Sustainable Tourism Certification Criteria – Ecotourism Australia

Section		Criteria
Eligibility criteria	Mandatory eligibility criteria	To be eligible for Sustainable Tourism Certification, you must answer YES to ALL the following questions: • Do you operate a tourism business or a business within the tourism supply chain in Australia? • Are you committed to sustainable business and operational practices and ongoing improvements? • Are you committed to reducing your business' emissions and carbon footprint? • Are you engaged with, and do you give back to, your local community? • Do you operate your business with respect for Indigenous culture?
1. Business management	1.1 Business sustainability planning Core	1.1 Business sustainability planning: Evidence of the following documentation must be submitted in support of your application. a) Business plan b) Marketing plan c) Operational management plan or manual (incl. HR management, risk management and customer service standards)
1. Business management	1.2 Legal compliance Core	a) The business complies with all necessary legal requirements and obligations, and hold all necessary authorisations required to operate as a tourism business. b) New product and infrastructure developments are subject to relevant approvals where required.
	1.2 Equal opportunity, fair treatment and anti-discrimination Core	a) The business offers employment opportunities, including in management positions, without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways and implements its own policies on equal opportunity employment, fair treatment, and anti-discrimination, and labour rights in the workplace. b) Please upload copies of your business' policies covering equal opportunity and fair treatment, workplace discrimination and harassment.
	1.3a Insurance	It is required that the business carries adequate Public Liability Insurance cover. It is also important to ensure that any subcontractors contracted by the business also have adequate Insurance cover.

	Core	Please upload a copy of your current public liability insurance certificate.
	1.4 Accessibility Core	The business does not discriminate, both directly or indirectly, against a person because of disability when providing goods, services or facilities, or access to public premises. This includes providing equal opportunity for people of all abilities to access tourism services and activities. a) Access for participation by customers of all abilities has been considered. b) Where the nature of activities may be limited for people with a disability, a process or customer access plan is documented to assess the situation and take all reasonable steps to ensure equal opportunity for participation, or to offer an alternative activity that meets the guest's accessibility requirements and provides an enjoyable experience. c) Accessible products are clearly and accurately identifiable in product descriptions, on your website and in marketing material. d) Staff and employee training include awareness of accessible products, activities and facilities, and delivery of appropriate customer service to people of all abilities. e) Any accessible infrastructure or equipment meets the necessary minimum requirements for mobility and access set within the national building or construction code.
2. Responsible marketing	2a) Core	Marketing content only features images and descriptions of places and activities that are part of the product being offered and avoids the presentation of operating practices that contradict minimal impact behaviour or conflict with permit conditions or laws governing the activities.
2. Responsible marketing	2b) Core	Marketing content about wildlife or cultural events does not promise sightings or interactions which cannot be guaranteed.
2. Responsible marketing	2c) Core	The following elements are reflected in the businesses digital marketing and any marketing material representing the product (where applicable): ❑ The characteristics that describe the area being visited/the destination; ❑ Principal activities/products/services offered ❑ Sustainable and climate change friendly behaviour ❑ Means of accessing additional information about the destination/region

		❑ Means of accessing additional information about sustainability e.g. articles, books, websites;
2. Responsible marketing	2d) Core	Once certified, the certification logo/s must be displayed on your website in association with certified products and used in marketing material accompanying certified products. Descriptions of the certification must be accessible for guests and use of the logo must not be ambiguous. The business will display their certification logo/s and descriptions once certification is granted.
2. Responsible marketing	2e) Core	The business highlights in their marketing content their commitment to sustainable operations, environmental and cultural responsibility, and any contributions to conservation, community and climate change action (such as emission reduction, reduced energy consumption practices and/or offset programs where they apply).
2. Responsible marketing	2f) Core	Sustainability claims made in marketing content are based on records of past performance.
2. Responsible marketing	2g) Advanced	Marketing provides accurate information on at least one of the following (where applicable): • Climate change benefits associated with the product/service provided; • Climate change impacts effecting the region and how guests can make more sustainable choices throughout their experience; • Offsetting options for guests; • The carbon footprint of the business; • The carbon footprint of the products/services provided.
2. Responsible marketing	2h) Core	Internal communications media (i.e. staff notices, newsletters, etc.) include updates on the objectives, strategies and achievements of the business that are related to sustainable operations, environmental and cultural responsibility, contributions to conservation, community and climate change action.
3. Customer satisfaction	3a) Core	Feedback on customer satisfaction is monitored and actively sought via at least four of the following measures: • Observation of customers; • Discussions with customers; • Visitor books or feedback forms;

		- Regular review of operations; - Digital and social media platforms, e.g. TripAdvisor, Yelp, Facebook, Instagram etc; - Discussions with partners such as; Visitor Information Centre staff, travel agents and wholesalers; - Review of articles by visiting journalists; and - Reviewing and responding to letters or telephone calls from customers.
3. Customer satisfaction	3b) Core	It can be demonstrated that customer feedback relating to general issues, sustainability, customer service and guest experience is acted upon, and responses made to negative feedback are recorded.
3. Customer satisfaction	3c) Advanced	Goals have been established to improve on levels of current customer satisfaction
3. Customer satisfaction	3d) Advanced	The operator actively seeks feedback from tourism professionals, such as other nature tourism or ecotourism operators, national, state and regional tourism organisations and industry associations.
3. Customer satisfaction	3e) Advanced	To improve customer satisfaction performance, the operator utilises and communicates research findings to staff and other relevant organisations (e.g. inbound operators and protected area managers).
3. Customer satisfaction	3f) Advanced	The operator communicates and shares insights from the customer satisfaction improvement process with the broader tourism industry in the spirit of fostering quality in the region through initiatives such as conferences, mentoring, newsletters and workshops.
4. Environmental management	4.1a) Environmental management procedures Core	Environmental management procedures are documented and include: - Environmental and cultural characteristics significant to the operation, and which require management and protection; - The goal of protecting endangered and endemic species, biodiversity, native vegetation, natural water flows, landscape and cultural heritage of the site; - A commitment to undertake continual improvements toward ecological sustainability through the adoption of best practice techniques; - Environmental risk management planning, including appropriate responses (i.e. provision of emergency response equipment) to minimise the likelihood of events and mitigate impacts if they occur, and a monitoring process for key aspects of environmental risk;

