

Huon Valley and Kingborough - Tourism Environmental Audit (TEA)

Information for Tourism Operators

Project Background

The Huon Valley Kingborough Tourism Association (HVKTA) has secured a Federal Government grant to deliver an environmental sustainability program for the businesses spread throughout the Huon Valley and Kingborough region. That area includes the municipalities of Kingborough and Huon Valley south of Hobart. There are four distinct sub regions of these two municipalities, Bruny Island and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel in Kingborough and the Huon Valley and Far South in the Huon Valley. The area is promoted and known to visitors as the 'Huon Trail'.

Tourism operators in the Huon Trail region have demonstrated a need and demand for ways to improve environmental practices in their businesses. This project aims to deliver the business skills required for undertaking a Tourism Environmental Audit and increasing business efficiencies, improved entrepreneurship and potentially improved profit levels from better environmental, social and economic practices. That is *Responsible Tourism*.

Both visitors to the region and operators have become aware of the need to find efficiencies in energy, water and waste to improve the bottom line. The tourism marketplace is increasingly demanding that industry adopt appropriate environmental practices and operators that meet the expectations of the travelling public can expect an increase in demand for their products and services. That is how the *Green TEA* project began.

What is Green TEA?

With funding through the Federal Government the HVKTA Committee and will oversee a project to assist up to forty (40) operators over a twelve month period to develop the skills to conduct a Tourism Environmental Audit (TEA) and monitor their progress.

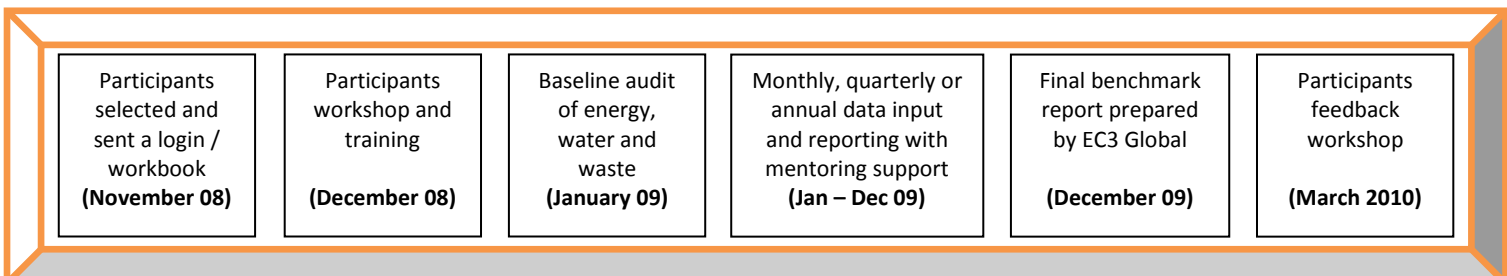


Map 1: The Huon Trail region

The Association has appointed a Project Manager, Gerry White, who will administer, coordinate and manage the project. In addition, the Committee have appointed EC3 Global to provide the Environmental Best Practice [EBP] components of the project. EC3 Global has a demonstrated ability for delivering training and environmental best practice solutions to companies.

EC3 Global provides certification of sustainable practices through the internationally renowned Green Globe program for benchmarking, certification and environmental best practice and improvement programs, and specialises in the tourism industry.

The project involves a number of key steps over the twelve month period as outlined in the timeline below:



Green TEA

Tourism Environmental Audit

What is required of operators?

For tourism operators to be involved in the project they will need to advise the Project Manager, Gerry White by sending the following details:

- Business name;
- Type of business;
- Name of contact person/owner;
- Telephone number;
- Email address.

For the forty (40) operators selected to participate they will receive one-on-one mentoring and up-skilling in conducting their own audit supported by workbooks, online material and one on one mentoring support. The program will up-skill participants to implement environmental best practice measures for twelve months and then evaluate the outcomes.

The program is aimed at providing skills for setting up, running and evaluating an environmental audit program for a tourism business. The skill sets being delivered are:-

- a. Understanding the environmental principles of sustainability and how these directly link to running and operating a profitable business;
- b. Compiling a list of green initiatives to save money;
- c. Assessing the current environmental practices of their own business performance;
- d. Developing and applying a sustainable business policy and translating this to a sustainable plan for their business;
- e. Undertaking and trialling the sustainability plan for 12 months;
- f. Evaluating the outcomes of the trial;
- g. Refining the business policy and planning for sustainable environmental practices beyond the life of the project;
- h. Promoting green business initiatives to the community, customers, and suppliers, and
- i. measuring and benchmarking their own CO2 emissions footprint

If there are any operators that are not able to participate in the pilot program the online training material, and the principles of TEA will be available through the sustainability portal developed for the project.

