



# Sustainable travel toolkit

A guide for the Northern  
Territory tourism industry



*Different in every sense*



Welcome to your Sustainable Travel Toolkit (the Toolkit), a practical resource to help you identify and implement sustainable initiatives within your tourism business, now and into the future. Becoming sustainable is not something anyone does overnight. This Toolkit is designed to give you the information and tools to enable you to take small yet active steps along your path to sustainability.

It will also help you achieve relevant accreditation or certification, proving your commitment to sustainable practices and the provision of high-quality, low impact tourism experiences.

Sustainable tourism is for everyone and all NT tourism businesses are encouraged to get involved. Regardless of how big or small the action, your commitment to sustainability is important. What matters most is that you start the journey and are taking steps to improve.

Sustainable tourism provides an exciting and important opportunity to transform your business for the better, while benefiting the community, environment, and positively impacting the NT's visitor experience. With travellers increasingly expecting and preferencing sustainable travel options, operators who are committed to positive change will see a competitive advantage as they benefit by increased bookings and attract responsible travellers.



In the Northern Territory (NT), we aim to come together as an industry to protect and restore our natural environment, hold sacred Aboriginal cultures and learn from Aboriginal Territorians, and enrich our diverse local communities as we share our unique and stunning backyard with visitors from Australia and around the world. We strive for economic resilience and prosperity as we work towards becoming a world leader in sustainable tourism.

## Using your toolkit

Your Toolkit contains information, resources and advice to help you get started, take action and communicate your progress and achievements to your customers and stakeholders. There is also a template to help you build a Sustainability Strategy. You can work through the Toolkit sequentially, or concentrate on the sections of most relevance to your business.

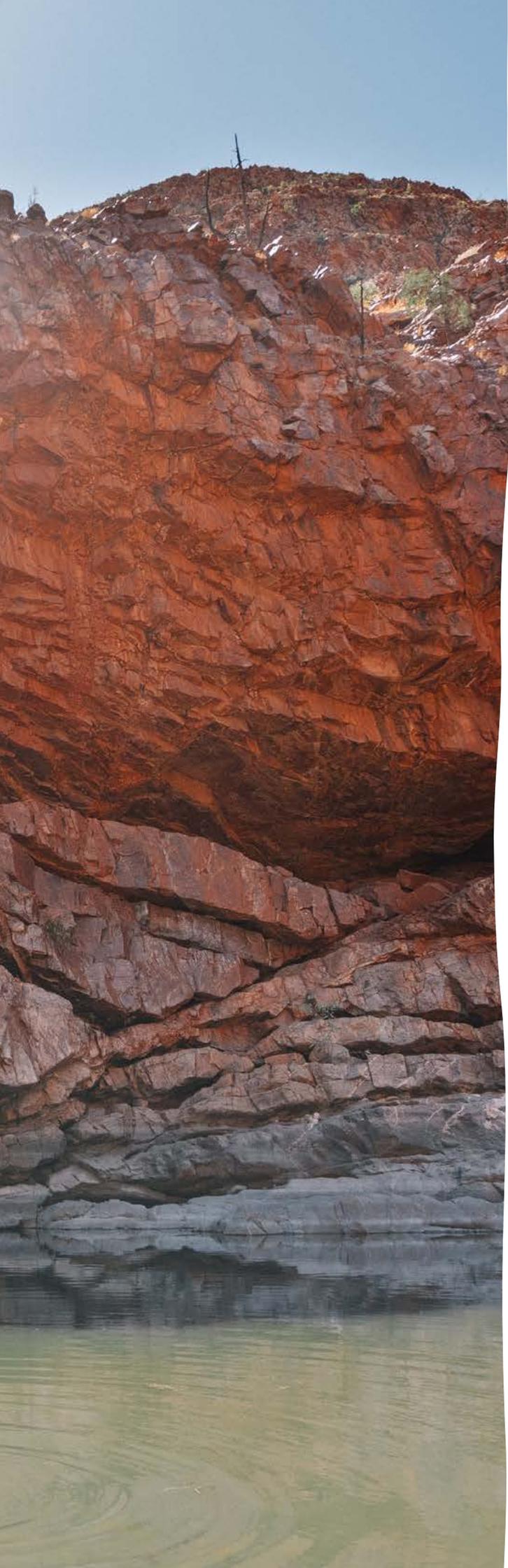
The tools and information section includes checklists to help you **get started** by making valuable changes with a minimal upfront investment in time or money, and to **take further action** with ways to invest in efficiency upgrades or alternative solutions to achieving sustainability as your budget and resources allow.

Many sustainability goals can be achieved through a simple change in process or behaviour. Others require long term planning and investment. What matters most is that you make a start and keep progressing.

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# Sustainable tourism explained



The [United Nations \(UN\) World Tourism Organisation](#) defines sustainable tourism as:

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.

It is about people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

These values are underpinned by the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), a framework to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and fix climate change. Tourism has an important role in the achievement of SDGs, and has the potential to lead the way for a better future for all.

The [Global Sustainable Tourism Council \(GSTC\)](#) manages a set of criteria that forms global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, as well as providing international accreditation for sustainable tourism certification bodies.

The GSTC Criteria recognise four key pillars of sustainable tourism:

- Sustainable management: focuses on overarching governance of sustainable practices, such as sustainability commitment, risk management, crisis preparedness, measurement and monitoring, strategy and policy.
- Socio-economic: focuses on long-term prosperity, ethical practices and well-being, delivering equity in employment opportunities, social cohesion, harmony and diversity.
- Cultural: focuses on the protection of Indigenous peoples, cultures and heritage, aspiring to healthy, prosperous and connected communities, providing a good quality of life for all.
- Environmental: focuses on the conservation and regeneration of nature, the responsible use of natural resources, the reduction of waste, eco-friendly transport, offsetting programs and the ethical treatment of animals.

## Our aspirations:

- **The Northern Territory is a compelling destination for authentic sustainable travel**
- **NT tourism is a positive driver for sustainable development and the conservation of our natural and cultural landscape and heritage.**

# Why embrace sustainability?



Embracing sustainable practices will lower your carbon and biological footprint, increase the positive impact you have on your local community, enhance the NT's global appeal as a sustainable travel destination, help to future proof your business against climate change and achieve greater economic resilience to crisis events.

Governments and businesses around the world are adopting more sustainable practices, and the tourism industry is no exception. Sustainability is a way of life and a new way to do business.

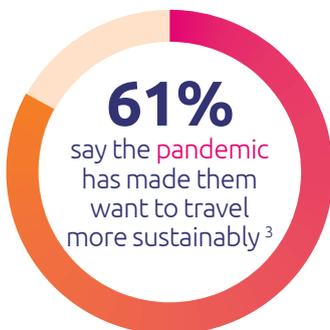
It is also an important decision-making factor for travellers, as shown in recent research from the Expedia Group, Booking.com and Tourism Australia.

Governments and the community are increasingly expecting businesses to reduce negative operating impacts to preserve natural resources, protect biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions.

The benefits of sustainability in tourism are:

- reduced operating costs
- increased and repeat visitation
- increased customer satisfaction
- greater success in staff recruitment and the retention of valuable staff
- increase in like-minded, sustainable, responsible travellers
- enhanced reputation protection
- success in award submissions, accreditations and certifications
- increase in funding opportunities
- acceptance into trade and marketing campaigns
- greater crisis preparedness
- enhanced adaption to climate change.

## Percentage of travellers interested in sustainable travel options



1 Expedia Group, Sustainable Travel Study, published 2022.

2 Tourism Australia, Future of Demand, published 2022.

3 Booking.com, Sustainable Travel Report, published 2022.

# Who is a sustainable traveller?



Sustainable travellers understand their impact on the places they visit, and care about the contribution of their tourism spend. They appreciate that it is important to reduce their negative impact, increase their positive impact and to support sustainable businesses, even if it means spending more.

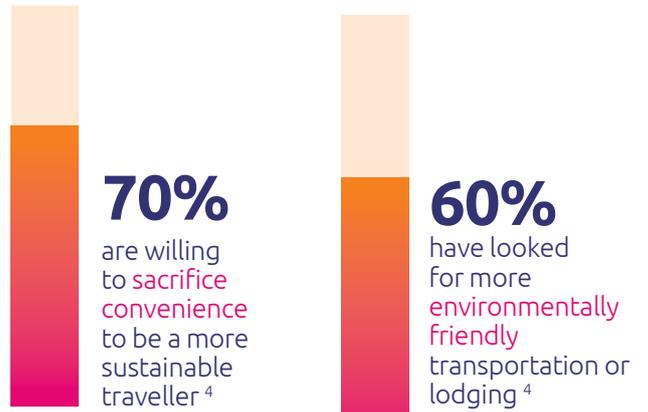
Sustainable travellers seek out authentic experiences, are highly interested in Aboriginal culture, will want to connect with host communities and look for ways to support community initiatives. They also want unique experiences in natural environments and will take time to research destinations prior to visiting.

The NT's capacity to match these values is a significant opportunity for operators and contributes to our objective of developing the NT as a compelling destination for authentic sustainable travel.



Katherine Hot Springs

## Percentage of travellers interested in options with low environmental impact



<sup>4</sup> Expedia Group, Sustainable Travel Study, published 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Booking.com, Sustainable Travel Report, published 2022.





# Energy



As one of the largest economic global sectors, tourism is also one of the largest consumers of energy, and travellers use energy with a greater intensity than local people. Managing energy consumption will reduce your expenses as well as the negative impact your business has on the world's warming climate.

On average, Territorians use more electricity than the rest of Australia, mainly due to our climate. While we can't change the weather, we can make changes to help reduce energy consumption.

With renewables, sustainable energy and tourism can complement each other. Renewable energy includes solar, wind, hydro, biomass and geothermal. Whilst technology is still progressing for some of these energies, others are well developed and available in the NT, including in some remote areas. There are government grants and programs dedicated to the reduction of energy consumption and the transition to renewal energy. Keep your eyes open and take advantage of these opportunities whenever you can.

Get started



Make use of natural lighting. It has a positive impact on workplace productivity and employee well-being, and saves energy and money!



Increase lighting efficiency by installing motion sensors and changing bulbs to LEDs, which use around 80% less energy and last longer.



Set your hot water temperature to a maximum of 60°Celsius and talk to your maintenance manager or local plumber about low cost options to insulate your hot water system.



Use timing functions to coincide cooling and/or heating control with your opening hours.



Set your thermostats in accordance with the following and ask housekeeping to return thermostats to these set-points:

- Air-conditioning: 24°Celsius
- Heating: 18°Celsius



Adjusting your cooling or heating by just one degree can bring significant savings to your business.

Clean the filters in your heating and cooling systems once a month to maximise efficiency. Dirty filters can increase running costs by 5 – 10%.



Ensure that the dress code for your staff is appropriate for your climate, allowing them to be more comfortable in hot or cold weather.



Power down electrical equipment at night, including TVs, computers, printers and monitors. Standby power is an energy sponge that results in significant carbon emissions each year.



Clean and maintain all electrical equipment regularly to ensure they are operating at maximum efficiency, including office, kitchen and workshop equipment.



Get your staff on board. Provide training and education about how they can save energy and create an energy efficient culture within your business.