		• Staff training requirements which ensure capabilities to implement appropriate responses; • A documented green supplier policy, purchasing guidelines or ethical partners policy as per criterion 4.2 (refer page 27). *Note: this policy may be documented in your Business Plan if preferred*; • Emissions reduction planning, including identification of emission sources and reduction strategies as per criterion 4.3 (refer pages 28-30); • Climate change vulnerability and adaptation planning as per criterion 4.4 (refer page 32); • Resource use and management, including minimisation strategies (i.e. for water use); • A waste management plan, including solid waste monitoring and minimisation strategies as per criterion 4.6 (refer pages 36-38).
4. Environmental management	4.1b) Environmental management procedures Core	Environmental management plan and procedures are reviewed at least annually.
4. Environmental management	4.1c) Environmental management procedures Core	It can be demonstrated that: • Staff are trained in minimal environmental impact techniques and the procedure for potential environmental emergencies that are adopted by the business; • Staff receive timely updates on any changes to procedure, and training and guidance materials on environmental management are readily available; • Staff can provide feedback to improve the sustainable management of the business.
4. Environmental management	4.1d) Environmental management procedures Advanced	Business operations, environmental management plans and/or procedures have been recognised, certified or audited by a consultant or qualified environmental professional, or through an international sustainability standard. (i.e. ISO14001, B Corp, etc).

4. Environmental management	4.1e) Environmental management procedures Advanced	Stakeholders are regularly informed about sustainability performance and actions and are invited to support them.
4. Environmental management	4.1f) Environmental management procedures Advanced	Management and key staff responsible for the operation's environmental performance have specific training or qualifications from independent third-party registered training organisations, or an environmental consultant has been engaged to assist in the development of environmental management planning.
4. Environmental management	4.2a) Suppliers and business partners Core	The business has a documented policy or guidelines in place for supporting local suppliers and business, reducing emissions from production and transport, reducing packaging and supporting ethical and responsible companies and brands. This policy/guideline should preference goods and services that have lower energy, waste and emissions associated with its operation, goods and services. This includes the selection of partners when offering package deals in collaboration with other providers.
4. Environmental management	4.2b) Suppliers and business partners Core	A commitment to reducing emissions can be demonstrated by at least one business partner or supplier.
4. Environmental management	4.2c) Suppliers and business partners Core	Where it is appropriate to do so, the business provides advice and support to other local businesses and service providers on the quality and sustainability of their service.

4. Environmental management	4.3a) Emissions measurement, reduction and offsetting Core	Identify and document where greenhouse gas emissions associated with your business operations are coming from. This can be related to any areas or activities of the tourism product/s and its operational management.
4. Environmental management	4.3b) Emissions measurement, reduction and offsetting Core	Collect data on identified emissions to calculate the business' carbon footprint. Use a relevant measurement methodology and monitoring system (i.e. a carbon footprint/emissions calculator or audit tool) to measure and monitor emissions from business operations, which is updated with current data on a regular basis. Please indicate which methodology or system is used.
4. Environmental management	4.3c) Emissions measurement, reduction and offsetting Core	The business must collect data on carbon emissions of the business for a full calendar or financial year to establish a baseline performance period. This is known as a base year. A base year must be established before a carbon neutral claim can be made. The base year can be used to compare future performance periods and evaluate success of emission reduction strategies. Select your answer: ❑ The business has established a base year OR ❑ The business has commenced data collection and is in the process of developing a base year
4. Environmental management	4.3d) Emissions measurement, reduction and offsetting Core	Implement strategies to reduce your emissions Identify and document strategies to reduce emissions and mitigate environmental risks associated with all of the emissions sources that have been identified.

4. Environmental management	4.3e) Emissions measurement, reduction and offsetting Advanced	The business participates in a verified carbon compensation (or offsetting) scheme to compensate the remaining emissions, once the largest possible reductions have been made.
4. Environmental management	4.4a) Business vulnerability and adaptation to climate change Advanced	Identify where the business may be vulnerable to climate change impacts: An internal climate change risk assessment has been conducted and the potential risks (or impacts) of climate change on the business activity have been identified and documented. Risks should be prioritised into 'high risk', 'medium risk' and 'low risk' (or equivalent) categories.
4. Environmental management	4.4b) Business vulnerability and adaptation to climate change Advanced	Relevant operational areas have been considered in the development of climate change adaptation strategies.
4. Environmental management	4.4c) Business vulnerability and adaptation to climate change Advanced	Strategies for responding to climate change risks are identified and documented.

4. Environmental management	4.5a) Location Core	The business considered the following when selecting the site for their operations: • Sites are selected following consideration of alternative uses of the site • Sites are selected in consideration of their capacity, fragility and level of pressure on the site and the nearby communities • Sites are away from areas of high conservation values (or at least be where the use will not threaten the conservation value) • Sites preferably use previously disturbed sites rather than undisturbed sites • Sites do not adversely affect local or public access • Sites avoid culturally sensitive sites (unless the activity involves appropriate presentation of cultural values or conservation of cultural heritage with the permission of relevant Indigenous groups or other appropriate representative bodies, and consistent with Cultural Heritage legislation)
4. Environmental management	4.5b) Location Core	The business manages its impacts on biodiversity at the site/s of operations: • Minimal impact management of all activities; • Monitoring of environmental impacts on natural sites visited; • Rehabilitation of areas subject to visitor impacts (where within the control of the business); • Suspected infringements, incidents and pollution by other users of the site are reported to the relevant protected area manager or agency/agencies where they apply.
4. Environmental management	4.5c) Location Core	When selecting a site for the experience, the business engages with relevant local authorities or protected area management agencies to identify any issues concerning visits to the particular sites.
4. Environmental management	4.5d) Location Core	Noise levels are considerate of nearby natural areas or adjacent residences and staff and guests are aware of noise guidelines

