

Energy

With the expectation that energy costs will increase in the near future, more and more companies in the tourism sector – both small and large – are proactively examining ways they can reduce their energy costs.

Why should you reduce your energy consumption?

Energy consumption by tourism operators can occur not only through general infrastructure such as buildings and recreational facilities but also through transport facilities such as customer travel, transfer and on-site vehicles.

An overall reduction in energy consumption can:

- > Reduce the operational costs of your business and
- > Have major environmental benefits, primarily through the conservation of natural resources and the lowering of associated greenhouse gas emissions.

Why do I need to act on this now?

The Federal and State Governments plan to introduce a national emissions trading scheme by 2010. This will provide further incentive and financial income for businesses that achieve above-average reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The Government is also working to gradually phase out all inefficient light bulbs by 2010.

Tips for reducing your energy consumption and improving energy efficiency

Most energy suppliers now have a green option, so investigate this with your provider.

Heating and air-conditioning

- > Ensure heating and air conditioning is turned off when not required. You can do this by adjusting time switches to minimise usage.
- > Set heating and air con to 18-20°C for heating and 23-24°C for cooling.
- > Ensure that hot water systems are installed close to where the most frequent use occurs.
- > Ensure all equipment is well maintained to ensure it is working optimally to prevent unnecessary energy wastage.
- > Place the air-conditioning unit out of the sun and away from heat sources to maximise effectiveness.

- > When replacing outdated equipment, take the opportunity to select new equipment with a high energy efficiency rating, which will also significantly reduce operating costs.
- > Install solar heating where appropriate. Solar heating boosted by gas power, when necessary, can help reduce both gas and electricity costs.
- > Use sensors which stop the air-conditioning when a person leaves the room.
- > Install timers on spa pools to prevent spa jets continuing after use.
- > Install solar heating for appropriate hotel facilities, e.g. to heat the swimming pool
- > In summer, use blinds and curtains to block out heat to minimise the need for air conditioning.

Lighting

- > Use natural lighting in room design to minimise the need for artificial lighting. When incorporated at the design stage, a natural lighting approach can reduce a building's energy requirements for lighting by 40-50%.
- > Where appropriate, consider putting in sky lights to improve the use of natural light.
- > Turn off lights when room is unoccupied.
- > Install sensors and timers in all indoor and outdoor areas so lights are switched off when not required.
- > Consider introducing key cards for hotel guestrooms, thereby ensuring that lights and electrical equipment are only operated when rooms are occupied.
- > Replace incandescent lights with compact fluorescent and low-energy light bulbs. Energy saving globes can last 5 to 10 times longer and consume 60 to 80% less electricity.
- > Divide a hotel room into zones and design the lighting so that the guest can illuminate only those areas needing light.
- > In guest rooms, place desks in a position to maximise the use of natural light.

Energy

Computers

- > Use the energy-saver or power-saver mode on your computer.
- > Switch off your computer and printers completely when not in use for long periods.

Refrigerators/Freezers

- > Select energy-efficient equipment when purchasing new or replacement refrigerators or freezers. Also select the smallest appliance that will fit your needs.
- > Ensure the seals are working efficiently to prevent energy wastage for cold air escaping
- > Do not place your refrigerator or freezer near a heat source such as an oven or against an uninsulated wall exposed to the sun as it needs to use more energy to maintain cold temperatures.

Other appliances

- > Turn off appliances – at the powerpoint – when not in use. Even on stand-by mode appliance used energy.
- > Operate dishwashers, washing machines etc. with full loads only.
- > If purchasing a new dishwasher, select one with a short-wash cycle, which can save both energy and water.
- > Operate laundry washing machines using cold water. Hot water requires far more energy (60% of the machine's energy consumption is used in heating the water).
- > Air dry laundry rather than using electrical dryers, wherever possible.

Useful links

Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts – Energy Audit Tools
environment.gov.au/settlements/challenge/members/energyaudittools.html

The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism – Energy Efficiency Opportunities Assessment Program
ret.gov.au/Programsandservices/EnergyEfficiencyOpportunities/Pages/default.aspx

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