Display signs, posters or flyers to educate and encourage staff and travellers about energy efficiency. Give travellers practical advice relevant to their visitor experience, for example ask hotel guests to keep doors and windows closed while air-conditioners are running.



Check how your energy spend compares to similar businesses in your area through a free online program called [Check your Energy Spend](#).



Uluru Kata-Tjuta  
National Park

## Take further action



Apply for the [Smarter Business Solutions](#) program to help you reduce day-to-day energy, water, waste and material costs\*.



\*Eligibility criteria applies.

Install a solar photovoltaic (PV) system with a battery and inverter, or add a battery and inverter to your existing solar PV system so you can store electricity generated by the solar panels for use when the sun isn't shining. NT Government funding is available through the [Home and Business Battery Scheme](#)\*.



\*Eligibility criteria applies. Closes 30 June 2024.

Install blinds, curtains, awnings or shutters to control direct sunlight on windows, particularly those facing north and west.



Install solar window screens or solar films to deflect sunlight, reduce glare and help to keep your business or vehicle cool.



Plant trees and vegetation to provide shade for your visitors and keep your business cool. Ensure the type of tree you plant is safe for your region, particularly if it is a large variety in a cyclone affected region.



Replace old appliances with low energy products, looking out for high scoring energy rating labels.



Install screens or curtains at the entrance to large or walk-in refrigeration systems and service them at least once a year to ensure they function efficiently and have a longer life.



Use solar-reflective paint on your roof, pavements and outside walls.



# Water

Water efficiencies are best made by focusing on the areas where you can make the biggest difference and by providing ways for your visitors to learn about and contribute to water savings.

On average water leaks and irrigation make up about 70% of your water bill. By just focusing on these two areas you could significantly reduce your water bill.

Water is a precious, finite resource, vital to our individual health, our collective needs as a community, and the needs of our environment. Water efficiency is essential for our economy and way of life, and our future relies on a sustainable and secure water supply. It is also an important management consideration for all businesses.

- Currently, in Darwin, water is mainly sourced from Darwin River Dam, which relies on rainfall. Even when Darwin has a good wet season, only a small portion of rainfall actually falls in the Darwin River Dam catchment.
- In Alice Springs, water is sourced from underground aquifers, which only see minimal replenishment as they

don't regularly renew through annual rainfall like a river or dam might.

- In regional or remote regions, water may be sourced from a river, aquifer, dam, storage tank or may even be delivered by truck. These regions rely on many factors to ensure a supply of good quality drinking water, and it is important that water efficiency measures are in place to ensure water security.

As our population grows and our climate changes, it is important that as an industry we don't have a negative impact on the local communities we operate in and visit.

## Get started



Understand the [NT's water](#) story including what the NT Government's plans and future priorities are to secure water supplies in the areas you operate.



Every 3 months complete a 3-Step Leak Check using [Living Water Smart's](#) advice:



1. Make sure that there is no water being used in your business.
2. Go to your water meter and take a reading of the last two red digits.
3. Wait 5 minutes, then take another reading of the last two red digits. If there was movement of the dial, you may have a leak. Even the smallest leak can add up to a lot of wasted water over a year.

Check for toilet leaks. Add dye to your cistern and if after an hour dye appears in the bowl, you may have a leak. A leaking toilet, barely discernable to the naked eye, can waste over 200 kilolitres of water per year!



Over irrigating is a big contributor to water wastage, and it doesn't do your garden or lawn any favours! Implement these [Living Water Smart](#) tips to save water in your garden and grounds:



- ✓ Water lawns three times a week, garden beds twice a week and natives just once a week.
- ✓ Water once the sun goes down and before the sun rises in the morning.
- ✓ Turn off your irrigation system when it rains (this might be the whole wet season in the Top End!).
- ✓ Check your irrigation system for splits in your lines, blocked pipes and broken sprinkler heads.

Ensure your [pool is running efficiently](#). It may be more practical and cost effective to outsource pool maintenance to an expert – however make sure they know your water efficiency goals!



Display signs, posters or flyers to educate and encourage staff and travellers about water conservation. Give travellers practical advice relevant to their visitor experience, for example ask tour groups to limit their shower times in remote and regional locations.



Include water saving policies and procedures in staff training and encourage guides and customer service staff to include water conservation in their introduction briefs to visitors.



Encourage staff to contribute to water savings ideas, creating a water efficiency culture within your business. You could even identify monthly 'water saving champions' within your team and reward them accordingly!



Measure your water use annually to track how well your initiatives are working and to pinpoint your weaknesses.



## Taking further action



Install a rainwater harvesting and recycling system. Do your research to ensure that your choice in system is the most efficient for your climate and maintain your system well.



Upgrade your shower heads to a water efficient alternative, making significant water and energy savings.



Update appliances, fixtures and fittings when budget allows or as replacements are required. Install appliances, such as dishwashers, toilets and washing machines, with a high water star rating.



Install water valves to help manage water use. Valves allow you to easily section off water to different parts of your property to locate areas that are leaking or to make repairs without interrupting supply to the rest of your business.



Plant wisely, choosing species suited to your local conditions. Usually natives use less water and are hardier. Make sure to mulch, zone your plants according to how much water they need, and consider the direction of the sun, shade and wind when planting.



Upgrade your irrigation systems to include a smart irrigation controller that automatically adjusts watering based on local weather conditions. Get advice from your local irrigation specialist as you may need to upgrade your pipes and install solenoid and isolation valves.



Install waterless or composting toilets, especially if you operate in a remote area. Look out for grants to assist in upfront costs.



Measure and document water-related metrics, and review your water saving performance each quarter.



Apply for the Smarter Business Solutions program to help you reduce day-to-day energy, water, waste and material costs\*.



\*Eligibility criteria applies.

Contact Living Water Smart to ask advice on current water efficient technologies and practices, and find out if they can help you identify potential water saving opportunities specific to your business.

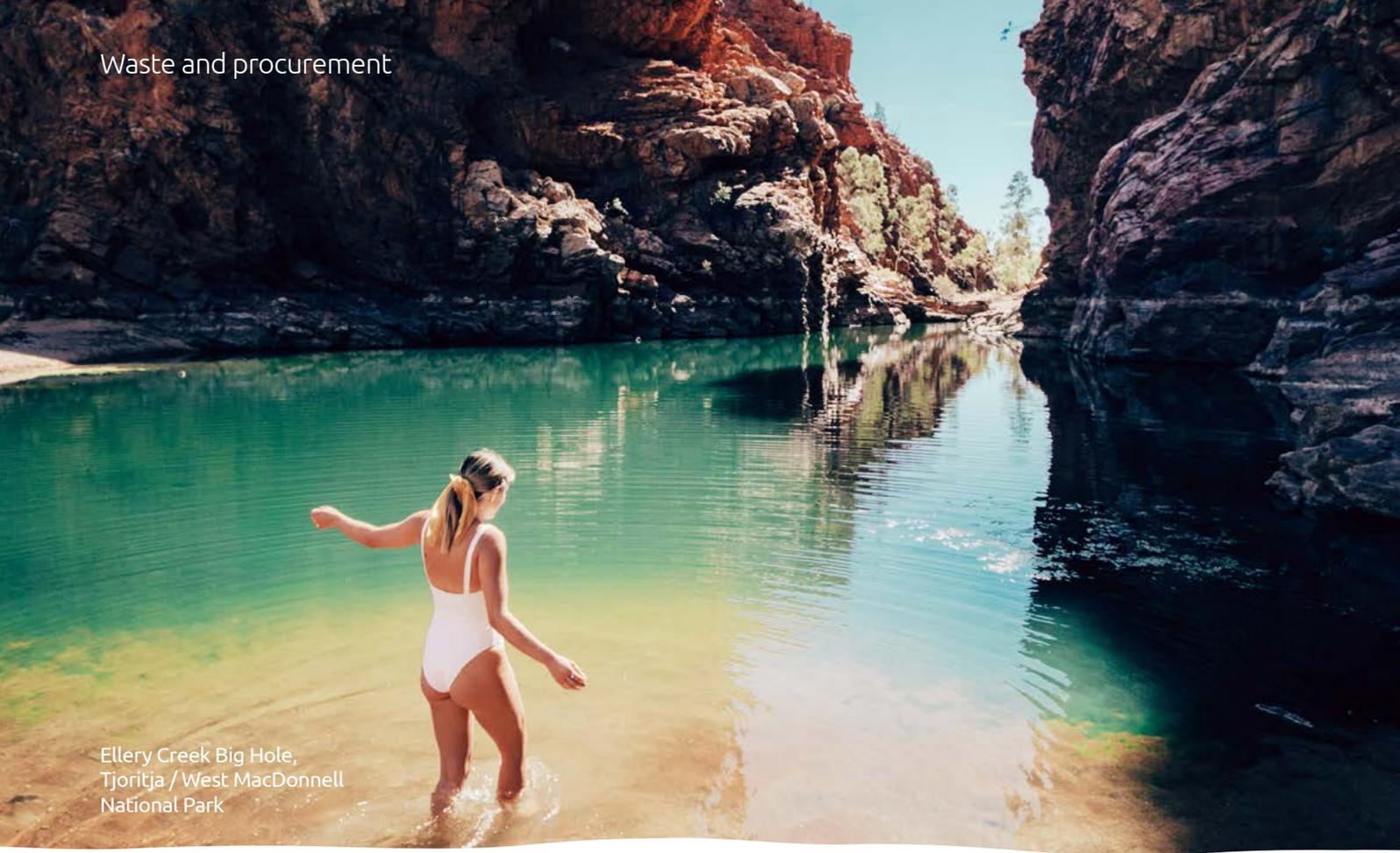


# Waste and procurement



Waste that goes to landfill decomposes anaerobically, releasing emissions and contributing to our changing climate.

Through sustainable purchasing and by reducing, reusing, and recycling, you can significantly reduce your waste footprint.



Ellery Creek Big Hole,  
Tjoritja / West MacDonnell  
National Park

## Purchasing wisely

You can manage your waste and have a positive impact on our local community through sustainable procurement. The purchases you make have the power to create either positive or negative impacts on the Territory's people, community, economy, and natural environment. To maximise the contribution of your cash, consider whether you need the item, how the item was made, where it was made, and the packaging it will arrive in.

## Managing waste

There are simple solutions you can employ to significantly reduce your waste. As a start, remember the five Rs:

Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle.

While recycling seems simple, there are lots of misconceptions - for example, did you know that Tetrapak cartons cannot be recycled, and your recyclables must not be placed inside a plastic bin bag? You can [check here](#) to determine whether you are recycling and disposing of your waste correctly. Alternatively, get in touch with your local council to find out what options are available in your region.

Judbarra / Gregory  
National Park

## Get started



Transition away from single use plastics.

- Provide a free drinking water refill station (are you able to provide refillable water bottles?).
- Ditch single use plastic straws, water bottles, cutlery, plates, and bags.
- Avoid plastic packaging, especially if it can't be recycled or if recycling options are limited.



Reduce the amount you print, using tech-based or other solutions when you can. Use recycled printer paper and recycle your printer cartridges, paper and cardboard. Go to [Planet Ark](#) to find out your recycling options.



Research what items are recyclable and explore ways you can make recycling easy for your staff and visitors.