4. Environmental management	4.5e) Location Core	Where available; staff are actively encouraged to walk, ride or use public transport to get to work.
4. Environmental management	4.6a) Waste minimisation and management Core	A waste management plan is documented and in place to identify and monitor waste. Waste minimisation strategies are documented and adopted.
4. Environmental management	4.6b) Waste minimisation and management Core	Measures to REDUCE overall waste and environmental impact are in place: Including: • Single-use plastics and polystyrene are avoided; • Overpackaged goods are avoided; • Food and materials are purchased in bulk where available; • A "no print" policy has been adopted; • Digital marketing, social media, email and word of mouth are the preferred means of customer interaction; • Print promotional material user environmentally-friendly paper and inks where possible (e.g. recycled paper, unbleached, Forest Stewardship Council certified paper, soy-based inks). *Should you partake in any other waste reduction efforts, please detail below:*
4. Environmental management	4.6c) Waste minimisation and management Core	Measures to REUSE or REPURPOSE waste are in place: Including: • Non-disposable items are used (e.g. utensils, containers, etc); • Bulk materials are obtained in reusable containers and the containers are returned and reused; • Reusable bags or water bottles are provided or available for guests to purchase;

		• Facilities for guests to re-fill water bottles are provided or made available to guests; • A policy to recycle/refill toner cartridges has been adopted; • Existing and potential customers are actively encouraged to pass publications to others for reuse. *Should you partake in any other waste reuse or repurposing efforts, please detail below:*
4. Environmental management	4.6d) Waste minimisation and management Core	Measures to RECYCLE waste are in place: Including: • Soft plastics are collected and recycled through a soft plastics recycling program if available • Organic kitchen waste is composted or fed to domestic or farm animals; • Participation in a regional or nationwide recycling scheme; • Assistance has been provided in the establishment of local recycling infrastructure; • Batteries, fluorescent lightbulbs and electronics are disposed of responsibly through correct disposal programs. *Should you partake in any other recycling efforts, please detail below:*
4. Environmental management	4.6e) Waste minimisation and management Core	Recycling facilities, instruction on bin use, locations of facilities and other relevant information on waste minimisation are clearly displayed or made available for guests.
4. Environmental management	4.6f) Waste minimisation and management Core	Staff receive training on correct waste minimisation and management procedures.

4. Environmental management	4.6g) Waste minimisation and management Advanced	Waste monitoring The detail of the business' waste monitoring and management extends to the amount of solid waste disposed per tourist/guest night (or a different productivity unit such as number of guests per tour/vessel etc).
4. Environmental management	4.6h) Waste minimisation and management Advanced	Waste auditing The business has conducted their own internal waste audit to inform waste minimisation strategies and determine waste reduction goals. OR The business has had a waste audit conducted by a qualified environmental auditor.
4. Environmental management	4.7a) Minimal disturbance to wildlife Core	Where wildlife may be encountered (e.g. gardens on the property, parks etc), the following measures are taken to manage customer behaviour: • Customers are advised that noise must be kept to a minimum; • Customers are advised to keep to designated trails; • Safe distances are ensured (for wildlife and customers); • Wildlife is not cornered, chased or provoked into performing particular behaviours (e.g. flying, gliding, defence display, etc.); • Customers are advised not to touch or feed wildlife;
4. Environmental management	4.7b) Minimal disturbance to wildlife Core	Minimal disruption Operations do not cause significant disruption to behaviour such as foraging, territorial or breeding patterns. An appropriate minimal approach distance to animal breeding sites (e.g. bird nests, seal breeding colonies etc.) is adopted. Existing paths/trails are used to avoid damage to wildlife habitat (e.g. trampling of nests or burrows). Where applicable, use of lighting is limited.

		The area is left immediately if wildlife is displaying signs of distress or discomfort.
4. Environmental management	4.7c) Minimal disturbance to wildlife Core	Operations do not involve alterations to habitat that will result in alterations to wildlife population dynamics (e.g. trampling of vegetation, removal of nest trees, wetland drainage, etc.).
4. Environmental management	4.7g) Minimal disturbance to wildlife Core	Merchandise derived from rare and threatened species is not sold by the business and advice is provided to customers not to purchase these items from other sources.
4. Environmental management	4.8a) Site selection: built infrastructure Core	DESIGN ADVICE OR REVIEW Design and construction of building and infrastructure pertaining to the selection of a site: • Complies with local zoning and protected area and heritage requirements *(NOTE: these are legal requirements and may include authorisation conditions around maintenance schedules);* • Respects the natural or cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment, and land rights and acquisition; • Uses locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction;
4. Environmental management	4.8b) Site selection: built infrastructure Core	REDUCE Smoking is restricted to designated areas and prohibited in natural areas and in any buildings used by guests. Required Site Disturbance: • Site/s are selected with consideration given to what construction methods are possible. In construction of marine or water-based ecotourism structures, environmental impacts due to site selection have been minimised through the following:

		• Selected site/s and any moorings/anchoring avoids impacts on sensitive environments (e.g. seagrass beds, coral reefs); • Excavation and dredging at the site/s are kept to a minimum; • Construction waste is removed from the site and appropriately disposed of; • Structures do not use toxic compounds (e.g. anti-foulant).
4. Environmental management	4.8c) Site selection: built infrastructure Core	PRODUCE Site/s are selected to maximise design opportunities which will reduce energy use: • Site is selected considering optimum orientation relative to the sun; • Site is selected to capture cooling breezes or exclude cold winds; • Site is selected with consideration to how existing natural features will affect the site (i.e. trees shading undesirable sun).
4. Environmental management	4.8d) Site selection: built infrastructure Core	EXPERIENCE • Design or construction decisions can be conveyed to contribute, enhance or enrich guest experience.
4. Environmental management	4.9a) Operational resources: built infrastructure Advanced	• If construction and/or development have taken place in the last 5 years, professional advice has been used to develop energy efficient building design and operation. • If above is N/A - An audit of existing building design and operation has taken place and areas to improve energy efficiency have been identified and are scheduled for replacement/ update/ improvement.
4. Environmental management	4.9b) Operational resources: built infrastructure	Energy Use • Energy use is measured (by building usage) and measures to reduce overall energy consumption are continually assessed.

