and services, our company has saved money."

Jo Ladd
Tall Ship Adventures
Chair of WCBIA Climate Change and Sustainability Committee



Australian Government

**Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority**

Green Purchasing



What is green purchasing?

Every purchase you make impacts the environment in some way. Green purchasing means taking environmental considerations, rather than just price, into account when making purchasing decisions. These considerations can include:

- Reducing energy and water consumption (also reduces operating costs)
- Minimising greenhouse gas emissions (buy local rather than imported products)
- Minimising toxic chemicals (such as cleaning products)
- Reducing landfill (go for products with minimal packaging)
- Buying recycled or reusable products.

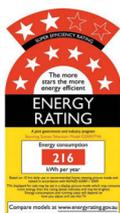
Why should I care about green purchasing?

By consciously deciding to make environmentally friendly purchasing decisions, you will:

- reduce the environmental impact of your business
- save money through reducing consumption and improving product performance
- be closer to achieving environmental goals (such as ECO Certification)
- enhance your reputation as a 'green' operator.

Taking this one step further, when you choose to partner with businesses taking into account their environmental impact, you will also influence the wider community to consider the financial and social benefits of making their business environmentally friendly.

Compare the energy rating of appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators at www.energyrating.gov.au/.



How do I begin green purchasing?

Step 1. Do I really need it?

The most important step in green purchasing is to constantly ask yourself 'do I really need this?'. Eliminating unnecessary purchases can save you time and money.

Easy changes you can make include reading publications online rather than subscribing to printed publications and hiring or sharing equipment that you only need for short-term use.

Step 2. For essential products, select items with the least environmental impact

If you do need to buy something, assess products based on:

- energy and water efficiency
- durability (how long it will last)
- method and location of manufacture
- maintenance requirements (cost of running and maintaining it)
- potential for reuse and recycling
- amount of packaging.

Step 3. Partner with other operators to identify green suppliers

Get together with other like-minded tourism operators in the local area to share the job of sourcing green suppliers.

Interview the suppliers to show that you are serious about finding environmentally sustainable options. By sharing the responsibility of talking to suppliers, operators to the Whitsunday Islands have reduced duplication in workload and come together to share information and findings (see the case study on the last page for more information).

Ask your suppliers the following questions:

- Can the supplier provide a full listing of ingredients / components and where they were sourced from?
- Is the product made using renewable energy?
- Is it made of recycled materials, ideally from 100 per cent post-consumer waste?
- Is it made of natural materials or materials produced by organic agriculture?
- How long will the product last?
- Is there a plan for what to do with the product once it has reached the end of its life? Can it be recycled, or composted, or sent back to the manufacturer for re-use or recycling?
- Does the supplier calculate their carbon footprint and what do they do to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions?

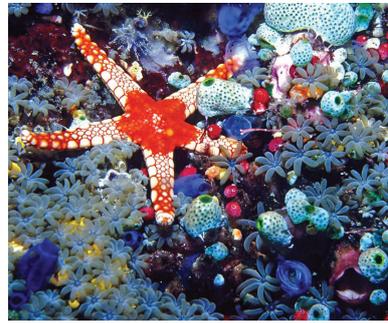
Step 4. Create a company policy on green purchasing

Document your purchase criteria, preferences and decisions to form the basis of a green purchasing policy for your business. Identify an office champion who is passionate about the environment and ask them to lead this initiative.

Display this policy in your office and on your website to keep your suppliers and customers informed of your commitment to the environment.

Checklist

- ✓ Ask yourself, "Do I really need this?" If not, then don't buy it.
- ✓ Assess different products for their efficiency, durability, and maintenance impact.
- ✓ Are there options to buy the product with reduced or reusable packaging, or in bulk.
- ✓ Get together with other operators to create a network and share the initial work of identifying green suppliers.
- ✓ Ask suppliers about their commitment and actions to environmental sustainability.
- ✓ Identify an office champion and document your purchasing criteria and decisions in a company policy on green purchasing.



Green Purchasing

Where can I find out more?

- Eco-Buy operates ECO-Find, a comprehensive directory of green products and suppliers and a one-stop-shop to support organisations with green purchasing. www.ecobuy.org.au
- The Good Environmental Choice (GEC) label is awarded to products which meet specific environmental standards based on life cycle assessment by a third party. The GEC label is awarded by an independent certification organisation – the Australian Environmental Labelling Association. www.geca.org.au/green-procurement/home-welcome.htm
- Eco Natural features a directory of Australian green products, services and resources. www.econatural.com.au/pages/links.html#dir
- The Green Directory is a resource for locating green suppliers. www.thegreendirectory.com.au

How will customers react?

Travellers are aware of climate-related issues and all other factors being equal, they will select products that contribute to environmental sustainability and conservation.

If you have a green purchasing policy, let your customers know by putting it on your website and in your booking office, and mentioning it in your brochure.



Green Purchasing

Case Study The Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association

When climate-committed tourism operators in the Whitsunday Islands decided to look into how 'green' their suppliers were, they realised the task was a big one.

"As tourism operators, our commitment to green purchasing does not only involve direct suppliers, but also other tourism businesses such as backpacker accommodation, resorts and hotels", said Jo Ladd, Director of Tall Ship Adventures.

"Partnering with other green tourism businesses such as a local Green Globe accredited backpacker hostel, and an organic Bed and Breakfast in Airlie Beach, allows us to design green tour packages."

The next step was to approach travel agents to convince them of the value of selling green tours.

While sharing her experience at meetings of the *Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association (WCBIA)*, Jo Ladd found out she was facing the same challenges as other operators considering green purchasing.

"Rather than doubling up our efforts, we decided to work together to share lessons learnt and, as an industry, be strategic about our approach to climate change" Jo continues. "We decided to set up a Climate Change and Sustainability Committee, which would meet fortnightly to work towards proactive



WCBIA Climate Change and Sustainability Committee (L to R): Emily Smart (Fantasea), Alison Molloy (Prosail), Jo Ladd (Tallship Adventures), Jan Claxton (Ocean Rafting), Nah Turnbull (QPWS), Rachael Bell (WCBIA) and Helen Sheehy (Southern Cross Sailing Adventures / Australian Tallship Cruises)



Emily Smart from Fantasea Adventure Cruising is trialling a number of Seawise products on behalf of the WCBIA Climate Change and Sustainability Committee.

climate change goals, and ensure both mitigation and adaptation."

Jo was appointed Chair of this Committee, which sits under the local association's banner.

The Committee developed a series of practical initiatives for industry to reduce its carbon footprint, including investigating current recycling and disposal options for marinas and islands.

Members investigated the green commitment of local food establishments, only to find out that these establishments didn't have much information on the origin of their ingredients, so they decided to work with suppliers to raise awareness about the supply chain.

The Committee is also looking at labelling on marine products and equipment so that they can identify and recommend environmentally responsible and low emission products.

"Working together as a group has proven a lot more efficient than doing all the work on our own", Jo said. "The next step for us is to share our experience with the wider industry and government agencies, which will hopefully foster a wide uptake of green initiatives such as green purchasing."

For more information on WCBIA's Climate Change and Sustainability Committee contact Rachael Bell (07) 4948 0601 or email rachael@wcbia.com.