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| Title | Low Carbon Living Tourism Business, Resident and Visitor Program Launched in Australian First |
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In an Australian first, the tourism business community in the Blue Mountains has proved that a low carbon future for businesses and users is possible, with the launch today of one of the most extensively researched low carbon regional programs.

The Blue Mountains Low Carbon Living program released its [website and web app](#) designed to support and promote businesses that have reduced their carbon footprint and at the same time provide residents and visitors an opportunity to reduce theirs by choosing low carbon services.

Of 200 Blue Mountains visitors and 100 residents surveyed in April 2016 regarding their own carbon footprint, 94% said they were concerned and 85% said they were prepared to choose business services with a low carbon footprint. Nearly 70% also said they would use a website or app that identified local businesses that had achieved reduction ratings to make their choice.

Funded by the [CRC for Low Carbon Living](#) (CRCLCL), the new web and app program can be easily transferred to other communities and is set to be taken up by other regions in NSW and nationally.

CRCLCL Project leader and Executive Director of the Blue [Mountains World Heritage Institute](#) (BMWHI) Dr John Merson said the audit techniques developed for the 30 local businesses in the pilot program, along with the rating scheme and website was designed to be easily transferrable to other communities.

“Overall our audits reviewed the business’ energy, water and waste usage, advised on how to be more efficient in using carbon based resources, then assessed what they had done and calculated the carbon reduction. From this we provided a gold, silver or bronze rating for the website,” he said.

“Some businesses have achieved up to 15% carbon reductions in one year with many having further plans to increase this figure by adding more solar or introducing water recycling for example.

“Businesses involved in the project include hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, cafes plus transport and activity providers. Their incentive to be involved is that by lowering their carbon footprint they will attract more customers who in turn seek to lower their own footprint by using low carbon services.

“The website is ultimately the way of promoting the businesses carbon reduction achievements and at the same time providing residents and visitors with the opportunity to support them by choosing their services.

“The incentive for residents, and tourists is that by use these businesses they are lowering their own carbon footprint – so it’s a win-win situation,” said Dr Merson.

One local business given a gold rating – Silvermere Guest House – have not only reduced their energy use through solar systems, but also their potable water use by around 40% through a variety of recommended

water saving initiatives. They are planning further energy saving over the next 12 months including the introduction of a solar powered robotic lawn mower.

“Our plans include increasing the number of solar panels and to purchase a rechargeable robot lawn mower to replace the current petrol burning mowers,” said owner Cathy.

According to CRCLCL CEO Professor Deo Prasad, worldwide tourism accounts for 5% of greenhouse gas emissions and makes up 5.6% of Australia’s emissions so the new website and app package was a significant achievement.

“Now we have a proven low carbon audit system, website and app package available through this project, more business communities and carbon emission conscious individuals in Australia and around the world can benefit as it is rolled out and further developed. We are very pleased with what this project has achieved and what it has to offer for a low carbon future,” he said.

The launch was held from 5-7pm in the Banksia Room, Lillianfels Hotel, Katoomba and included a variety of presentations from local business leaders and researchers.

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About the CRC for Low Carbon Living Ltd

The CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRCLCL) is a national research and innovation hub that supports Australian industry to be globally competitive in the low carbon built environment sector.

It brings together property, planning, engineering and policy organisations with leading Australian researchers to develop new social, technological and policy tools for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment.

A key aim of the CRCLCL is to help cut Australia’s residential and commercial carbon emissions by 10 mega tonnes by 2020. It will do this by developing opportunities for lower-embodied carbon manufacturing, creating efficiency and productivity in the built environment sector, empowering and engaging communities, increasing the evidence base for government policy and planning, and building the sector’s capacity for high quality research, education and training.

The CRCLCL is supported by the Cooperative Research Centres programme, an Australian Government initiative.