	Core	
4. Environmental management	4.9c) Operational resources: built infrastructure Core	Heating Cooling and Ventilation • Systems to 'block out' or 'let in' the sun at different times of year and day are applied to the outside of the building – systems applied are appropriate to the location's climate; • Size, extent and location of window glazing and openings is considered in relation to controlling solar access and breezes relative to the location's climate; • Glazing type is selected to block incoming heat or retain internal heat as appropriate to the location's climate; • Building materials are selected and located to help control the comfort of the space, (i.e. thermal mass); • Natural ventilation is maximised, minimising the need for air conditioning ; • Heating/cooling is restricted to living and sleeping areas etc. or is able to be isolated ; • Use of key-tag switches and other automatic controls to ensure that air conditioners and other energy consuming appliances are used only when required; • Heating/cooling temperatures have default settings for 25-26°C in summer and 18-20°C in winter; • Materials used in interior design are appropriate for the climatic conditions (e.g. bedding materials, flooring and floor covers are suitable for the climatic conditions).
4. Environmental management	4.9d) Operational resources: built infrastructure Core	Water Heating • Water heating is undertaken, in part or whole, using renewable resources i.e. solar hot water system, recovered heat systems (e.g. a heat pump).
4. Environmental management	4.9e) Operational resources: built infrastructure	Lighting • Natural light provides all necessary illumination to all living areas of buildings during daylight hours; • Illuminated signage is only used for emergency exits or other orientation, security, or safety requirements;

	Core	• Over 90% of lights are energy efficient (e.g. compact fluorescent bulbs, LED lights, sodium lamps, metal halide lamps); • Movement detectors and or lighting level detectors are used to control lighting; • A lighting plan has been developed that minimizes energy power consumption; • Solar or other renewable energy sources are used to power at least some lighting.
4. Environmental management	4.9f) Operational resources: built infrastructure Core	Equipment and Appliances • Energy efficient equipment (based on the Country's energy efficiency rating system, label or standard) are utilised. If the country in which you operate does not have a current rating system, label or standard, compliance will be assessed based on location and feasibility. If the business is unable to implement measures, it commits to do so when the opportunity presents itself. • Where available, default settings for appliances are set to "eco" mode; • Where possible, appliances are switched off at the wall when not in use; • The maintenance of air conditioning and refrigeration systems is completed by a licensed air conditioning or refrigeration technician; • Cool rooms/refrigeration are designed to give maximum efficiency for the business.
4. Environmental management	4.9g) Operational resources: built infrastructure Advanced	Efficient use of technologies that minimise fuel/electricity consumption and emissions generation and use of cleaner fuels can all help to reduce emissions. With respect to any equipment used by the business (e.g. mowers, generators, chain saws, vacuums/blowers, floor polishers, compressors), at least two of the following measures have been undertaken: • Equipment operators have undertaken training in fuel-efficient operating techniques where applicable; • All equipment is regularly serviced and maintained; • Rechargeable batteries for portable equipment are used where practical; • High efficiency motors are used where possible; • High efficiency motors have been specified for replacement equipment (High efficiency motors minimise the use of fuel and/or electricity and have lower emissions).

4. Environmental management	4.9h) Operational resources: built infrastructure Core	**Water use:** **General:** • Strategies are in place to reduce water use across all operations; • Water use is measured (by building usage) and measured to reduce overall consumption and continually assessed; • Water efficient fixtures are fitted that are above the required standards; • Water saving devices are fitted (e.g. automatic shut-off nozzles, timers, etc). • Water efficient appliances used (based on the Country's water rating system, label or standard). If the country in which you operate does not have a current rating system, label or standard, compliance will be assessed based on location and feasibility. If the business is unable to implement measures, it commits to do so when the opportunity presents itself. • A regular maintenance program ensures immediate replacement of leaking taps, valves and pipes. **Bathroom/Toilets** • Water efficient toilet systems are installed; • Timer devices fitted to fixtures to reduce shower times. **Landscape** • Plants selected for landscaping have low water requirements (local natives); • Direct watering systems are installed (e.g. drip watering systems); • Measures to aid water retention are implemented (e.g. soil treatment, mulch); • Hard surfaces have been reduced, with wash down of hard surfaces not permitted (i.e. sweeping is the preferred method for cleaning outdoor surfaces instead, etc.). **Kitchen** • Appliances requiring water are not used where they can be avoided.

4. Environmental management	4.9i) Operational resources: built infrastructure Advanced	**Water use** Where water supply is obtained from a watercourse a professional assessment of minimum natural flow has been undertaken and extraction of water does not exceed sustainable levels (with allowance for seasonality).
4. Environmental management	4.9j) Operational resources: built infrastructure Advanced	**Wastewater - Grey water** • Treated grey water is used to irrigate landscaping; • Certified and maintained grey water treatment systems are in place.
4. Environmental management	4.9k) Operational resources: built infrastructure Core	**Wastewater - Black water** Where the operation has its own septic system: • Wastewater receives at least secondary treatment or is composted. Where this is not possible, the method of wastewater treatment (direct disposal of sewage or septic system) is justifiable and the ongoing impacts on ground and surface waters have been assessed and are judged to be sustainable; • All onsite wastewater treatment has breakdown alarms, approved emergency bypass facilities and an ongoing water operations manual that is administered by a trained operator.
4. Environmental management	4.9l) Operational resources: built infrastructure Advanced	**Wastewater – Black water** • The treatment system is at tertiary level or secondary level with effluent reuse (this can be either a site-specific system or community municipal system); • All cleaning chemicals used are biodegradable and compatible with wastewater and effluent treatment and disposal; • Only toilet facilities that are composting or have secondary treatment are used; • Biological indicators are used in a monitoring program to determine receiving water quality.

