



Down Under Tours Group of Companies

# GREEN POLICY – Full version

As a Transport and Transport Logistics Supplier

With significant diversity in its natural resources, Australia is an environment where enormous opportunity exists **for people to learn more about the area's natural and cultural resources.**

The Down Under Tours Group of Companies has made a firm commitment to environmental sustainability through the support and participation of local studies, the implementation of staff accreditation and achieving nationally and internationally recognised company accreditation.

Additionally, best practice operations management is a fundamental component of the Down Under Tours Group commitment to environmental sustainability. It includes the focus on energy management, waste management and contribution to conservation through all levels of the Company.



## | ECO CERTIFICATION:

Ecotourism certification provide industry, protected area managers, local communities and travellers with an assurance that a certified product is backed by a commitment to best practice ecological sustainability, natural area management and the provision of quality ecotourism experiences.

Eligibility for Ecotourism Accreditation is based upon the following principles:

- **Economic Sustainability**
- **Environmental Sustainability**
- **Social Sustainability**

Each of the above principles is reflected in specific assessment criteria that establish the category of Ecotourism certification. Ecotourism certification has two levels; Ecotourism and Advanced Ecotourism. Each level of certification incorporates a more stringent set of assessment criteria. The criteria for Advanced Ecotourism also encourage and reward innovative best practice that exceeds the Eco Certification Program standards.

*Appendix A – Eco Certification Certificate*



## | ACCREDITED AUSTRALIAN TOURISM BUSINESS:

The Australian Tourism Accreditation Standard helps define core business activities and good business practices required by enterprise essential for a viable tourism business. It is against the key elements of the Standard, a business wishing to become accredited is formally assessed.

The Down Under Tours Group is a range of businesses which meets the requirements of the Standard and has gained accreditation status, signals to its customers and to the wider industry that it is committed to providing quality business standards, customer service and experience.

*Appendix B – Accredited Australian Tourism Business Certificate*



## | PLANET SAFE PARTNERSHIP:

Planet Safe Partnership is a recognition program developed and maintained by Tourism Tropical North Queensland. It recognises Tropical North Queensland products and businesses who are achieving excellent results in terms of environmental sustainability. Planet Safe is deliberately flexible in its assessment criteria because many companies can and are doing lots of great things for the environment in ways that are specific to their business. Three core criteria must be met by Planet Safe Partners;

### 1. **Energy Foot Print Audits**

Businesses must complete an energy audit or, as it's known in the current jargon, a carbon footprint audit.

### 2. **Proof of Best Practice Operations**

Businesses must have accreditation that demonstrates you are participating in best practice environmental management of your business. There are a variety of national and international accreditation schemes that endorse best practice in environmental sustainability. Because they all have outstanding attributes Planet Safe Partnership does not judge one as better than another as often they may be particularly relevant to an industry sector or business type.

### 3. Putting Something Back

No matter how much a business tries there will end up being some form of environmental impact. This can be compensated for by giving something back to the environment. To qualify for Planet Safe Partnership endorsement businesses need to participate in some recognised environmental improvement project.

*Appendix C – Planet Safe Partnership Certificate*



#### | AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST FOUNDATION:

The Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF) is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation dedicated to education, research and habitat rehabilitation for Australia's rainforests. The ARF builds global awareness and support for **Australia's rainforests by funding enhancement programs made possible through investment, sponsorship and donations from corporate and private citizens.**

Although endorsed and supported by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments the ARF believes that **Australia's Rainforests can not survive without the help of 'every day' citizens from Australia and around the world.**

To this end, the Down Under Tours Group of Companies were invited in 2004 to become members of the Australian Rainforest Foundation and offered **the opportunity to 'Adopt a Cassowary' as part of Operation Big Bird.** With delight we accepted the invitation and have been proud to be financial members of the Australian Rainforest Foundation since this time.

#### | TRAVEL PROCEDURES AND OFFSETTING:

Studies have shown that one full coach has five times less CO2 emissions per passenger per kilometre than a jet aircraft on the same route, and for every full coach, there are 16 fewer cars on the road.