Train staff and display signs about waste avoidance practices and encourage visitors to carry a suitable container to store their rubbish until the next appropriate bin or recycling station, or do it for them.



Aim to purchase items that can be composted, repurposed, or recycled, and choose items packaged in sustainable materials.



Support local businesses with your purchases, especially those with clear social, cultural and environmental commitments.



Research your supply chain's targets and achievements, and encourage them to follow you in your sustainable practices.





**Take further action**



Introduce a composting station, worm farm, or Bokashi composting bin to transfer your organic waste into a valuable resource. If a large compost is required, invest in a commercial composter. There are lots of options on the market, make sure you do your research to procure the more sustainable and effective product.



Compost is great for the garden, retaining moisture, insulating plant roots, and fixing sandy soils. Your staff, visitors and garden will love it!

If you can't compost, research your local waste management facility to find out if they will accept your green/organic waste (often this is managed by your local council). It can be tempting to put your organic waste into your general waste bin, however this releases significant carbon emissions to the atmosphere.



Encourage staff and visitors to participate in one of the [Great Northern Clean Up](#) events held in the NT between August and October every year. Can you include this in your product offering as a regenerative travel experience?



Undertake a procurement audit and develop a strategy to transition to local and sustainable suppliers. It will also help you to determine if your supply chain risks are at an acceptable level\*



\*See table on page 19.

Complete a waste audit and develop a strategy to identify areas of weakness or opportunities to repurpose. It will also help you determine if:



- items are being thrown away before they have been fully used
- items are being placed into the correct bins
- there are items that could be recycled using alternative methods and solutions
- there are items that could be repurposed.

Distribute annual voluntary screening surveys to your suppliers to improve your understanding of their sustainability performance and encourage them to reflect on their sustainability practices.



Establish a procurement policy to uphold values of sustainable purchasing that will prioritise the local community, prosperity, and sustainability.



According to the Sustainable Accounting Standards Board, supply chain risks you should be aware of include:

Labour conditions	Environmental health and safety	Reputational risks due to environmental or social impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive work hours</li> <li>• Minimum age violations</li> <li>• Unfair compensation practices</li> <li>• Lack of freedom of association rights</li> <li>• Unfair worker treatment, such as harassment or abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsafe building and occupational safety hazards</li> <li>• Non-compliance with environmental permits</li> <li>• Unsafe levels of air and water pollution</li> <li>• Improper management of hazardous substances</li> <li>• Wastewater and solid waste disposal violations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• Environmental regulation breaches</li> <li>• Irresponsible land use practices resulting in significant negative impacts</li> <li>• Production methods resulting in water pollution, soil degradation, deforestation, or loss of biodiversity</li> <li>• Animal welfare, labour and human rights practices</li> </ul>



Finke River, Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park

# Carbon footprint



Your carbon footprint refers to the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere due to the activities and operations of your business. It is important to understand where your emissions are being generated so you can calculate how much carbon you are emitting, and can start to monitor and reduce your output.



In the context of climate change, carbon is commonly used as a shorthand for carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas released by humans that has accelerated global warming. Tourism is a major emitter of greenhouse gases, accounting for about 8% globally<sup>6</sup>, contributing to a warming climate. To avoid the worst impacts of climate change, governments around the world, including the NT, have committed to reduce carbon emissions to reach net zero by 2050.

Before you start your journey towards emissions reduction, it is important to understand your current state. Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions are a way of categorising the different kinds of carbon emissions a business creates in its own operations, and in its wider value chain. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, your emissions as an operator in the tourism industry will largely be attributed to:

<b>Scope 1 Emissions</b>	<b>Direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by you:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuel in tour buses and 4WD vehicles</li> <li>• Fuel costs of charter flights and helicopters</li> <li>• Diesel generators in remote locations</li> <li>• Grounds maintenance (diesel and petrol run mowers)</li> <li>• Business vehicle emissions</li> </ul>
<b>Scope 2 Emissions</b>	<b>Emissions from indirect consumption of energy and other purchases:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business premise heating and cooling</li> <li>• Business premise energy consumption</li> <li>• Hotel room heating and cooling</li> <li>• Pool heating and cleaning</li> </ul>
<b>Scope 3 Emissions</b>	<b>Indirect emissions that you are involved in through your value chain:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business travel</li> <li>• Third party transport and distribution</li> <li>• Electricity consumed by suppliers</li> <li>• Waste disposal</li> <li>• Food and beverage supply and production</li> <li>• Transport, such as flights or long-haul drives, taken by your visitors</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> The carbon footprint of global tourism, Natural Climate Change, published 2018.

## Get started



Publicly declare your ambition to reduce your carbon footprint and become more sustainable. A great way to do this is on a dedicated page on your website.



Identify a team or person in your business to champion sustainability and reduce your carbon footprint.



Estimate your carbon emissions using a [carbon calculator tool](#) (there are many online tools out there, do your research and choose one that suits your business).



Attempt to understand the emissions you are contributing through your current suppliers (Scope 3 emissions). You may need to ask them to provide that information, even if it is an estimate.



Estimate how high you expect your carbon emissions to be by a set date in the future (determine a date that suits you; it could be 2030, 2050 etc). Set achievable and realistic targets to improve upon your estimate.



Establish a strategy to achieve your newly set carbon emission reduction targets. This will form your 'Net Zero Strategy' and will greatly improve your carbon footprint.



Bamurru Plains,  
Mary River

## Take further action



Research generation or purchase of carbon credits to offset any emissions you cannot practically reduce through changes in operations.

Purchase high-quality credits that also result in environmental, economic, social or cultural benefits – known as co-benefits. For example:

- projects that increase biodiversity by protecting and regenerating native vegetation
- use of traditional fire management practices, providing new income streams in Aboriginal communities
- projects that improve soil health and resilience in the land sector.

Pursue carbon neutrality and gain certification through a trusted standard such as [Climate Active](#).

## According to the [Clean Energy Regulator](#), there are 3 way to offset emissions in Australia:

### 1. Purchasing credits using the [Carbon Market Institute \(CMI\) Carbon Marketplace](#).

The CMI Carbon Marketplace provides information about projects and agents that may have carbon credits for sale. Carbon credits generated in Australia are referred to as Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs).

### 2. Purchasing credits through the [Emissions Reduction Fund project register](#).

This may be a good option if there are specific ACCU projects you would like to support, such as those that are generating credits locally, or those with co-benefits.

### 3. Generating credits in line with the requirements of an [Emission Reduction Fund project](#).

If you have the capability to reduce emissions or store carbon in soils or vegetation, you may be eligible to participate in the generation of ACCUs under the Emissions Reduction Fund.



Earth Sanctuary, East  
MacDonnell Ranges

# Natural environment and climate



It is everyone's responsibility to conserve, protect and regenerate the natural habitat in the area in which they travel, live, and operate a business. How can your business have a positive impact on the natural environment and subsequently on climate change, wildlife and the local community?



Jabiru (black-necked stork),  
Kakadu National Park

## Nature conservation

The NT's unique natural environment is a major attraction for both domestic and international visitors. Contributing to a healthy ecological environment will add credibility to your business. Involving visitors in the conservation of native species and local habitat will allow them to feel that they have had a positive impact on the area where they are travelling and as a result this creates a positive overall experience.

Can your business find an alternative to clearing land or can you actively regenerate the land? Could the restoration of habitat form part of your tour offerings? Can you integrate a citizen science project or partner with a conservation agency to enhance your visitor experience? Can you find a better, more ethical way for your customers to experience local wildlife? Businesses around the world are leading the way in sustainability through regenerative tourism – you can be a leader too!

## Climate change impact

With its close connections to the environment and climate itself, tourism is highly sensitive to climate change.

The United Nations has identified the Australia / New Zealand region as one of five Climate Change Vulnerable Hotspots for the global tourism industry. The Climate Council of Australia predict that:

- In 2030 the Red Centre could experience more than 100 days above 35°C every year (19 days more than the current average) and more than 160 days per year by 2090.
- Darwin could see an increase in hot days (temperatures above 35°C) from 11 (1981-2010 average) to 43 by 2030, and up to 265 by 2090.<sup>7</sup>

It is vital to strengthen your adaptive capacity to climate induced impacts, whilst taking climate action by measuring and reducing your greenhouse gas emissions. Once you make a start, there are many ways to conserve, protect and regenerate the natural environment and to improve your climate impact. Take your visitors along the journey with you; if they know how to reduce their own carbon footprint and are aware of sensitive habitats and ecosystems, they are more likely to make better decisions in how they travel and experience the natural environment.

### Get started



Research and understand how your business may be impacted by climate change:

- extreme weather events causing damage to assets and infrastructure upon which your operations relies
- extreme temperatures, heatwaves and peak winds resulting in increased danger to staff and visitors
- rising sea levels and associated saltwater inundation, damaging protective ecosystems
- ocean acidification and rising sea temperatures
- drought, leading to land degradation, increased risk of bushfire, and deterioration of natural beauty
- biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation
- changes in traveller sentiment to long haul travel.



Ensure that your wildlife experiences and portrayal of wildlife are ethical and responsible, demonstrating consideration of animal welfare and showcasing best practices in animal welfare.



Educate staff and inform travellers about volunteering opportunities, local conservation issues and regenerative tourism offerings in the region.



Avoid driving off-road or trampling of plants and compacting of soil by keeping visitors on paths or tracks during walking tours.



Cap visitor numbers to a relatively small group size or limit the number of cabins / rooms to a sustainable number commensurate with the surrounding environment.



<sup>7</sup> Climate Council, Icons at Risk, published 2018.

## Take further action



Hold a brainstorming session with your staff to come up with ideas to integrate regenerative tourism with your visitor experience offerings.



Include information in your interpretive commentary about vulnerable plant and animal species.



Collaborate with academic, scientific or conservation agencies to research or monitor wildlife. Can you integrate a citizen science project in your visitor experience?



Complete a bushfire plan relevant to your region's bushfire season and ensure you know of any planned burns in your area. Keep your staff and travellers informed.



Choose an environmental cause and support it through enablement of voluntary visitor donations or by contributing a small percentage of your revenue.



Provide periodic staff training days to ensure environmental harm from operations is minimised.



Kakadu National Park

# Transport



Finding ways to decarbonise the transportation associated with your business and its visitors will be key to improving your sustainability impact and aligning with the NT's target of net zero emissions by 2050.

While transport may seem like an expensive improvement area, there are ways to contribute without hefty investment. Can you provide walking or cycling alternatives for your staff and travellers? Can you educate your staff and visitors about how to offset flights?

Can you incorporate sustainable accommodation options in your region? Can you buy locally to reduce Scope 3 carbon emissions? Remember, what matters most is that you are doing something, no matter how big or small!

## Get started



Create a safe and accessible culture for staff carpooling using simple methods such as an expression of interest list on your staff noticeboard.



Set up a secure area for staff and visitors to safely store and maintain their bicycles. Can you also provide storage and shower facilities?



Provide hire or free loan bicycles for your visitors.



Display signage or provide clear, accessible information to visitors about public transport options.



Educate visitors about packing light to reduce fuel consumption. Send them an email prior to their arrival or add a sustainability page to your website.



Include information on your website about how travellers can make low impact choices as they embark on their journey to reach you.