4. Environmental management	4.9m) Operational resources: built infrastructure Advanced	**Energy** • Electric vehicle charging ports are available for guest use. **Clean Electricity Production** Use of renewable energy is demonstrated through at least one of the following measures: • Solar panels for lighting, hot water, refrigeration on tour etc. ; • Heat exchange hot water systems; • Wind power; • Methane gas collection; • Micro-hydroelectricity; • Electricity generation using biomass fuels; • Geothermal energy. NOTE: If you unable to implement any of the above then you must make a commitment to do so when the opportunity presents itself AND you must be currently purchasing at least 50% GreenPower (or similar) accredited energy. • The business is unable to implement any of the above to use renewable energy but commits to do so when the opportunity presents itself and the business purchases at least 50% GreenPower accredited energy - or similar. If GreenPower accredited energy is not available through any energy providers you currently have access to and the above clean power technologies are not able to be implemented, then you may select N/A for criteria within this section.
4. Environmental management	4.9n) Operational resources: built infrastructure Advanced	On site fuel production • Heat is recovered from equipment (e.g. waste heat from a diesel generator is used to heat hot water); • Where it is required, wood burning heating systems use sustainably grown wood.

4. Environmental management	4.9o) Operational resources: built infrastructure Core	Water Rainwater Storage • Rainwater from roofs and other surfaces collected; • Rainwater is reused where practical (e.g. in landscaping, toilet flushing or laundry).
4. Environmental management	4.9p) Operational resources: built infrastructure Core	Communicate Energy and Water efficient features and practices The following actions are completed: • Communicate energy and water efficient design features to visitors; • Communicate how to optimise efficiency and comfort within the buildings (i.e. supply or display information on when best to open shading blinds, curtains, etc.); • Communicate wastewater treatment and reuse systems where relevant; • Guests are encouraged to reuse towels and sheets before laundering; • Guests are given a water budget (small tank for water supply, time limited showers); • Energy and water use and production are displayed for guest information.
4. Environmental management	4.10a) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Core	Disturbance of existing native vegetation • Native species are not disturbed where possible; • Measures are in place to ensure non-native invasive species, pests and diseases are not introduced (e.g. weeding, boot cleaning stations, report sightings to relevant authorities, etc).
4. Environmental management	4.10b) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Advanced	Disturbance of existing native vegetation During site development a specific program was implemented to protect natural areas (e.g. survey of major trees, contractor education and penalties for damage).

4. Environmental management	4.10c) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Advanced	Exotic species For properties with exotic (or native but not locally occurring) plant species as part of the landscaping, a program for re-landscaping with native locally occurring species is implemented.
4. Environmental management	4.10d) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Core	Pesticide and chemical use The use of pesticides and herbicides that cause residual pollution are avoided.
4. Environmental management	4.10e) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Core	Water run-off and erosion • Development has avoided extreme land shaping and surface modifications. Drainage follows essentially natural paths and concentration of overland flow is avoided; • If erosion is evident, measures are taken to stabilise and rehabilitate existing eroded areas; • A soil and water management plan was prepared during the design stage and implemented accordingly, considering pollutant sources, controlling the rate of runoff, trapping sediment and other coarse particles as near to the source as practical ; • The soil and water management plan was certified by a qualified professional in erosion and sediment control;

		- Construction methods involve erosion and sediment control measures to minimise the amount of clearing and soil exposure; - Permanent soil conservation measures have been incorporated into the landscape design; - Access tracks have been constructed in a manner that minimised the total disturbance to both soil and vegetation; - Drainage works are designed to prevent controllable erosion and to minimise the effects of sediment transport; - A maintenance program exists for soil and water management devices; - Design has minimised the use of impervious surfaces which limit infiltration, increase stormwater runoff, and can cause downstream erosion as runoff becomes concentrated; - Design has incorporated pervious buffer strips/soakage strips around high use areas and impervious surfaces to allow infiltration (i.e. gardens in parking areas); - Overland flow does not pass over unprotected land surfaces or over impervious surfaces where particles have settled.
4. Environmental management	4.10f) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Core	Water retention, carbon storage and habitat protection Landscaping involves methods to improve water retention, carbon storage and habitat protection: - Composting; - Mulching; - Water wise plant and grass selection; - Use of drip feed irrigation systems with timers; - Minimal lawn areas; - Provision of dense groundcover; - Use of fast growing and native tree species.

4. Environmental management	4.10g) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Core	**Energy** • External lighting is limited to that necessary for orientation, security, and safety ; • Movement detectors and/or timers are used to control lighting; • External spotlights do not point above the horizontal; • Incandescent floodlights are not used outside public areas.
4. Environmental management	4.10h) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Advanced	Revegetation Where there are revegetation activities occurring onsite, local seeds and cuttings are propagated.
4. Environmental management	4.10i) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Advanced	Stormwater detention and retention and on-site infiltration • Stormwater is collected onsite for reuse or dispersed onsite for infiltration or irrigation of vegetation (i.e. using a stormwater detention tank); • Permanent sediment traps or constructed wetlands, trash racks, gross pollutant traps and/or oil and water separators have been incorporated into the design of the facility if/where appropriate.
4. Environmental management	4.10l) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Advanced	Food production Where a vegetable/herb garden or orchard is kept for guest food supply, it is maintained using principles of organic and/or permaculture gardening.

4. Environmental management	4.10m) Landscape, drainage, soil and water management Advanced	Native flora and fauna Information about native flora and fauna is provided.
4. Environmental management	4.11a) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Core	Energy Where building design is within the control of the business, building size is optimised for its use.
4. Environmental management	4.11b) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Core	Material Impact | Air Quality • Materials used in construction are low or zero Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs can be found in a range of materials used in construction, including; paints, primers, finishes, stains, adhesives, treated lumber, spray foams, and insulation); • Spaces are naturally ventilated to reduce the build-up of any material off-gassing; • The business implements practices to reduce and avoid pollution from ozone-depleting compounds and air contaminants, including hydrocarbon emissions, during construction; • The installation of air conditioning and refrigeration systems is completed by a licensed air conditioning or refrigeration technician; • No solvents are used.