The Down Under Tours Group takes its environmental impact on the planet seriously and rises to the challenge by committing to low-emission, eco-efficient travel alternatives in a changing world.

So what are we doing? At the Down Under Tours Group we have implemented a range of initiatives to ensure we minimise our environmental impacts:

- Our bus fleet is constantly upgraded to ensure fuel efficiency and lower carbon emissions. In fact, Down Under Tours has spent over \$6.9 million in the last 2 years upgrading its fleet to ensure continuous improvements in fuel efficiency and the delivery of lower carbon emissions by investing in vehicles which are manufactured at minimum industry emissions standards of Euro3 and Euro4
- We have recently engaged The Missing Link – Resource Coordinators Pty Ltd to conduct an Eco-efficiency Audit to document what is currently happening and to set a benchmark against which to operate and reduce impacts into the future.

Down Under Tours Australia cares for our environment and we invest in it by making our business the most environmentally friendly that it can be. Our objective is to set the standard for transport; minimizing emissions and maximizing the efficiency of travel.

## | WASTE MANAGEMENT:

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At the Down Under Tours Group, we consider an integrated approach to managing waste that minimises environmental impacts whilst maximising efficiency. Being a large coach operator with waste outputs from vehicle services and maintenance, we must ensure that waste management practices to be of a very high standard. Holding trade waste licences with Cairns City Council and the Environmental Protection Agency we undergo regular compliance audits by these departments in order to maintain our licence validity and to ensure the ongoing quality and improvement in our waste management systems.

The onsite treatment facility includes a Coalescing Plate Separator which enhances gravity to remove free oil, grease, detergents and solids from waste water in a cost effective way. The Coalescing Plate Separator has the following environmental benefits:

- Automated low cost facility for workshops, parts and engine wash down areas.
- Custom designed plants for heavy machinery wash pads, re-fuelling areas.
- High volume in-pit systems for car parking and vehicle storage areas.
- Interceptors for treating storm water run off from equipment stand down and parking areas.
- General office waste has also been reduced by implementing standards of use. These standards include:
  - Reuse of all paper for printing on both sides – in-house documentation.
  - No Print Policy on documents unless required for audit and/or file management purposes. (i.e. staff file maintenance)
  - Recycling of all printed material with North Queensland Recycling Agencies. This includes paper, cardboard, used envelopes and other items.
  - Recycling of all unused brochures at end of travel year
  - 30% of day tour brochures are printed on recycled paper

The changes in waste management have reduced the overall output of waste. The initial start-up costs have been far outweighed by the returns of future cost savings and has allowed Down Under Tours to meet legislative obligations and environmental best practice.

*Appendix D – Cairns City Council, Authorised Vehicle Repair Station and Audit Compliance Letter*

## | ENERGY MANAGEMENT:

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The Down Under Tours Group considers the management of energy within the entirety of its operation. The regular maintenance and servicing of premises equipment and vehicles including waste disposal, air-conditioning units and fleet vehicles has been found to reduce oil and fuel/diesel consumption while decreasing emissions and improving reliability and customer confidence.

The Group also aims to cut its energy consumption and greenhouse emissions by planning several campaigns **such as "switch off" and "ride to work" campaigns.** Unnecessary lighting and electrical appliances that are usually on standby will be switched off when not in use which the Group anticipates will lead to a 10% reduction in energy consumption and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

The electricity and water consumption of the Group will be metered and monitored to track the success and progress of energy and water efficiency actions.

Further to this commitment to monitoring and reviewing consumption of fuel/diesel and decreasing emissions in its fleet of vehicles the utilization of an onboard computer known as an Execulog in each vehicle is also undertaken.

The Execulog is a hand set is installed on the dash board of a vehicle, close to the driver. In most Execulog applications, the driver will enter some simple details into the handset before beginning a journey. For example, his/her identification details, departure point, destination and the purpose of the trip. The driver will also be able to enter the fuel consumption at the end of the trip after having refuelled.