Hot air ballooning, Alice Springs and surrounds

Electric Vehicles (EVs) in Australia will be commonplace in the not too distant future. The Australian Electric Vehicle Council forecast that by 2030, one third of all cars in Australia will be electric and this increases to half by 2035<sup>8</sup>. A survey carried out by the Council in 2020 shows that 56% of respondents would consider purchasing an electric vehicle as their next vehicle, representing a steady increase from 48% in 2018 and 53% in 2019<sup>9</sup>.

The Australian Government has released a [National Electric Vehicle Strategy](#) and is moving towards the introduction of vehicle fuel efficiency standards and improved carbon emissions schemes, and the NT Government has committed to more sustainable transport options through an [Electric Vehicle Strategy and Implementation Plan 2021 – 2026](#).

There are a number of ways you can participate in or support the transition to EVs in the Territory, depending on your operations, location, size and budget. You can begin by sharing EV information with your visitors, progress by installing an EV charging station, and finally invest in a single EV or transition to an EV fleet.

There are a number of different types of [charging stations and suppliers](#):

Level 1 – AC trickle charging

Level 2 – AC fast charging

Level 3 – DC rapid charging

Take further action	
Ease anxiety about the location and type of EV charging stations available in your region by linking to the EV Council's <a href="#">Australian EV Charger Map</a> from your website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider installing an <a href="#">EV charging station</a> . If so, research which type of charging station and supplier is best suited to you, your budget and your visitors' needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look out for EV grants and incentives from government and industry bodies, along with opportunities for partnerships and collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider how the installation of an EV charging station will impact your sustainability, including increases in energy costs, opportunities for diversification, and whether infrastructure upgrades are required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
EV charging may take between 15 minutes to a few hours, or even overnight. If you install a charging station, consider how you can enhance the visitor experience for motorists waiting for charge.	<input type="checkbox"/>
EV drive routes are being developed across the country. If you install an EV charging station ensure you let relevant government and industry bodies know, so you can take advantage of promotional and development opportunities!	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop a strategy to invest in a single EV or transition your fleet to EVs. It will significantly reduce your emissions and contribute to your sustainability goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>

8 Annual Report, Australian Electric Vehicle Council, December 2020.

9 State of Electric Vehicles, Australian Electric Vehicle Council, 2020.

# Community and culture



Sustainable tourism means leaving the destination in a better condition than when you arrived. When it comes to the local community and culture, it is important to be respectful, educated and committed, and enable your visitors to do the same.



Top Didj Cultural Experience, Katherine

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) people are the custodians of the world's oldest living culture. They have practiced sustainability in Australia for over 65,000 years. The NT is home to unique linguistic and cultural diversity, ancient knowledge systems and unique ecosystems. Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Territorians are experts in the management of land, waters and natural resources with a deep understanding of Country and

preserving traditional knowledge for future generations of Aboriginal people. We can promote and continue to build sound sustainable practices learning from the best of traditional knowledge and contemporary science.

Respecting, engaging, and partnering with Aboriginal people will benefit your business, your staff and your visitors together with Aboriginal people and communities.

### Get started



Provide an accessible and welcoming environment for Aboriginal people, including those visiting from around Australia.



Respect Aboriginal traditional knowledge, cultural values and obligations.



Ensure you know whose Country you operate on and acknowledge Traditional Owners through interpretative commentary and/or signage at your business. Research and implement correct protocols when [Acknowledging Country](#).



Partner with Aboriginal owned businesses to create Aboriginal tourism experiences.



Engage an Aboriginal consultant or senior community member to provide education sessions with your staff about Aboriginal culture, people, history, language and significant cultural sites and landmarks.



Use Aboriginal place names in commentary, interpretation and signage whenever appropriate.



Consider business development opportunities in collaboration with Aboriginal people. Approach Traditional Owners, community leaders and entrepreneurs to introduce yourself, your business and your staff. Listen, learn and ask about their business, social and cultural aspirations.



Assess the current state of your employee diversity. How many Aboriginal people are you providing employment and training opportunities to? Aim to increase this. Explore [Aboriginal workforce grants](#) to fund projects that support employment of Aboriginal people.



Engage with the creative industries and the arts. Can you employ an Aboriginal artist in residence, provide opportunities for Aboriginal artists to sell their work, or conduct tours to artist workshops and community art centres?



Source supplies from and actively promote Aboriginal owned businesses. For example, you could purchase consumables from an Aboriginal business, offer seasonal native ingredients sourced from Aboriginal suppliers on your menu, display Aboriginal artwork in guest rooms, and provide opportunities for your visitors to purchase from Aboriginal owned businesses.



## Inclusive, accessible and collaborative

Sustainable tourism supports strong, connected and diverse communities. It is important to consider how your business positively impacts on your local community, the broader NT community and also the Australian and global community. How do you minimise negative impact to the community where you operate or visit? How do you create an inclusive and accessible experience

for all people, regardless of a person’s appearance, choices, physical limitations, disabilities or age? Can you provide opportunities for economic development in the region? How do you support young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the LGBTQI community? There are choices you make every day that can have a positive impact on the place you live and work.



Take further action		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuously strive to be more <u>inclusive and accessible</u> , and ensure your accessibility features are presented accurately on your website. This may include floorplans, location maps, videos, photos and a list of accessible options.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Include accessible and inclusive imagery and content on your website and social media.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Address dietary requirements on your menus and train staff to enquire about allergies.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Implement a cultural holiday and events calendar, such as NAIDOC Week and Diwali, and aim to plan celebratory, inclusive experiences around these important occasions.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritise local people for employment opportunities, remembering sometimes that will mean investing in their training or making changes to provide an inclusive and accessible workplace.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer experiences that promotes travel during off-peak and shoulder seasons and to regional and remote areas to support local communities over the entire year and throughout the whole of the NT.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote local retail, hospitality, arts, and culture experiences to your visitors.		<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>10</sup> Derived from Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey, 2021.  
<sup>11</sup> "Accessible Tourism in Victoria and Queensland" conducted by Tourism Research Australia, 2017.

# Measure and manage



Now that you have advanced your sustainable initiatives, it is time to assess the governance structures you have in place and monitor your performance.



Baruwei Lookout,  
Nitmiluk National Park

## Measure and manage

It is important to ensure that you set up and maintain effective management practices and policies in your business, including your environmental, social and cultural impacts.

The first step is to analyse your current operations to measure what impact you have right now. Start a journal or record to help you determine and prove your sustainability outcomes over time.

What is the impact you have on the local community, and how can you measure this? How many people do you employ? How much energy, water, fuel and food does your business use each month? How much carbon do you emit each month? How many local suppliers do you support each month?

Once you have your baseline measurements, you can use these figures to benchmark your business against leaders in this space, or in following years to measure your progress and determine areas requiring more attention. As you begin to see improvements, you can use this data to prove your sustainability achievements.

Sound management practices, including plans, strategies and policies, will help to strengthen your business and make a positive contribution to the local, regional and national community and economy.

### Get started



Comply with all relevant regulations and legislation, ensuring you have current licenses, land use permissions, and operational certificates relevant to your business and the land upon which you travel.



Record your resource use, recycling, waste and carbon output. Start small and build. Some ideas to get you started:

- record your water and electricity use from your utility bill each month or quarter
- separate and record your recycling each month (or record it each second month, taking the average)
- do waste audit every 6 months
- use an online carbon calculator tool to estimate and record your emissions.

Download '[A guide to assist tourism business to prepare, respond and recover from a crisis](#)' and develop relevant plans and strategies for your business resilience, including:



- risk management and crisis preparedness plan
- climate change business impact analysis
- incident and crisis response plan
- bushfire and/or flood plans.

Develop policies to clearly articulate your business commitments and expectations, including an:



- environmental policy
- buy local policy
- health and safety policy
- quality policy
- community, accessibility and diversity policy
- drug and alcohol policy.

Implement a procedure to regularly review and update your plans, policies, certifications and licenses.



Ensure you have appropriate insurance that is relevant to your region and operations.



Providing a safe and secure working environment, and investing in appropriate training and professional development for your staff is imperative for the success of your business and contributes to a strong visitor economy in your region.

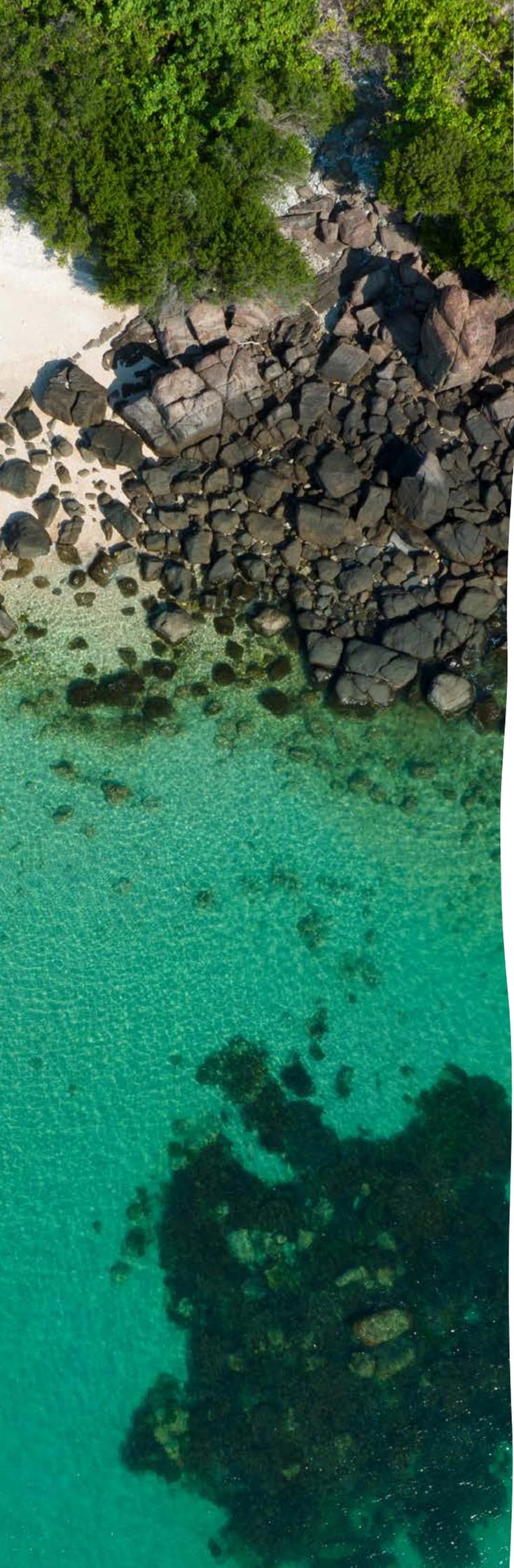
Continually invest in yourself, your staff and your business. A great way to do this is by attaining and maintaining certifications and accreditations, joining professional memberships and attending conferences or supporting staff to attend on behalf of your business.