4. Environmental management	4.11c) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Core	Material impact | Environment (i.e. leeching, spreading of invasive species etc.) - Timber used in construction that has been treated with arsenic or copper is not used; - Soil and gravel used in construction is free from weeds and plant diseases; - Vehicles used to transport materials to the site are cleaned to control the transfer of weeds, fungi and diseases; - Cleaning products use no harmful chemicals.
4. Environmental management	4.11d) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Core	Material Selection The following areas have been considered in construction and the selection of materials across all construction elements: - Foundations and structure; - Walls and roof; - Internal finish; - Services; - Site Works. In addition to the consideration of material selection for the above construction elements, the following have occurred: - Excavation has been kept to a minimum; - A low impact foundation system has been established; - Buildings have been designed with an efficient low impact structure relative to the sites location; - Sustainable materials have been selected (i.e. sourced from renewable resources); - Chosen materials are low embodied energy.
4. Environmental management	4.11e) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials	Ongoing maintenance and replacement Materials are selected to reduce the ongoing maintenance and replacement of the materials.

	Core	
	4.11f) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Core	Transport • Building materials have been sourced locally where possible; • Labour has been sourced locally.
4. Environmental management	4.11g) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Core	Construction Briefing of construction staff, employees and contractors on the natural and cultural values of the area and measures necessary for environmental protection were undertaken
4. Environmental management	4.11h) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Advanced	Construction • Renewable energy is used to provide power used in construction; • Construction methods requiring less energy to operate are used.
4. Environmental management	4.11i) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Advanced	Recycled materials • Recycled building materials have been used as a dominant source of material.

4. Environmental management	4.11j) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Advanced	Disposal of construction waste • Waste to landfill has been minimised during construction; • Building waste is repurposed on site (i.e. plaster and timbers broken down and used in landscaping where appropriate, left over materials used in smaller projects); • Material from dismantled buildings is reused or sold for use in other projects where possible.
4. Environmental management	4.11k) Embodied energy – construction methods and materials Advanced	Onsite/local materials Construction materials have been sourced from the project site (e.g. timbers from trees requiring removal, soils for rammed earth from excavations, materials from demolished existing buildings, etc).
4. Environmental management	4.12a) Operational resources: tours and transport Core	Energy use: Transport energy is minimised to the greatest extent possible through the following measures: • Tours and support vehicles/vessels routes and schedules are planned to minimise the distances travelled (including avoiding congested areas and peak hour traffic); • Where driving on unsealed roads, vehicles stay on established tracks and do not venture off designated tracks (terrestrial only); • Customers are encouraged to use fuel efficient transport (e.g. courtesy transfer service provided, providing public transport information, or providing bicycles for sightseeing); • All vehicles/vessels are regularly serviced and maintained to manufacturer's specifications; • Where possible, cleaner fuel options, such as bio-diesel, low sulphur diesel, LPG, ethanol, pyrolysis oils or natural gas are used for all vehicles/vessels and engines; • Vehicles/vessels are set up and operated for fuel efficiency;

		• Vehicles/vessels are operated using minimal impact driving techniques; • Daily vehicle/vessel selection is appropriate to the number of passengers; • Electric vehicles/vessels are used, and/or powered by renewable energy; • Electric car charging ports are available for guest use; • Renewable energy is used to charge batteries and/or run portable fridges/lights etc. (e.g. wind, solar or micro solar etc).
4. Environmental management	4.12b) Operational resources: tours and transport Core	Water use for tours and transport • Strategies are in place to reduce water use across all operations; • Cleaning products use no harmful chemicals; • Vehicles/trailable vessels are only washed in properly set up wash bays where the wash water is treated (with an oil/water separator at a minimum) and preferably recycled; • Fresh water use is timed or restricted when washing vehicles.
4. Environmental management	4.12c) Operational resources: tours and transport Core	Air quality Smoking is restricted to designated areas and prohibited in natural areas and in any vehicles, vessels, or aircraft, or in any buildings used by guests.
4. Environmental management	4.12d) Operational resources: tours and transport Core	Waste Waste collected on tour/on transport is sorted and recycled/disposed of responsibly.

4. Environmental management	4.12e) Operational resources: tours and transport Core	Biodiversity control Measures are taken to avoid the introduction of invasive species to new environments (e.g. vehicles are checked and cleaned of any thorns and seeds when entering new environments).
4. Environmental management	4.12f) Operational resources: tours and transport Core	Toilet facilities • Public toilet facilities that have sustainable wastewater treatment (e.g. wastewater received secondary treatment, or facilities are compostable) are used where available; • If appropriate toilet facilities are not available, human waste is carried out and disposed of at an appropriate facility; • Free disposal in remote areas is only used where there is no wastewater treatment available and minimal impact (e.g. "leave no trace") practices are implemented; • Where transport has its own onboard toilet facilities, waste is disposed of in designated dump points, sewage outlets or septic systems.
4. Environmental management	4.12g) Operational resources: tours and transport Advanced	Resource monitoring Logbooks or systems are implemented and maintained to monitor fuel use, mileage and maintenance.
4. Environmental management	4.12h) Operational resources: tours and transport Advanced	Low emissions vehicle policy Low emissions engines (based on the country's applicable vehicle emissions standard) are adopted as a matter of policy when replaced. If the country in which you operate does not have a current rating system, label or standard, compliance will be assessed based on location and feasibility. If the business is unable to implement measures, it commits to do so when the opportunity presents itself.

