

## Climate Action Certification Overview

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Based on the fact that businesses are at differing stages in their response to climate change three distinct levels of certification are provided:



### **Climate Action Business**

Businesses have undertaken a set of adaption and emissions reduction actions but are not necessarily measuring their carbon footprint.



### **Climate Action Innovator**

Businesses have undertaken a set of adaption and emissions reduction and are auditing and measuring their carbon footprint.



### **Climate Action Leader**

Businesses have incorporated strategic climate change responses across all relevant levels of business planning and operations. They are measuring and auditing their carbon footprint via a credible system and have undertaken an advanced level of adaptation, emissions reduction and offsetting and are working towards becoming carbon neutral.

### **Climate Action Certification will provide businesses with:**

- an understanding of climate change concepts and terminology
- awareness of credible offsetting activities that can be undertaken
- clear and practical ways of reducing their carbon footprint – reducing carbon emissions through design, equipment selection and changes in operational practices
- best practice examples relevant to the business sector and operating environment
- approaches to adaptation that will assist both the individual enterprise and the collective industry and community within its area of operation

In addition to emissions reduction strategies, CAA's Climate Action certification places significant attention on adaptation responses – as these are perhaps the most vital to business planning, development and investment. Completion of the Climate Action certification program can be undertaken online with a user-friendly application system or via a workbook.

Many of the initiatives recommended in the certification program will provide cost savings to the business through efficiency gains. Others provide broader sustainability gains and contribute in a real way to better environmental and community outcomes.

While the Climate Action certification program is completely stand alone, Sustainable Tourism Australia (a wholly owned company of Ecotourism Australia) has actively sought to complement existing environmental certification schemes where overlaps may occur (e.g. with ECO Certification, Green Globe and Greenhouse Challenge plus). The Climate Action certification program has sought to recognise and give credit for relevant portions of these alternate schemes.

The Climate Action program will be upgraded regularly as new technology and tools become available and as legislation changes. A third-party auditing process has been established to ensure the credibility of the program.

## Contents of the Program

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### 1. Business Details

#### 1.1 Business Ethics

Climate change is an issue affecting all individuals, businesses and industries in some way.

- Reducing emissions is a collective responsibility with action at all levels required
- Working together will make adapting to the impacts climate change easier and more cost effective
- Staying on top of environmental legislation is an important contribution to the climate change response.

#### 1.2 Insurance

Many of the impacts of climate change are unavoidable and businesses will need to consider how to manage the increased risks from more extreme weather and natural events. Part of this adaptation response will include a consideration of available insurance options to increase protection for personnel and property.

### 2. Business Relationships and Communications

#### 2.1 Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers will be critical in implementing both adaptation and emissions reduction actions. It is important that they have a high level of awareness and understanding of climate change impacts, how the business is adapting to those impacts and what actions the business is undertaking to reduce its carbon footprint.

#### 2.2 Customers

It is important to gain information on the social impacts of climate change - particularly how it affects customer travel and purchasing decisions. This will allow the business to develop ways to adapt to these new attitudes and behaviours via changes in products, services and marketing. The business also has a responsibility to communicate to customers any increased health and safety risks arising from more extreme weather patterns and how best to adapt to these for a safe and enjoyable experience. Emissions reduction actions being undertaken by the business should also be communicated to customers and may provide a competitive edge in a more environmentally conscious consumer market. Providing information on how customers can decrease the carbon footprint of their holiday may also help alleviate concerns about the impact of travel and encourage longer stays.

## **2.3 Suppliers and Business Partners**

A business can make a positive contribution to emissions reduction by choosing suppliers that are also taking action to reduce the emissions involved in the production and sale of their products and services. Partnerships with other 'climate friendly' businesses and organisations in the region can also be a good way to develop climate friendly packages, products and destinations. They can further be useful to collaboratively develop adaptation responses to the climate change impacts that will be similar and shared by the tourism sector in the region.

## **2.4 Community Contributions**

Climate change impacts will affect all individuals, businesses and communities. Participating in collaborative responses to reduce emissions and adapt to unavoidable impacts is likely to be an easier and more cost effective way of combating climate change – particularly since climate change impacts are likely to be similar and shared by all industries and communities at the regional and destination levels.

# **3. Business Operations**

## **3.1 Construction, Renovation and Redevelopment**

The selection of methods and materials used for construction, renovation and redevelopment activities will determine the level of emissions produced by these activities as well as the emissions generated by the ongoing use, maintenance and waste disposal associated with the facilities. Also, construction, renovation and redevelopment provides an opportunity to incorporate elements and design that will assist in adapting to unavoidable climate change impacts associated with more extreme weather patterns and events. That is, making built facilities more resilient to these impacts.

