



Acclimatise your business: climate change workshops for marine tourism operators

Summary

A series of two-day climate change workshops for the Great Barrier Reef marine tourism industry were held in 2009 and 2010. The workshops increased the marine tourism industry's understanding of, and planning for, the impacts of climate change. In 2009, the second day of the workshops guided tourism operators through a risk analysis of climate change impacts on their businesses, while in 2010, operators received one-on-one assistance with obtaining ECO or Climate Action Certification.

Background

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park tourism industry will be one of the first in the world to be directly affected by the impacts of climate change, with more frequent coral bleaching, severe cyclones and ocean acidification contributing to biodiversity loss at primary Reef tourism sites.

As part of the *Great Barrier Reef Tourism Climate Change Action Strategy 2009—2012* (the Strategy) (Action 1.1.2 Hold a series of industry workshops), the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority conducted a series of two-day climate change workshops in 2009.



The workshops were held in the Town of 1770, Airlie Beach, Cairns and Port Douglas.

Due to the success of the workshops, a second series of two-day workshops was conducted in 2010. The workshops were delivered in Cairns and Airlie Beach.

Objectives

- To increase tourism operators' understanding of the impacts of climate change on the Great Barrier Reef
- To assist tourism operators incorporate climate change impact considerations into their business plans
- 2009—To assist tourism operators to undertake a formal, basic risk analysis of climate change impacts on their business operations

Project name: Climate change workshops for marine tourism operators

Project number: 3.2B.402.10.08

Objective: Raise awareness amongst tourism operators about climate change on the GBR

Years: 2008-2009, 2009-2010

- 2010—To assist tourism operators to complete either ECO or Climate Action Certification.

Activities

- Engaged the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators to design and conduct industry climate change workshops.

Outputs

Two-day workshops held in:

- 2009— Town of 1770, Airlie Beach, Cairns and Port Douglas
- 2010—Airlie Beach and Cairns.

At the 2010 workshops, three operators signed up for certification applications, and five recommenced “on hold” applications.



Col McKenzie, Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators, and Phil Browne, True Blue Sailing, discuss ECO Certification at the 2010 Airlie Beach workshop

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The Great Barrier Reef is a popular tourist destination and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is working with the local tourism industry to raise awareness and understanding of climate change impacts on the Great Barrier Reef.

Outcomes

A tourism industry with a fundamental awareness of climate change impacts, which is working towards ‘climate proofing’ both individual operations and the industry sector, and which is undertaking continual improvement towards more sustainable operations and a decreasing carbon footprint.

Unexpected workshop outcomes

- After attending the 2009 climate change workshop in Airlie Beach and hearing about the predicted increase in severe cyclone intensity under a changing climate, *Maxi Action* and *Ocean Rafting* made a commitment that in the event of a severe weather-related emergency they would donate their boats and crew to assist other tourism operators, as needed
- Also arising from the 2009 workshops, the Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association recognised the benefits the industry would gain by working together and formed a *Climate Change and Sustainability Committee*.