Conducting an Environmental Audit

The participants will be introduced to the concept of Tourism Environmental Auditing (TEA) and the *Green Globe Lite* benchmarking tool by trained, local mentors.



All participants in the program will be provided with:

- A Step-by-Step workbook;
- A dedicated mentor / trainer;
- A workshop session to get an induction to the Green Globe Lite program;
- An online assessment using an interactive Healthcheck and an Action Plan;
- Monthly on-site mentoring sessions and/or telephone contact over 12 months;
- Access to an online portal of information and access to the *Green Globe Lite* international online benchmarking program for 12 months;
- Access to the *Green Globe Lite* promotional program for those that achieve the standard; and
- An opportunity to provide feedback on the program.

Outlined below is an overview of the face-to-face sessions that are designed for participants to better understand the process and gain the skills in TEA:

- A participants workshop with all forty operators run by local trainers will occur at the start of the program (December 2008). This session will run for 3 hours and introduce participants to the program objectives, the Healthcheck and the *Green Globe Lite* tool.
- One-on-one mentoring sessions will be available for participants. The initial session will be longer to assist the operator get established followed by shorter sessions as required by the for the duration of the project. Participants will be able to contact their mentor / trainer and the Project Manager at any point over the twelve months to seek guidance and suggestions.
- A final participants workshop (March 2010), after the trial which is anticipated will run for 2 hours.

Green TEA

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Benchmarking Your Performance

Operators who participate in the Green TEA program will have free of charge access for twelve months to the *Green Globe Lite* international online benchmarking tool (valued at \$850 per operator, per annum). This internationally recognised program underpins the Green Globe travel and tourism certification programme collecting, assessing and reporting quantitative data for energy, water, waste plus a range of sustainability checklists assessing chemical usage, herbicide/pesticide usage and community commitment.

Operators will be provided training and a step-by-step workbook and the simple to use online calculators for energy, water and waste. The CO2 emissions calculator allows an operator to input usage data for all energy sources within their operations. It automatically calculates the total energy consumption (MJ) of an operation and also calculates total tonnes of CO₂ emitted from these sources, giving the operation their carbon footprint. The system not only produces the operation's carbon footprint but also gives them a quantitative measure of their environmental sustainability.

Operators can input their data, monthly, quarterly or annually, and international benchmarking or comparison within your sector (see Table 1 below) is carried out **annually** and summarised in a final report. Through the online system operators are able to measure and manage their environmental sustainability on an ongoing basis through comparison graphs.

Table 1: Sectors and Key Measures

Sector	Key Measure
Accommodation	<i>Guest nights</i>
Activity	<i>Total customers</i>
Administration Office	<i>Area under roof</i>
Attraction	<i>Total customers</i>
Cruise Vessel	<i>Revenue passenger kilometres</i>
Farmstay	<i>Farm area</i>
Restaurant / Pub	<i>Total customers</i>
Spa	<i>Total visitors</i>
Vehicle Hire	<i>Vehicle hirings</i>
Vineyard	<i>Volume of wine produced</i>
Visitor Centre	<i>Total visitors</i>
Winery	<i>Volume of wine produced</i>

The information and data required for the system is no more than you already have, including:

- Energy bills;
- Water usage (via water meter);
- Waste to landfill; and
- Information collected through an online (Yes/No) Healthcheck.

To ensure that the results obtained are comparative across a tourism sector your energy, water and waste results are benchmarked against a Key Measure (see Table 1). For example, for Accommodation, the Key Measure is Guest Nights. Energy Consumption, CO₂ Emissions, Water Consumption, and Waste Sent to Landfill are benchmarked per 'Guest Night'.

Green Globe Lite includes an online reporting mechanism that provides an action plan to assist in achieving measurable improvement through the analysis of key performance indicators from the Healthcheck, your mentor will assist you in developing strategies to address the areas identified in your initial Healthcheck.

The user-friendly interface (below) allows operators to enter data into an online system in just a few minutes and the data can then be used to track, monitor and compare performance on either a regional or organisation level against industry averages.