Take further action		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pursue cultural certification, such as Ecotourism Australia’s Respecting Our Culture program (ROC), and/or complete a Reconciliation Action Plan through Reconciliation Australia. See page 44.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pursue sustainability, ecotourism or climate action certification or accreditation. See page 44.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Choose at least one conference, forum or professional development event for you and/or your staff to attend each year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implement professional development discussions with your staff and identify a plan for career progression, training and special areas of interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implement a structured system for staff feedback and satisfaction, and act on feedback in a timely, professional and constructive manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Explore professional memberships and choose to maintain at least one each year (ensuring you engage and take advantage of the networking and business opportunities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Aboriginal culture tour,  
Kakadu National Park





## Communication is key



At present, 38%<sup>12</sup> of visitors actively look for sustainability information from operators and two out of three<sup>13</sup> visitors want more sustainability information. These numbers are expected to increase as the appetite for sustainable tourism continues to grow.

For visitors not actively seeking sustainability information from operators, 56%<sup>12</sup> still said they would review the information if easily accessible, which may influence decision making.

Sustainability information needs to be authentic, seven out of ten travellers stated that they avoid travel options they do not feel are truly committed to sustainable practices and the same number felt overwhelmed by starting the process of being a more sustainable traveller<sup>13</sup>.

The fear visitors have of greenwashing and the overwhelm they feel in determining how to book sustainable experiences is a big concern. It is therefore important to clearly and accurately articulate your sustainability information on your website, giving travellers the confidence to choose which operator and experience they are booking. Showcasing key data about your targets and performance will help to assure travellers that you are authentically sustainable.

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<sup>12</sup> Booking.com, Sustainable Travel Report, published 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Expedia Group, Sustainable Travel Study, published 2022.

## What information are visitors looking for? <sup>14</sup>



### Where are they looking for information?

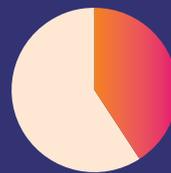
Travellers prefer to source information from trusted travel resources, such as regional or destination websites as their first option, followed closely by an operator's own website<sup>14</sup>. The first preference is likely due to visitor concerns about greenwashing; they may perceive destination websites as more trustworthy. It is therefore very important to keep your listing on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), up to date, as this information feeds into destination websites. It's equally important to ensure the information you have on your website is authentic and accurate.



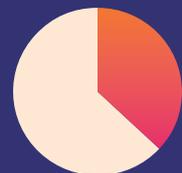
**50%**  
**local** destination, tourism, or **visitor resource groups**



**47%**  
**direct operator** websites



**41%**  
**independent** travel agencies or providers



**37%**  
**third-party** booking websites

<sup>14</sup> Expedia Group, Sustainable Travel Study, published 2022.



Simpsons Gap, Tjoritja / West  
MacDonnell National Park

# Talking to your customers



## Clarity

Sustainable travel information can be overwhelming and confusing. Make it easy to understand, leverage visual formats, and show clear impact, highlighting key performance data.

## Authenticity

Travellers want to know (and see) that operators are committed to sustainability, not just checking a box. Back up messaging with data. Avoid greenwashing at all costs.

## Value

Travellers are willing to pay more for sustainable travel options. Illustrate the value and positive impact of making more conscientious choices.

## Stay local

Visitors want to contribute to local communities positively - let them know how they can immerse themselves and give back to the community.

## Seasonality

33% of visitors are willing to travel outside peak periods to reduce overcrowding of destinations<sup>15</sup>. Promote shoulder and off-season visitation, particularly if it involves a sustainable travel product.

## Be honest

Travellers don't expect you to be perfect today, but they do expect you to be committed to progress over a reasonable timeframe and to demonstrate your progress towards that goal. Demonstrate how you walk the talk.

15 Booking.com, Sustainable Travel Report, published 2022.

# Website inclusions



Many businesses have dedicated pages displaying all their sustainability information in the one location. This is often the most clear and straightforward way of presenting your sustainability journey and impact.

However, some businesses choose to weave a sustainability narrative throughout their whole site, to show their deep and embedded commitment to sustainability across their entire operations.

Whichever option you choose, ensure your sustainability information stands out and is prominent on your website, so readers do not need to go searching for information.

Some things to consider:

## Sustainability ethos/commitment

Does your business have its own sustainability ethos/commitment that you can share with visitors?

## Sustainability policy

Does your business have a sustainability policy that you can share with visitors?

## Accreditation and support programs

Has your business achieved an accreditation, certification or participated in a support program? Make sure you display a logo, scorecard or certificate!

## What have you done so far?

Break down what you have achieved and your plans for the future, under the four key sustainability pillars:

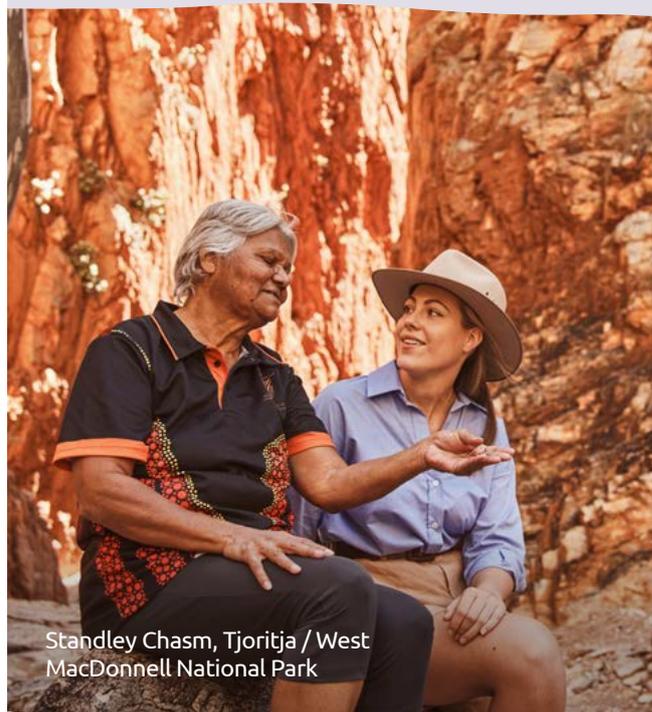
- **Sustainable management:** what are your overarching sustainable practices or policies? How do you measure and monitor your sustainability?
- **Socioeconomic impacts:** what economic impact does your business have on the local community? What impact do your visitors have?
- **Cultural impacts:** how does your business enhance the preservation of Aboriginal culture? How do you assist visitors to understand and respect culture?
- **Environmental impacts:** what steps has your business taken to reduce its impact on the environment? How do you encourage visitors to do the same?

## Tips for visitors

Help your visitors to be sustainable travellers. Include tips, advice and information about your local region and what travellers can expect on your website, social media or email.

You could include:

- Information about the weather, including advice about the type of clothing to be most comfortable in your climate. You could provide information about your region's Aboriginal seasons. For example, the [Six Seasons of Kakadu](#).
- Information about how your customer can reduce single use plastics, by bringing their own reusable items such as water bottles, coffee cups, reusable cutlery and tote bags for shopping.
- Information on locally produced, environmentally friendly products, such as nature based mosquito repellents and sunscreens.
- Advice about how to be a responsible traveller in the natural environment, such as keeping to the walking tracks, taking all rubbish with you, not leaving a trace and limiting sunscreen in waterholes by wearing sun protection clothing instead.
- Information and links to local community initiatives, volunteer programs and cultural festivities.
- Advice about how visitors can get to your business in the most sustainable way.



Standley Chasm, Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park

## Key engagement actions



### Look for opportunities to speak to your audience

Always look for opportunities to speak to your potential and current visitors to promote your sustainability journey. Link messages back to your sustainability commitment, vision, and achievements, and ensure messaging is clear and authentic.



### Ensure content is updated and relevant

Update your sustainability content regularly. This includes your website, social media sites, blogs and third-party websites.



### Make sure your Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listing is up to date

ATDW contains sustainability information. Ensure your listing is up to date and includes your sustainability targets and achievements.

For assistance: [ATDW.TourismNT@nt.gov.au](mailto:ATDW.TourismNT@nt.gov.au)



### Keep Tourism NT updated

Tourism NT want to hear about your sustainability achievements to include your business in promotions, campaigns, packages and famils.

Email: [Marketing.TourismNT@nt.gov.au](mailto:Marketing.TourismNT@nt.gov.au)



### Keep your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) updated

Tourism Top End and Tourism Central Australia play an important role in visitor information and bookings. Keep them updated about your sustainability journey by presenting to their customer service staff or at monthly meetings when you have exciting new developments.

Tourism Central Australia: [info@discoverca.com.au](mailto:info@discoverca.com.au)

Tourism Top End: [info@tourismtopend.com.au](mailto:info@tourismtopend.com.au)



### Keep Tourism Australia updated

Tourism Australia want to learn about your sustainability achievements to help them promote Australia to the rest of the world as a sustainable tourism destination.

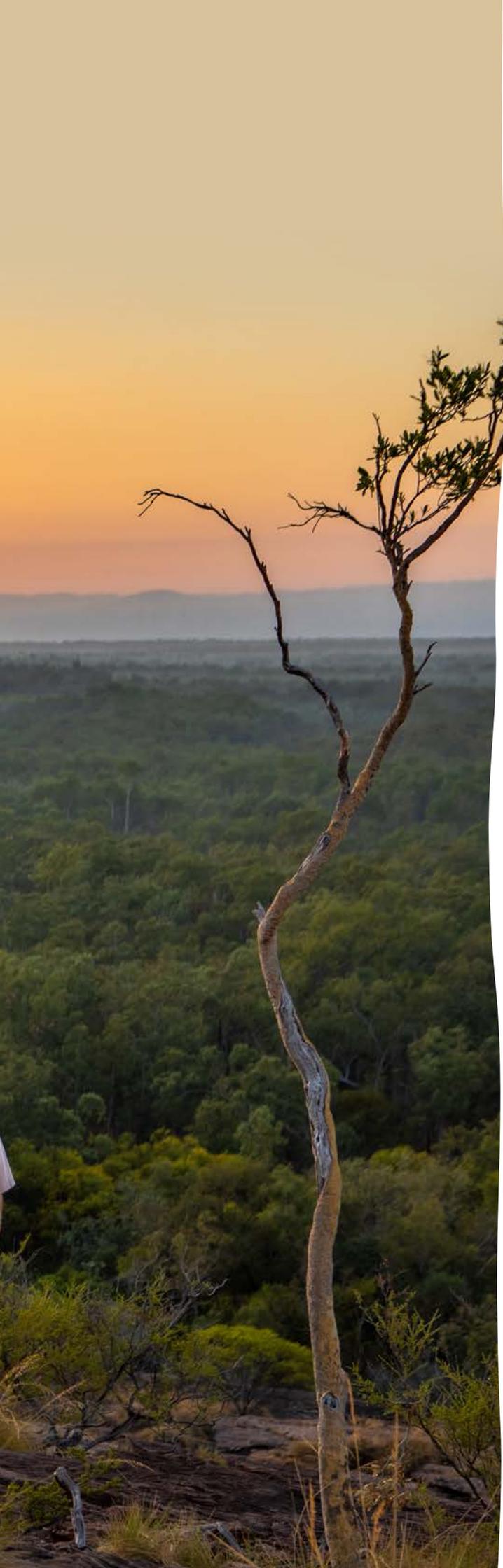
Email [ask.us@tourism.australia.com](mailto:ask.us@tourism.australia.com)



# Resources and case studies



Nawurlandja lookout,  
Kakadu National Park



# Accreditations and certifications



Undertaking certification and accreditation programs helps to keep you focused and accountable. The initial application process takes time and work, however the ongoing maintenance and progression is easier to manage and the benefits are significant.