## **3.2 Landscaping**

Landscaping design, materials, plant selection and development choices will affect the level of emissions generated in establishing and maintaining the landscapes established. It can also be used to help minimise emissions generated by artificial heating and cooling, water consumption and waste disposal. Large areas of vegetation also contribute to carbon sequestration (removing and storing carbon from the atmosphere). Finally, landscaping can also provide an opportunity to incorporate elements and design that will assist in adapting to unavoidable climate change impacts associated with more extreme weather patterns and events. That is, making the environment more resilient to these impacts.

## **3.3 Building Design and Operations**

Building design can significantly influence the level of energy (and consequent emissions) involved in building use and maintenance. Equipment and fittings will similarly affect the level of energy consumed by day to day energy and water consumption as well as waste production.

## **3.4 Energy Source for Electricity**

Using clean energy to supply electricity directly reduces the amount of greenhouse gas emissions generated and released into the atmosphere. Supporting and/or moving to the generation of clean energy is also means of adapting to the economic impacts of climate change – which is likely to increasing costs associated with generating/using electricity sourced from non renewable energy sources (e.g. impacts of the carbon trading scheme).

## **3.5 Lighting**

Using energy efficient lighting decreases both operational costs and energy use. Lower energy use in general contributes to reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

## **3.6 Water**

Significant energy is consumed in water treatment, transportation and heating. Emissions associated with this energy consumption can therefore be reduced through efficient water capture, use, heating and recycling. Efficient water capture, management and recycling can also assist in adapting to the impacts of climate change which may make rainfall events and patterns less predictable,

### **3.7 Waste**

Significant energy is consumed (and hence associated emissions are produced) for solid waste treatment and disposal. Incineration in particular produces significant greenhouse gas emissions and waste transportation also contributes. Emissions can therefore be reduced by minimising the amount of solid waste produced and recycling waste wherever possible.

### **3.8 Transport**

Motorised transport is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. Efficient use of motorised transport, the use of technologies that minimise fuel consumption and emissions generation, use of cleaner fuels and the use of alternative means of transportation can all help to reduce emissions. These strategies can also reduce operational costs in the face of rising fuel prices.

#### **3.8.1 Vehicles**

#### **3.8.2 Vessels**

#### **3.8.3 Aircraft**

### **3.9 Other Equipment**

Portable motorised equipment also generates greenhouse gas emissions. Efficient use, the use of technologies that minimise fuel/electricity consumption and emissions generation, use of cleaner fuels and the use of more labour intensive alternatives for the tasks can all help to reduce emissions. These strategies can also reduce operational costs in the face of rising fuel and electricity prices.

### **3.10 Fire**

Fires release significant greenhouse gas emissions. Strategies to minimise both planned and unplanned fires can therefore help to prevent greenhouse gas emissions. These strategies, together with effective fire mitigation and response procedures can also help in adapting to the impacts of climate change which may see increase bushfire risks in particular.

## **4. Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation**

### **4.1 Business Vulnerability to Climate Change**

Climate change may cause a range of unavoidable impacts. These may include increasing average temperatures, sea level rise and decreasing average rainfall. Associated extreme natural events may include: heavy floods and storm surge, heatwaves, droughts, bushfires, hailstorms and cyclones.

CC risk assessment is part of the business planning process. It involves a consideration of which of these impacts may affect the business and how.

### **4.2 Adapting to Climate Change Impacts**

Adaptation refers to the actions taken by the business to help reduce any potentially negative effects on business viability identified in the risk assessment process. Adaptation also refers to taking advantage of any business opportunities that may arise from climate change.

## **5. Reducing Greenhouse Emissions**

### **5.1 Emissions Assessment**

A range of actions can be taken to reduce emissions without any formal assessment or measurement of business related greenhouse gas emissions. The criteria in early sections have focused primarily on these actions.

A formal assessment and measurement of business related emissions however allows a much more strategic approach to minimising emissions. It allows the business to set reduction targets, consistently monitor improvements in emissions reduction over time and direct emissions reduction investment into priority (highest emissions) areas.

### **5.2 Emissions Reduction**

A range of actions can be taken to reduce emissions without any formal assessment or measurement of business related greenhouse gas emissions. The criteria in early sections have focused primarily on these actions.

However, the existence of an emissions reduction action plan within the business' operational plan allows for a more consistent and strategic approach to reducing emissions and one which enables actions to be monitored, reductions measured and performance reported.

### **5.3 Emissions Offsetting**

After emissions have been reduced as much as practical, there are still likely to be emissions associated with business activities. These remaining emissions may be partially or totally 'offset' or 'neutralised' by supporting projects that extract and store greenhouse gases. A business may operate an offset project themselves or in partnership with others (e.g. forest plantation). Alternatively, the business may pay other offset project managers for the rights to claim a proportion of the offsets generated by their projects against the business' emissions (e.g. via offset schemes).

## **6. Innovative Best Practice**

Additional points towards the advanced levels of certification can be gained via a demonstration of innovative best practices above and beyond the criteria used in this program.