

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hidden Valley leaves no footprint

North Queensland operator Hidden Valley Cabins and Tours has taken environmental sustainability to a new level – with moves afoot to neutralise the business's carbon footprint.

The general rule for ecotourism is to leave nothing but a footprint behind – Hidden Valley is taking things a step further. As of today the business is offsetting carbon produced through regular tour activities and resort services – even their weekly treks down the Paluma range to Townsville have been accounted for.

Guests at Hidden Valley will receive carbon neutral certificates proclaiming their holiday's green status. The first carbon neutral conference booking is a Wet Tropics conference booked for early next week.

Hidden Valley Cabins and Tours Marketing Manager Ross McLennan said ecotourism businesses need to take some responsibility for the environment.

"We really believe in the idea of preserving our natural environment for future generations. Going carbon neutral is just one way that operators can give back to the environment that provides the Queensland tourism industry with such a strong foundation. Our view is that we need to be doing whatever we can to protect and preserve the environment," he said.

"To our knowledge, Hidden Valley Cabins and Tours are the only Queensland operator offsetting carbon emissions. We'd love to see other operators doing the same thing. This isn't just a marketing ploy – we're serious about looking after the environment."

Hidden Valley Cabins currently operates on solar for 19 hours a day – they will completely switch to solar power in coming months – in the mean time they're offsetting emissions from their vehicles, generators and electrical equipment ensuring every guest leaves with a green conscience.

Environment Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr commended the operators of Hidden Valley Cabins and Tours on their green initiatives and objectives.

"This carbon-neutral project is a fine example of how tourism ventures can play an important part in helping to combat greenhouse and global warming, while at the same time enhancing their appeal to visitors.

"I have been aware for some time of the plans of Hidden Valley Cabins to switch 100 percent to solar power and applaud the fact that they have maintained their commitment to sustainable power management," Ms Nelson-Carr said.

Townsville Enterprise Chief Executive Officer Glenys Schuntner welcomed the move and called on all North Queensland operators to consider their impact on the environment.

"Hidden Valley Cabins and Tours are pioneering a new level of environmental responsibility and it's up to the rest of our operators to follow suit. North Queensland's tourism industry relies on our environmental assets – the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics Rainforest - to attract visitors. We need to be preserving these ecosystems and the environment to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the industry."

"We want visitors to the region to be enjoying our natural attractions for years to come," Ms Schuntner said.

"We urge the local industry to consider the environmental impacts of their activities through certification programs run by Ecotourism Australia and to do their up most to look after our pristine environment."