## Pathway programs

Ecotourism Australia and EarthCheck offer pathway programs that are a great start for businesses wanting to begin their sustainability journey or as a precursor to an accreditation or certification.

- **Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard**

A program by Ecotourism Australia, the scorecard measures where a business is at and provides a scorecard they can publicly display with a comprehensive report offering advice on key areas of improvement.

[Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard | Ecotourism Australia](#)

- **Micro-credential courses in sustainability**

EarthCheck have partnered with Typsy to offer tourism businesses three online training modules covering different aspects of sustainability and responsible tourism.

[Typsy + EarthCheck](#)

## Accreditations and certification

The next step is to consider investing in an accreditation or certification program. There are many benefits, including assuring travellers and booking agents that your products or experiences are backed by a strong, well-managed commitment to sustainable practices and are high-quality, low impact tourism experiences.

Accreditation and certification programs also provide you access to benchmarking materials for continuous monitoring and improvement, helping you to achieve best practice and excellence in tourism. Some of the options available are:

- **Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC)**  
ATIC is the national representative body for tourism and own the Quality Tourism Framework, which is an accreditation program that enables you to develop your business from start-up through to niche markets and international trade channels, in order to develop a sustainable tourism business that can compete and prosper. They offer a range of accreditations including Sustainable Tourism and EcoStar Accreditation.  
[Quality Tourism Programs - Quality Tourism Australia](#)
- **Ecotourism Australia**  
Ecotourism Australia is the peak body for ecotourism in Australia. They connect, champion, inspire and inform through strategic partnerships and global best practice standards and offer a range of certifications including ECO Certification, Sustainable Tourism Certification, Climate Action Certification, and Respecting our Culture Certification (ROC). They are recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.  
[Sustainable Tourism | Ecotourism Australia](#)

- **EarthCheck**  
EarthCheck work with governments, businesses and destinations to deliver science-backed, strategic and sustainable outcomes. They offer sustainability certifications for tourism businesses, hotels, destinations, governments, parks, and events. They are recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.  
[EarthCheck - Good For Business, Good For The Planet](#)
- **Climate Active**  
Climate Active represents Australia's collective effort to measure, reduce, and offset carbon emissions to lessen negative impact on the environment. Their certification encourages industry to go beyond standard practice and set themselves apart as climate champions.  
[Certification | Climate Active](#)
- **GreenStep Sustainable Tourism**  
GreenStep provides assessments, programs, and certifications to help tourism destinations and businesses measure and improve their sustainability performance. They offer assessment tools and support programs to help businesses reach their certification goals. They are recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.  
[Certification | GreenStep Sustainable Tourism](#)
- **Preferred by Nature**  
Preferred by Nature supports better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and the climate. They do this through a combination of sustainability certification services, projects supporting awareness raising, and capacity building. They are recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.  
[Sustainable Tourism certification | Preferred by Nature | global](#)



Florence Falls,  
Litchfield National Park

# Australian Government policy



Sustainable tourism sits within a broader national policy context. It is valuable to have a broad knowledge of new Australian Government policies, programs and plans that are relevant to your business, such as:

[The Climate Change Bill \(2022\)](#), legislating commitment to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 43% below 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero by 2050.

[Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019 – 2030](#) strives to incorporate adaptation, resilience and natural resource management in our cities, rural and natural environments, on land and at sea.

[Nature Positive Repair Plan](#) that sets out the government's commitment to reform Australia's environmental laws to better protect, restore and manage our unique environment. This includes a [Nature Repair Market](#) to reward landholders for restoring and protecting nature, and provides options for businesses to invest in nature repair.

[A National Landcare Program](#) has invested over \$1 billion in conservation, rehabilitation, and protection of our natural environment.

[A National Waste Policy Action Plan](#) with targets and actions to implement the [2018 National Waste Policy](#), including banning the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres, reducing the total waste generated per person by 10% by 2030, thus halving the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030, and phasing out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025.

[National Cultural Policy](#) that includes a commitment to protect First Nations knowledge and cultural expressions, including the harm caused by fake art and the development of a First Nations creative workforce strategy.

The [Aviation White Paper](#) will set the long-term policies to guide the next generation of growth and innovation in the aviation sector, including outcomes in relation to safety, competitiveness, sustainability and efficiency.

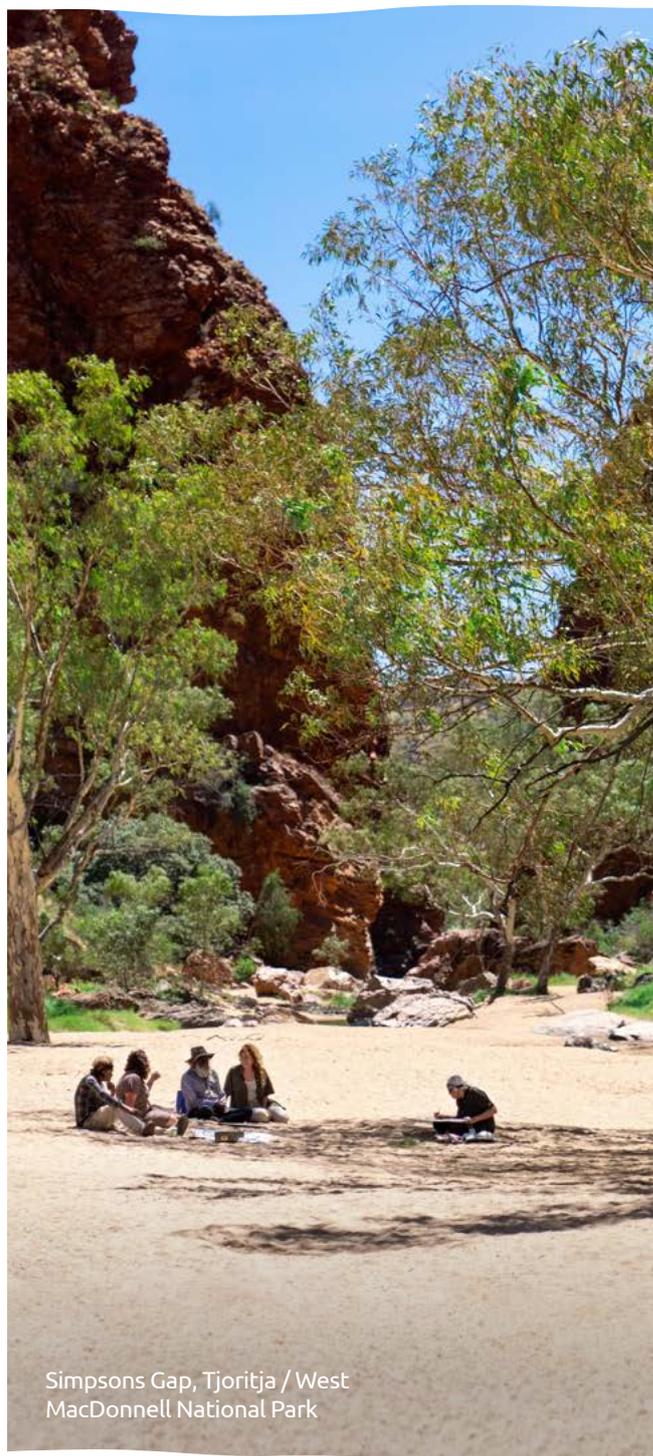
The commitment to a [Jet-Zero style council](#) for the progress of Sustainable Aviations Fuel innovation and the reduction of carbon emissions from air travel.

[A National Electric Vehicle Strategy](#) that aims to provide access to the best transport technologies and help meet emission reduction targets.

Australia is a signatory to many international commitments that may also be relevant to your business, including:

- [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
- [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)
- [The Larrakia Declaration on the Development of Indigenous Tourism](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Sustainable Ocean Economy](#)

- [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#)
- [Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals](#)
- [The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#)
- [UNESCO World Heritage Convention](#)



Simpsons Gap, Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park

# NT Government policy



It is also important to be familiar with NT Government policy, programs and commitments. Some that may be relevant to the sustainability of your business include:

[Northern Territory Climate Change Response Towards 2050](#) provides a policy framework that will enable the NT to strategically manage climate change risk and opportunities. The Response identifies 4 key objectives to inform future actions and guide development of mitigation and adaptation strategies:

1. achieve net zero emissions
2. build a resilient Territory
3. unlock opportunities from a low carbon future
4. inform and involve all Territorians.

[Northern Territory Offsets Framework](#) which is designed to promote the avoidance, mitigation and management of impacts on the environment associated with developments and other activities.

[Northern Territory Disability Strategy](#) and the 3-year action plan 2022-2025 demonstrates the NT Government's responsibility and accountability to all Territorians with a disability.

[Greenhouse Gas Emissions Offset Policy](#) to provide for the consistent and transparent use of greenhouse gas emissions offsets under Territory legislation. The policy will specifically help to transition the NT to a low carbon economy and support the Climate Change target of net zero emissions by 2050.

[Biodiversity Offsets Policy](#) is designed to compensate for impacts on biodiversity at one site by requiring conservation or restoration activities elsewhere. Avoiding or mitigating impacts to biodiversity is always preferred. However, when used appropriately, offsets can be a tool to help minimise environmental harm.

[Roadmap to Renewables](#) outlines the pathway for the NT Government's target of 50% renewable energy electricity consumption by 2030.

[Northern Territory Renewable Hydrogen Strategy](#) which articulates the potential hydrogen opportunities and the Territory's competitive advantages. The Territory aims to leverage these to be an Australian centre for hydrogen technology research, production and use.

[NT Circular Economy Strategy 2022-2027](#) commits the NT to a coordinated, collaborative, and innovative approach to increase resource recovery, reuse and recycling. Through this, the Government aims to transition the Territory's waste into a circular economy.

[Northern Territory Electric Vehicle Strategy and Implementation Plan](#) addresses climate risk and creates new economic and business opportunities by supporting the uptake of EVs.

[Everyone Together Aboriginal Affairs Strategy](#) provides a way for the NT Government to reshape how it works with Aboriginal Territorians to support community aspirations and achieve better outcomes.

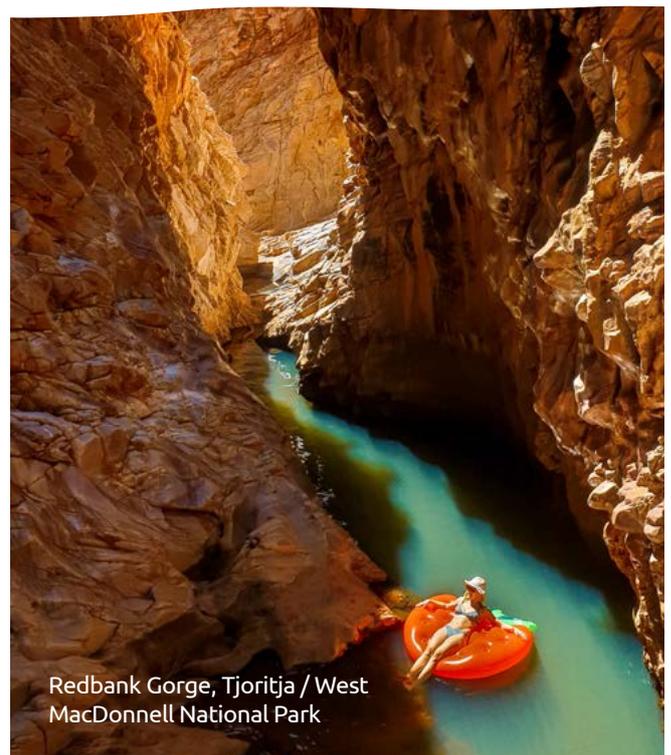
[Multicultural Policy for the Northern Territory](#) commits to value cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, and fair and equitable access to services and programs for all Territorians. It aims to increase inclusion and participation in the NT's social, cultural, and economic life for all Territorians.

