

NEWS

Low carbon business buzz

BY JENNIE CURTIN

A PLAN to turn the Mountains into a low carbon destination has already captured the imaginations of both locals and visitors.

A survey conducted by the World Heritage Institute in April found that 80 per cent of tourists would choose to do business with a company that was making an effort to reduce its carbon footprint.

And 65 per cent said being a low carbon destination would make them more inclined to visit than another place.

Locals were also enthusiastic about a new website which has been set up to rate low-carbon businesses, with 85 per cent saying they would use it to decide where to eat, to stay, how to get around or where else to do business.

Executive director of the Institute, John Merson, said "from any perspective, this represents a significant market and one that could well justify the efforts made [by the businesses]."

In the Low Carbon Living Blue Mountains project, the institute has worked with 30



LOW CARBON: John Merson, executive director of the World Heritage Institute, points out the features of the new website. Photo: David Hill.

tourism businesses, including Scenic World, the Mountain Heritage Hotel, The Carrington and the Escarpment Group (owner of the Hydro, Lillianfels, Parklands and Echoes).

Each of the businesses has been audited and their carbon usage assessed. Then new measures have been introduced to reduce their carbon footprint.

Steps include improving insulation, installing rain-water tanks, sourcing food locally, recycling waste, replacing lights with LEDs and

putting in water-saving low flow shower heads.

Huong Nguyen from Escarpment said there had been some technical challenges trying to reduce carbon while meeting customers' expectations of five-star hotels, but the changes had

been worthwhile.

"We found it wasn't only making us feel good to be part of the corporate responsibility movement but also it made commercial sense," she said, adding the company had reduced electricity usage at Lillianfels by more

than 25 per cent per Eric Sward, from M Heritage, had a similar with energy costs rec "It's been a really nancial result," he sa See the low carb site at lowcarbonliving.bluemountains.com.au.