The Execulog will then automatically record a range of vehicle signals, including:

- Speed
- Engine RPM
- Distance travelled
- Travel times
- Other vehicle functions where specified (e.g., clutch use)
- Job Type
- Job Code
- Paid Hours
- Drivers name
- Vehicle
- Kilometres travelled per job.

From these inputs the Execulog is able to record driving events such as heavy acceleration, heavy braking, idling time and accidents. Throughout a journey, the driver is able to record events - for example, Job start time, time taken on the job, Idling time, kilometres taken for each job and fuel consumption.

All of these signals along with any information that is entered by the driver are collected as data for each journey made. This data is then downloaded into our office computer which contains the Execulog software - WinFLEX. WinFLEX is a powerful windows based package which transforms the Execulog data into meaningful information. The main benefits for Environmental Management purposes include:

- Reduce Costs: ensures vehicles are being driven in a way which dramatically reduces operational and maintenance costs (e.g., minimise incidents of excessive idling, braking, acceleration and fuel consumption and emissions).
- Driver Incentives: use the WinFLEX driver performance reports as the basis for incentive schemes and for allocating further driver training.
- Vehicle Maintenance: ensure accurate scheduling of vehicle and maintenance tasks (for both vehicles and trailers). Monitor cases of unusual vehicle behaviour.
- Vehicle Usage: monitor which vehicles are the most cost effective, and which are suited to different types of work. Maximises vehicle efficiency and effectiveness.
- Accounting Purposes: invoice clients based on the variables recorded by the Execulog (e.g., distance travelled, weight carried, hours worked on a job and fuel consumption). Use the Execulog's records of hours driven for pay roll purposes.
- Monitor Equipment Usage: use monitoring lines to monitor elements such as air conditioning, and wheel chair ramps in coaches, bin lifts, and more

## **| REFRIGERANT HANDLING:**

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As an authorised business with the Australia Refrigeration Council (ARC), the Down Under Tours Group is dedicated to making a difference to our industry and our environment. Our authorisation with ARC means that we are a business dedicated to minimising the effect of refrigerants on ozone damage and global warming. ARC, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment and Water Resources, is continuing to protect and promote the values of our industry to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

Holding a Refrigerant Trading Authorisation and Refrigerant Handling Licence has many advantages:

- Knowing we are doing the right thing by the environment and the next generation
- Supporting industry best practice by adhering to regulations (it is illegal to acquire, possess, dispose or handle refrigerant without the appropriate ARC authorisation and/or licence).
- Protection for our business – ARC regularly performs field audits which may result in severe penalties without the appropriate authorisation and/or licence.

*Appendix E – Australian Refrigeration Council, Trading Authorisation Certificate*

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SUPPORTING THE DOWN UNDER TOURS GROUP OF COMPANIES COMMITMENT TO BEING 'GREEN'**

### **| SUPPORTING AND PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL STUDIES:**

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As a member of the local community and as a tourism industry representative, the Down Under Tours Group is assisting with gathering research data for the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF) through survey collection on selected touring programs.

The aim of **MTSRF is to ensure the health of North Queensland's public environmental assets** - particularly the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and its catchments, tropical rainforests including the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA), and the Torres Strait - through the generation and transfer of world-class research and sharing knowledge.

Protection of the health of these environmental assets is a joint responsibility of governments, community and industry and needs the commitment of each if it is to be achieved. The MTSRF outcomes will support each of **those parties in their endeavours to protect, conserve, sustainably use and manage North Queensland's public environmental assets.**

### **| CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION:**

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The Down Under Tours Group has provided constructive contributions to the management of natural areas visited and to its operation in natural areas and business sector. This has included:

- **Removal of customer's litter and rubbish in areas** used for tours.
- Monitoring assistance for the rehabilitation of areas subject to negative visitor impacts, including the participation in studies and data collection.
- Provision of concessional rates to schools and other institutions for studying the conservation of the environment.
- Encouraging passengers to complete our On-line Passenger Surveys instead of paper ones