## What does this mean for you?

Government commitments to sustainability are often supported through resources and [grant funding programs](#). Familiarising yourself with key policies and plans will help you keep up with opportunities for your business.

Businesses, including tourism operators, will be increasingly held to account for their sustainable management practices including how they measure and manage their environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural impacts. Many large businesses already do this with comprehensive Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategies. As government and community expectations continue to grow, small and medium sized businesses will need to do the same.

Understanding more about government priorities, expectations and policy will help you navigate your obligations and develop your sustainability strategies.



Redbank Gorge, Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park



# Case Studies – NT Operators



## Venture North

Venture North have long invested in achieving and maintaining certifications in cultural tourism, ecotourism and sustainability. These underpin their environmental and cultural practices and protocols, especially when touring and lodging on Country.

They provide comprehensive training for all guides to ensure they act responsibly on Country and correctly interpret the environment, people and culture for their guests. Training is also provided to ensure that staff support the business in their own internal sustainable goals and practices.

Venture North have partnered with [Top End Healthy Coasts](#) to educate others about the importance of conserving marine life and habitat. They have a coastal camp on the remote Cobourg Peninsula in north-west Arnhem Land where they have been granted permission by the Traditional Owners to operate a tourist camp. They take the responsibility seriously to look after the land, sea and wildlife and are committed to carbon neutrality by 2030.

### How has the business benefited?

- Received funding support, including a [Sustainability for Tourism](#) industry grant in 2022 to install a solar system at their Cobourg Coastal Camp to change from current fuel generators to renewables.
- Media and public relations opportunities through Tourism Australia and Tourism NT, and secured acceptance in tourism tradeshow and brochures.
- Success in both NT Brolga Tourism Awards and Australian Tourism Awards.

### Tips for other businesses?

“Committing to sustainable tourism will open opportunities for you, such as success in Tourism Awards, increased promotion and media attention, and government funding.”

### Accreditations

ECO certified Advanced Ecotourism and Respecting our Culture Certified (Ecotourism Australia), Sustainable Tourism Accredited (Australian Tourism Industry Council). [venturenorth.com.au](http://venturenorth.com.au)

## Sea Darwin

Sustainable tourism has been a core business principle for Sea Darwin since they first began operations. They focus on local people and community and their product is based on an overarching care for the planet.

Sea Darwin give back to the community through active involvement in marine clean-ups, data contributions to marine research, subsidised interpretive cruises for schools, and support for both Austurtle (from 2010, five percent of every turtle tour ticket sold has been contributed to Austurtle) and the North Australian Marine Megafauna Research Project.

Sea Darwin visits Njulbitjlk (Bare Sand Island) with the permission of Traditional Owners to provide turtle tourism on the island. They always have a qualified turtle guide and ensure visitors stay on the beach or dunes, do not light fires, only use sea turtle-friendly lights, leave no rubbish and do not visit the sacred site.

### How has the business benefited?

- Attracted and retained like-minded staff.
- Attracted like-minded interstate and international travellers who are seeking sustainable experiences.
- Received regular bookings from conference and education groups.
- Success in both NT Brolga Tourism Awards and Australian Tourism awards.
- Promotion and marketing opportunities with media outlets, Tourism NT and Tourism Australia.

### Tips for other businesses?

“Sustainability is a way of thinking and operating. Once you make the change, the benefits will outweigh any costs.”

### Accreditations

ECO certified Advanced Ecotourism and Respecting our Culture Certified (Ecotourism Australia).

[seadarwin.com](http://seadarwin.com)



## Trek Larapinta

Trek Larapinta are committed to the preservation and conservation of the environment. This commitment is paramount to their values and they consider it a privilege to operate in the unique natural environment of the West MacDonnell Ranges.

They have achieved carbon neutrality and have a comprehensive sustainability policy covering their travel and accommodation footprint, their greenhouse gas inventory and their actions towards the preservation of Aboriginal culture and heritage.

They have a sustainable menu and encourage guests to be mindful and responsible travellers through education and practical action.

They have also developed resource management policies to save water and energy, and have a policy of minimum impact travel based on responsible and sustainable tourism principles.

### How has the business benefited?

- Received a Sustainability for Tourism industry grant in 2022 to install solar technology upgrades to four Trek Larapinta camps.
- Success in NT Brolga Tourism Awards.
- Attracted and retained loyal guides and staff.
- Repeat business and group bookings.
- Decreased costs of energy and water.

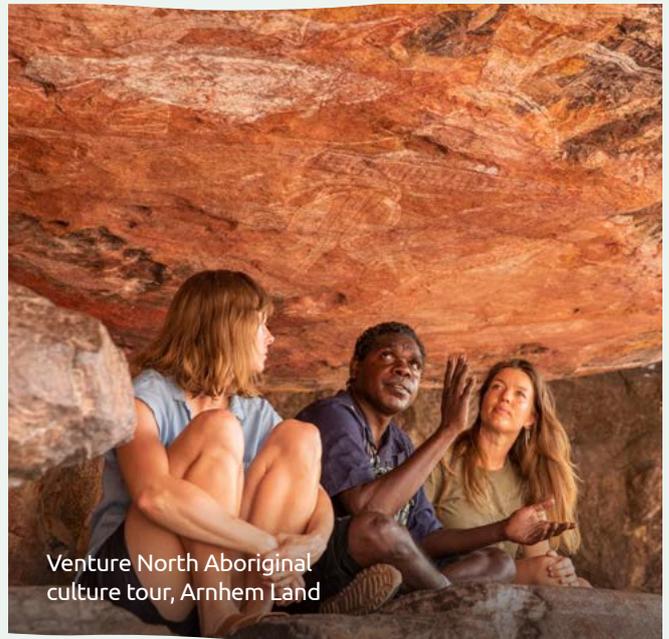
### Tips for other businesses?

“Make a start, you will quickly realise the benefits far outweigh the effort.”

### Accreditations

ECO certified Advanced Ecotourism and Respecting our Culture Certified (Ecotourism Australia).

[treklarapinta.com.au](http://treklarapinta.com.au)



Venture North Aboriginal culture tour, Arnhem Land



Sea Darwin tour, Darwin Harbour



Euro Ridge Larapinta Trail, Alice Springs and Surrounds

# Case Studies – National Operators



## Tanja Lagoon Camp – South Coast NSW

Tanja Lagoon Camp is based on social, cultural and environmental responsibility. Inspiration comes from the desire to live and care for the beautiful land and provide opportunities for others to connect with the earth. They commit to their product being a force for good.

They have a strong focus on environmental initiatives such as investing in the planting of over seven thousand native trees to revegetate the natural environment encouraging the return of native birds and wildlife. They have also invested in hybrid work vehicles to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Tanja Lagoon Camp is run on solar and battery power and they have accessible accommodation and communal spaces. They also have local green supplier and purchasing policies, sustainable design structures, a worm farm waste management system that processes all sewage and rain water conservation practices.

They have also committed to only work with international travel agents who are offsetting the carbon emissions from their guests' international flights.

### How has the business benefited?

- Attracted respectful and like-minded visitors.
- High staff retention rates.
- High customer satisfaction and repeat visitation.
- Increase in visitors with accessibility needs.
- Decreased energy, waste and water costs.
- Increase in wildlife.

### Tips for other businesses?

“Sustainability is a journey. The most important thing is to get started and keep going.”

### Accreditations

ECO certified Advanced Ecotourism and Climate Action Certification (Ecotourism Australia)

[tanjalagooncamp.com.au](http://tanjalagooncamp.com.au)

## Wooleen Station Stay and Homestead – Outback WA

Wooleen Station are committed to land always coming first. They are dedicated to the rehabilitation of the outback for the purpose of sustainable production and healthy vibrant ecosystems into the future. There are many ways they achieve their commitment, such as through their Adopt an Acre initiative, their interpretation of the environment and cultural heritage of the land, and their practical and constantly evolving sustainability practices.

They have extended their solar panel capacity and upgraded to more efficient battery technology. They also invest in locally made products, support small business, and consciously buy from certified B-Corp businesses.

Wooleen Station are always looking at ways to reduce plastic and recently moved away from small plastic shampoo and conditioner bottles.

### How has the business benefited?

- Success in Western Australian Tourism awards.
- Easier recruitment and retention of staff.
- Excellent traveller ratings and word of mouth.
- Increased repeat visitation.
- Promotion through media interest and inclusion in WA Tourism opportunities.

### Tips for other businesses?

“You need to be authentic and grow from a place of passion. Start with the action you care deeply about and do it well.”

### Accreditations

Sustainable Tourism Accredited (Australian Tourism Industry Council)

## Kingfisher Tours – Kimberley region WA

Kingfisher Tours is committed to treading lightly on the environment, embracing local culture and working to generate future employment for local people. They aim to ensure that future development of the region provides a positive experience for local people, local industry and visitors.

The business has a local employment strategy based on employing Aboriginal guides and reservation staff and providing ongoing training and support. They work with Traditional Owners to ensure a culturally appropriate product that immerses the visitor in nature and culture. Their tours also boast local produce and native ingredients for lunches.

Kingfisher Tours commit to actively minimise their carbon footprint and have introduced several initiatives to reduce single-use plastic in the business. They encourage other tour operators, in particular their partners and suppliers, to do the same. This includes a partnership with Project Pargo to supply high quality water bottles and keep-cups on their tours.

Kingfisher Tours are also committed to supporting their staff, including the development of micro businesses such as their Head Guide's Purnululu Bush medicine label 'Garingbaar Products'.

### How has the business benefited?

- Focus on local employment has increased staff retention and satisfaction.
- Aboriginal guides have enhanced the visitor experience and increased visitor satisfaction.
- Success in Western Australian tourism awards.
- Excellent online traveller reviews and increase in visitor bookings including repeat visitation.

### Tips for other businesses?

"There's always something that can be done and lots of things are free. Whether it is recycling office paper, purchasing reusable lunchboxes and water bottles, or switching to a local supplier."

### Accreditations

ECO certified Advanced Ecotourism and Respecting our Culture Certified (Ecotourism Australia), Sustainable Tourism Accredited (Australian Tourism Industry Council)

[kingfishertours.com.au](http://kingfishertours.com.au)



Tanja Lagoon Camp,  
South Coast NSW



Wooleen Station Stay and  
Homestead, Outback WA



Kingfisher Tours,  
Kimberley region WA

# Sustainability strategy



Glen Helen Gorge, Tjoritja / West  
MacDonnell National Park

# Your Sustainability Strategy



Now that you have worked through the toolkit you will have an understanding of the cultural, socioeconomic and environmental impacts of your business, as well as the sustainable management practices that can guide them. One such practice is the development of a sound Sustainability Strategy to manage your sustainable targets, actions and outcomes in line with your wider business strategy.