5. Interpretation and Education	5.1a) Interpretation planning Core	The major interpretive messages, including take home messages, are displayed on the business' website and integrated where appropriate into other marketing communications undertaken by the operation.
5. Interpretation and Education	5.1b) Interpretation planning Core	Information or instructions are provided to guests on any practices or initiatives requiring their participation (e.g., *instructions on correct use of recycling or compost bins, air conditioning or heating, refraining from feeding wildlife etc.*).
5. Interpretation and Education	5.1c) Interpretation planning Core	Sustainability information on relevant natural areas and cultural heritage is prominent/readily available in your marketing and consumer facing platforms (website, brochures, newsletters, social media, via staff etc).
5. Interpretation and Education	5.1d) Interpretation planning Core	Climate change information is provided to customers, this can include: • An explanation of climate change theory and reality; • The impacts of climate change on the region; • The impacts of tourism and travel on climate change; • How climate change impacts can be reduced by tourism businesses, including examples of actions taken by the business; • Actions that can be taken by individuals to reduce emissions while on holiday; • Advice on where to find government and non-government resources and how to make lifestyle changes to assist climate change action.

5. Interpretation and Education	5.2 Opportunities for interpretation Advanced	Interpretation is developed and delivered to accommodate the needs of target groups and details are documented in the interpretation plan. *Target groups may include non-English speakers, children, customers with some form of physical or intellectual disability etc.*
5. Interpretation and Education	5.3a) Credibility of interpretation and educational information Core	The accuracy of information provided to customers is sourced from and/or verified with reference to reliable sources, including; • Reference books, scientific journals or the like; • Professional persons (scientists, academics, anthropologists, environmental managers); • Scholarly oral history; • Knowledgeable local people (specifically Indigenous people where relevant) who have a high level of recognition; • Recognised training courses and/or training materials • Recognised bodies or interest groups • Credible online resources.
5. Interpretation and Education	5.3b) Credibility of interpretation and educational information Core	The content of interpretation will discuss certification, its role for the business, and how customers can identify certified products.
5. Interpretation and Education	5.3d) Credibility of interpretation and educational information	Content of the interpretation communicates how to protect culture and/or the environment in everyday life practices.

	Core	
5. Interpretation and Education	5.3f) Credibility of interpretation and educational information Advanced	Staff/volunteer induction includes an overview of the following: • Climate change impacts on the operating regions; • The potential climate change impacts on the business; • Positive and negative business contributions to climate change.
5. Interpretation and Education	5.3g) Credibility of interpretation and educational information Advanced	The business provides information to customers on how to offset their holiday emissions with details of specific initiatives or information provided in a documented interpretation plan.
5. Interpretation and Education	5.4a) Staff training, awareness and understanding Core	All customer service staff have attended induction training and participated in ongoing in-house training. Training should include: • The natural and cultural values of the area; • The environmental management issues in the area; • The principles of ecotourism and how they are adopted by the business/product; • Practices that staff are to follow as part of their duties to minimise adverse impacts; • Appropriate customer communications and behaviour.

5. Interpretation and Education	5.4b) Staff training, awareness and understanding Core	Guides and all staff delivering interpretation have undertaking training in interpretation or communication skills, must be able to demonstrate skills-based competencies and are encouraged to undertake regular professional development.
5. Interpretation and Education	5.4d) Staff training, awareness and understanding Advanced	It can be demonstrated that staff are aware of the results of monitoring, research, conservation or environmental programs and outcomes carried out within, or involving the operation of the business and its various sites of operation.
5. Interpretation and Education	5.4f) Staff training, awareness and understanding Advanced	There is documented evidence that professional development of guides/interpretive staff is undertaken by methods such as: • An interpretation plan or guide training manual; • Customised delivery material; • Resource files of archive material or sourced information; • Training register or evidence of scheduled training sessions; • Access to relevant research journals and websites; • Access to specialist talks or workshops; • Update from scientific research programs; • An interpretive newsletter.
6. Contribution to conservation	6.1a) Contributions to biodiversity	Operators must contribute regularly, and within the means of the business, to biodiversity conservation efforts. Contributions may be physical, monetary, in-kind or of any other nature. Contributions should contribute to, or achieve their own, conservation outcomes/targets (long term or short term, direct or indirect). Contributions to conservation should aim to:

conservation efforts Core		• Minimise visitor impacts or mitigate environmental damage from tourism activities external to those of the business; • Contribute to environmental rehabilitation or improving habitat quality and the integrity of the natural environment; • Mitigate impacts of climate change; • Contribute to rehabilitation, threat reduction or improved conservation outcomes of native endemic wildlife or at-risk flora species; • Establish, or support existing, conservation programs, or monitoring and research efforts.
6. Contribution to conservation	6.1b) Contributions to biodiversity conservation efforts Core	The business keeps a record or register of all monetary, in-kind or other support provided to biodiversity conservation efforts. A copy of the existing documentation must be submitted in support of your application.
6. Contribution to conservation	6.1c) Contributions to biodiversity conservation efforts Advanced	The business is actively involved and contributes to the broader conservation efforts within their region or has initiated or operates their own ongoing conservation projects, a foundation or supports and/or participates in ongoing scientific research to aid achievement of conservation outcomes. Details of projects or contributions must be documented, and documentation supplied in support of your application.
6. Contribution to conservation	6.2a) Conservation education Core	The business provides information to their guests on the importance of biodiversity conservation and their contribution efforts. Advice to guests also covers the following issues: • Behaviour to minimise environmental impacts; • Ways in which they can support or be involved in biodiversity conservation efforts;

		The importance of not purchasing merchandise derived from rare or threatened species or heritage artefacts (including significant cultural or heritage items).
6. Contribution to conservation	6.2b) Conservation education Core	The business provides information and training to their staff on the importance of biodiversity conservation and about contributions to conservation outcomes made by the business.
6. Contribution to conservation	6.2c) Conservation education Core	Your education and environmental efforts are communicated to members of the community (these activities may occur on or offsite).
6. Contribution to conservation	6.2d) Conservation education Advanced	Guests and community members have the opportunity to engage in or assist with conservation activities as part of the product experience.
7. Working with local communities	7.1a) Provision of local benefits Core	The business has a documented policy in place for supporting the local communit(ies) in which they operate, which may include: • Preferencing local businesses and suppliers; • Incorporating experiences such as local food and wine; • The purchase of locally produced souvenirs. The business keeps a documented record or register of contributions or support provided to the local community