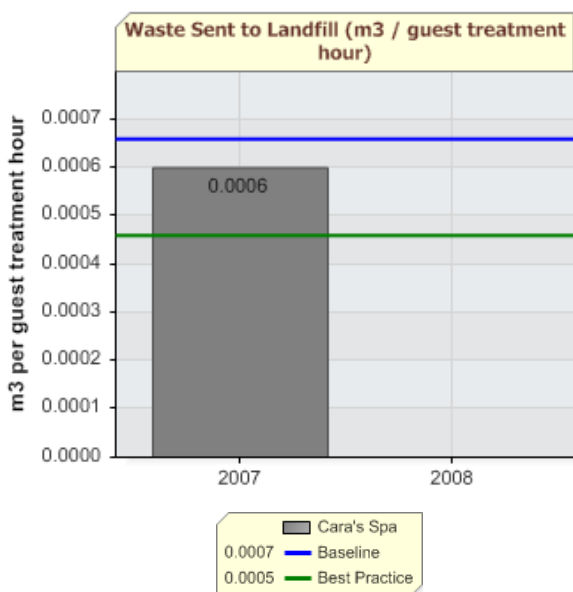
Green TEA

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The web-based interface allows participants access to:

- Quick indicators of trends in the industry;
- Their own performance measured against industry competitors;
- Measurement of the impact of national and international events on the industry; and
- Information to make better informed decisions about their businesses

Below is an example graph from an Annual Benchmarking report and online interface generated through *Green Globe Lite*.



Does Green Globe Lite help to reduce my impact and my costs?

The online *Green Globe Lite* program begins with a Healthcheck and produces an Action Plan that targets a specific range of key environmental management performance areas that affect the organisation's sustainability. The programme then uses these indicators to benchmark performance against standard industry-based levels that are deemed achievable, responsible and operationally beneficial.

The Earthcheck has over seven years of data across its world-wide business sectors and the quantitative nature of the indicators provide an objective mechanism for an enterprise to demonstrate improved environmental outcomes.

Specifically, *Green Globe Lite* can provide your enterprise with the means to:

- Meet sustainability requirements of national and international guidelines;
- Compliancy with elements of government regulation;
- Support internal management reporting on performance;
- Promote your commitment and performance at international levels to your customers; and
- Enhance your public and community image.

How much time will it take?

The *Green Globe Lite* system will be available online so that operators can input data at their leisure. Data is only required annually but monthly or quarterly tracking is better for monitoring performance and developing solutions to reduce your impact – but this depends on how often you can get the data to input. Another important consideration is the size and complexity of your business. A small accommodation operator with one or two bedrooms/cottages will require a lot less time than a complex business with, say, a café, bar, accommodation and tours operating at a larger scale.

Below is a summary of the time each operator will need to allocate:

- One hour to complete the Healthcheck in the participants workbook prior to the first workshop.
- The first workshop will take about 3 hours and then operators can review the workbook (allow 1-2 hrs).
- The time needed for the one-on-one mentoring sessions will depend on your needs and the size and complexity of your business but could be between 20 minutes and an hour. Again, depending on your business it may take up to 2 hours a month in preparation and review of potential solutions to reducing your footprint.
- Putting your data into the system each month will take around 20 minutes but allow a few hours the first month.
- Allow two hours to review the Benchmarking report on completion of the trial period (Jan 2010).
- Finally two hours to participate in the final workshop scheduled for March 2010.

Ten [10] benefits for operators who participate in the Green TEA project?

1. You will gain a far better understanding of energy, water and recycling costs incurred in your business and savings that can be achieved by your business.
2. Be recognised for your environmental commitment by achieving Green Globe Lite status and being able to promote your business using the promotional logo.
3. Increase your understanding and skills regarding how to promote your green credentials in the market place.
4. Know how to explain to your current guests and clients the nature of the Green TEA project and suggest appropriate behaviour so they reduce your costs and improve environmental outcomes.
5. There will be a Green TEA segment added to the Huon Trail website detailing the nature and scope of the project and including a list of all participating properties.
6. During 2009 a 'tent card' flyer explaining the nature and scope of the Green TEA project including a list of participating properties will be produced for display purposes in your business.
7. An integral component of the project is to generate media interest in the project by producing stories and media releases about the project and success stories from a variety of participating businesses.
8. The stature of the Green TEA project will be lifted through the involvement of high profile members on the Reference Group.
9. Tourism Tasmania will be using the Green Tea project and participating operators to case study and to produce a number of industry articles for Tourism Talk and the Tourism Tasmania Corporate Website.
10. This project has the intent of providing all operators with the opportunity of becoming green accredited.

And if you looking for another reason, it is free to HVKTA members, and to become a member only costs \$90 and then you get a range of other benefits!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAM CONTACT
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