## Your ambition or purpose

### What to write

The first step in developing your strategy will be outlining your sustainability ambition or purpose.

Is sustainability a key part of your operations? Do you want to follow in the footsteps of your peers? Maybe you want to become a leader?

### For example

*“Our purpose is to actively contribute to environmental, cultural, and social good within our operating region, and have the sustainable management practices to ensure success.”*

*“Our purpose is to reduce our negative social, cultural, and environmental impacts.”*

### Our ambition/purpose is...

## Your vision

### What to write

Your sustainability vision is an inspirational, future focused statement regarding your sustainability aspirations. Your ambition and vision will guide the high level direction of your Sustainability Strategy.

### For example

*“Our vision is to operate responsibly as we commence our journey towards achieving net zero, and contribute positively to the environmental and cultural landscape in which we operate.”*

*“We want to become a sustainability leader in the Territory’s tourism industry.”*

### Our vision is...

## Your strategic priorities

### What to write

Determine 3 to 5 focus areas. You may wish to use the 4 pillars of sustainability as your strategic pillars, or you may wish to be more specific to your operations.

### For example

*"Sustainable management | Socioeconomic impacts | Cultural impacts | Environmental impacts."*  
*"Policy development | Local community | Aboriginal engagement | Natural environment and climate."*

### Our strategic sustainability priorities are...

## Your strategic objectives

### What to write

This is where things get more detailed. Set measurable targets or goals that will demonstrate your progress towards your strategic priorities. You may set multiple objectives under each priority, separated by whether they are long, medium, or short term goals.

### For example

*"Measuring our impact and aiming for continual improvement | Increasing local procurement and employment levels | Increasing our Aboriginal engagement and opportunities | Increasing our water and energy efficiency."*

### Our strategic objectives are...

## Your outcomes

### What to write

Your outcomes should clearly articulate what successful achievement of your strategic objectives will look like.

You may wish to set 2-3 outcomes for each objective.

### For example

*"Measuring sustainability performance annually and noting comparative improvements, year on year.*

*A supply chain that supports local suppliers.*

*An increase in the number of Aboriginal guides.*

*Decreasing energy and water consumption."*

### Our sustainability outcomes are...

## Your initiatives and projects

### What to write

These are your actionable initiatives that will enable your business to achieve your strategic objectives. Draw on the action items identified in the Tools and Information section. These initiatives and projects should be broken down into short, mid and long term to keep you on track and accountable.

### For example

*"Install a rainwater harvesting system.*

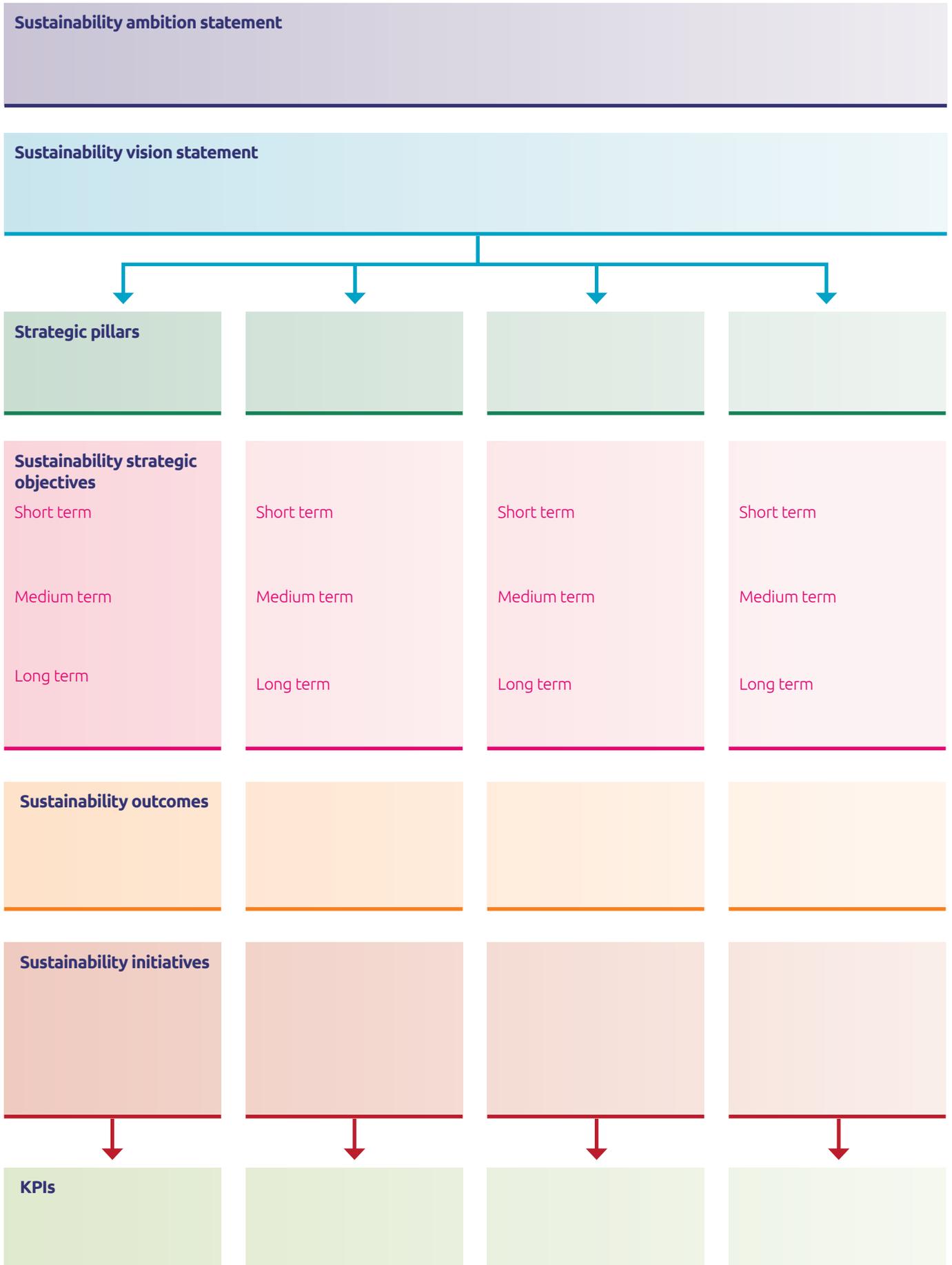
*Create a sustainability page on website.*

*Implement a training schedule for staff, focused on their career development."*

### We will achieve our goals by...



You may wish to use the below template to publish your Sustainability Strategy on your website or to easily share for accreditation, certification or award submissions.



# Glossary



Sustainability tends to involve lots of jargon which can be difficult to decipher depending on their context. Below are some common terms that you may encounter in this Toolkit and along your sustainability journey. Additional definitions can be found at: [GSTC Sustainable Tourism Glossary](#).

Term	Definition	Examples
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area - the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life.	Kakadu National Park's biodiversity is recognised by its World Heritage Listing. Kakadu is home to 2,000 plant species, around one-third of all Australian bird species and about one-fifth of all Australian mammals.
<b>Carbon Footprint</b>	A carbon footprint refers to the total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organisation, or community.	Some major contributors to the tourism industry's carbon footprints include transportation, lodging, food and drink, shopping and construction.
<b>Climate Action</b>	Climate Action means to limit and adapt to climate change. It is number 13 of the 17 <a href="#">Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</a> and encourages urgent action to combat climate change and its impact. <a href="#">Climate Change NT</a> is an example of climate action.	Climate actions include fuel and emission innovations in the aviation and cruise sectors, electric vehicles, decarbonisation and waste reduction in lodgings, carbon offsetting and the adoption of responsible, sustainable, and regenerative tourism practices.
<b>Climate Change</b>	Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.	The NT has experienced an average annual temperature increase of 1.5°C since 1910. Climate change threatens our natural attractions, affecting biodiversity, water security, the look of the landscape, accessibility of coastal regions, destruction of wetlands, and the incidence of mosquito borne diseases.
<b>Ecotourism</b>	The United Nations World Tourism Organisation defines ecotourism as: all nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.	Find a guide to the NT's ecotourism experiences here: <a href="https://northernterritory.com/articles/sustainable-travel-experiences-in-the-nt">northernterritory.com/articles/sustainable-travel-experiences-in-the-nt</a>
<b>Emissions</b>	An emission of something, such as gas or vapor, is the release of it into the atmosphere.  A specific set of gas emission associated with human activities that alter the Earth's climate are called greenhouse gas emissions.	Greenhouse gas emissions include carbon dioxide which makes up the vast majority of emissions from the tourism sector, but smaller amounts of methane and nitrous oxide are also emitted.
<b>ESG</b>	ESG is an acronym for Environmental, Social and Governance. In essence, ESG captures all material, non-financial topics that usually are not being captured by standard financial reporting.	Most large organisations and businesses report on ESG, and many of these reports can be found on company websites.



Term	Definition	Examples
<b>Greenwashing</b>	Advertisements and corporate activities that are made to appear more environmentally friendly or sustainable than they actually are.	Putting the words “eco” or “environmentally friendly” in the advertisements or labels of products and services for marketing purposes that may mislead travellers, when the products themselves are not actually contributing to any sustainable outcomes.
<b>Net Zero</b>	Net zero (also known as carbon neutral) means you do not emit more carbon than you sequester. This is achieved by balancing a measured amount of carbon released through operations with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset.	<a href="#">Earth Sanctuary</a> was one of the first carbon neutral business in the NT. All of their events and tours have been certified as carbon neutral.
<b>Regenerative Tourism</b>	Regenerative tourism goes beyond sustainable tourism and is based on adding a positive impact to the local community and environment.	The <a href="#">Islander Way</a> on Flinders Island in Tasmania is an example of a co-designed project using regenerative tourism principles and practices.
<b>Residual Emissions</b>	Residual emissions are any greenhouse gas emissions that remain after a business or organisation has implemented all technically and economically feasible opportunities to reduce emissions in all scopes and from all sources.	An example of residual emissions is from petrol or diesel from your tour vehicles that cannot yet be feasibly phased out.
<b>Responsible Tourism</b>	Responsible tourism is any form of tourism that can be consumed in a more responsible way. It minimises negative social, economic and environmental impacts, generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities.	Tourism NT’s video about cultural tourism is an example: <a href="#">How to travel responsibly on Country in the NT</a> .
<b>Scope 1 emissions</b>	Direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by you.	Emissions from petrol used in company vehicles.
<b>Scope 2 emissions</b>	Emissions from indirect consumption of energy and other purchases.	Emissions from the electricity used in your hotel that is not generated by renewables.
<b>Scope 3 emissions</b>	Indirect emissions that you are involved in through your value chain.	Emissions associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any goods and services you purchase</li> <li>• Waste disposal</li> <li>• Fuel consumed by supplier’s vehicles</li> <li>• Employee commuting.</li> </ul>



Florence Falls, Litchfield  
National Park

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**NORTHERN  
TERRITORY**  
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