7. Working with local communities	7.1b) Provision of local benefits Core	The business is actively involved and contributes to the broader tourism industry within their region/s of operation. When possible, the business is involved with sustainable tourism planning and management in the destination where it operates.
7. Working with local communities	7.1c) Provision of local benefits Core	Where practical, local residents are employed by the business, and local guides are employed to present local attraction or sites, or to provide training to guides.
7. Working with local communities	7.2a) Minimal impact on local communities Core	Where applicable, the following sensitive issues are covered in some form of customer briefing to minimise their impact on the local community and its lifestyle: • Subjects that should not be raised or language that should not be used; • Areas that should not be entered; • Items that should not be touched, climbed or sat on; • Places, items or people that should not be photographed without approval; • Appropriate behaviour, such as noise levels, talking, laughing or dancing.
7. Working with local communities	7.3a) Community support core	Tangible support or participation is regularly offered to at least one organisation or event that contributes to the welfare of the local communities.
7. Working with local communities	7.3b) Community support core	Benefits are regularly offered to at least one local community group such as education providers, cultural heritage groups, local residents or local sporting group.

7. Working with local communities	7.3c) Community support core	A representative of the operation is actively involved in relevant local community issues as they arise.
7. Working with local communities	7.3d) Community support Advanced	Contributing to local climate change initiatives The business can demonstrate involvement in the following climate change initiatives: • Actively encouraging government/community organisations to conduct climate change workshops/seminars or get involved in climate change initiatives; • Participates or supports climate change research or monitoring projects in association with an environmental, education or research institution or protected area management agency. This may include providing accommodation or transport for climate change researchers, facilitating visitor surveys related to climate change, facilitating visitor collection of environmental data for climate change research projects, or participating in climate change pilot programs.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1a) Consultation and training Core	Acknowledgement and respect: The business acknowledges and respects the Indigenous peoples of the lands and waters on which it operates.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1b) Consultation and training Core	Where the product involves visitation to culturally sensitive sites and/or interpretation relies heavily on cultural content, contact has been made with relevant Indigenous communities or representatives, to discuss and explain the nature and scope of the product and any potential impact on the community, land and water.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1c) Consultation and training	Guides and front-line staff responsible for delivering the product have received training on the cultural heritage background for the area, how to respect and demonstrate cultural sensitivity, and how to deliver cultural interpretation.

	Core	
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1d) Consultation and training Core	Where a product involves access to a site with cultural sensitivity, it does so with the permission of Indigenous peoples or relevant authorising bodies.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1e) Consultation and training Advanced	Relevant components of the product are approved or developed in consultation with representative Indigenous peoples and/or a cultural group with a direct connection to the heritage being visited.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1f) Consultation and training Advanced	Representative Indigenous peoples and/or an appropriate cultural group are consulted on the development of interpretive material that presents any aspect of the local community heritage. In some cases, no interpretation may be the preferred option by Indigenous peoples.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1g) Consultation and training Advanced	Indigenous staff who have an understanding and knowledge of local Indigenous heritage are employed to act as interpreters and/or trainers of guides in this field.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1h) Consultation and training Advanced	Indigenous peoples are provided training and support to develop tourism business management skills.

8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.1i) Consultation and training Advanced	Appropriate representatives of the Indigenous peoples are involved in strategic decisions on the presentation and interpretation of their culture.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.2a) Cultural interpretation Core	Where applicable, the business supplies visitors with information that : • Conveys the host Indigenous community's spiritual belief for a site; • Provides an understanding of the site's importance and the local cultural practices and traditions; • Encourages respect and consideration of community norms, customs, spiritual and religious beliefs; • Outlines appropriate behaviour, cultural etiquette, and any protocols to be followed in the areas visited. In some cases, no interpretation may be the preferred option by Indigenous peoples.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.2b) Cultural interpretation Core	Where cultural interpretation is delivered, the content: • Has been derived from reputable sources, e.g. Indigenous peoples or representative groups or organisations, and/or relevant government agencies or protected area managers; • Provides an accurate story about the local area and its cultural heritage. In some cases, this may not be applicable as documenting culturally sensitive content may be discouraged by Indigenous peoples.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.2c) Cultural interpretation Core	Where cultural interpretation is delivered, the content, sources, and any relevant consultation records are documented and/or incorporated into guide/staff training where it is appropriate to do so. In some cases, this may not be applicable as documenting culturally sensitive content may be discouraged by Indigenous peoples.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.2d) Cultural interpretation	The business supplies visitors with information that addresses current societal issues and concerns from an Indigenous perspective.

	Advanced	
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.2e) Cultural interpretation Advanced	The relevant interpretation content of the business: • Shows commitment to allowing visitors to hear about and experience history and culture directly from Indigenous people; • Provides information introducing visitors to present-day Indigenous culture and social issues and demonstrates that it is a living, dynamic culture.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.2f) Cultural interpretation Advanced	The business avoids publication or dissemination of photography, film or sound footage featuring deceased persons, and where use of such materials cannot be avoided, a warning is used in respect for the dead and their community.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.3a) Indigenous arts, crafts and goods Core	The business ensures that Indigenous art and craft sold are locally made and have a Certificate of Authenticity.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.3b) Indigenous arts, crafts and goods Core	The business uses and promotes the use of locally produced goods and services and promotes local/regional Indigenous arts, crafts, festivals, attractions and events.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.3c) Indigenous arts, crafts and goods Core	The business complies with copyright and intellectual property rights of local communities, including but not limited to, all Indigenous content sold, distributed, copied, published or otherwise.

8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.3d) Indigenous arts, crafts and goods Core	The business commits to not selling merchandise derived from heritage artefacts or items of significant cultural value and advice is provided to customers to not purchase these items from other sources.
8 Cultural respect and sensitivity	8.3e) Indigenous arts, crafts and goods Advanced	Where Indigenous arts, crafts and goods are sold, the business has formal agreements in place with communities for purchase, distribution and/or support of emerging Indigenous artists.