

Hidden Valley Cabins, Queensland

The owners of the Hidden Valley Cabins have undergone vast research in order to implemented energy efficient initiatives that suit their business operations whilst providing them return on investment.

Major achievements include:

- reduced carbon emissions by 78 tonnes
- annual financial savings in diesel of \$45,000.

The vision

As the resort is not on grid power, the owners aimed to decrease their generator use to reduce emissions and costs without compromising the guest experience.

The business

Located 1.5 hours northwest of Townsville, Hidden Valley Cabins is situated amongst some of Townsville's most unique landscapes with Running River Gorge nearby, surrounded by a plethora of native flora, fauna and natural wildlife.

Ian and Bonnie McLennan have owned Hidden Valley Cabins since 1986. In that time it has undergone some enormous changes, and to date is now a fully serviced resort and tour company with six cabins, four hotel rooms, swimming pool and spa.

Following extensive research, the owners decided that it was best for the business and the environment to look at energy efficient initiatives.

The challenges

Information overload:

There is a wealth of knowledge available for operators to use, causing the owners of Hidden Valley Cabins to invest 18 months of time to research, digest and implement energy efficient initiatives. A program that assists in cutting through all of this information overload can assist in making this job much easier for business owners.

Cost of fuel:

Interest in energy efficiency was initially sparked by rising diesel prices which were making business-as-usual unaffordable.

Energy efficiency achievements

Energy efficient fixtures:

Hidden Valley Cabins has achieved annual energy savings through the replacement of old fittings with new energy efficient equivalents.

Initiatives:

- Replaced conventional light bulbs with energy-saving compact florescent reducing power consumption from 2220 watts to 430 watts.
- Replacing fridges with more energy efficient models.

How to do it: efficient fittings

When retrofitting lighting and appliances you can compare various products you can implement into your business through the energy rating website:

<http://www.energyrating.gov.au/calculator>

Using Renewable Energy

Innovative Technology:

Hidden Valley Cabins has achieved significant savings thanks to switching from diesel generators to solar power for their energy needs.

Initiatives:

Installation of solar power system that has reduced the use of diesel resulting in savings of \$45,000 annually.

How to do it: installing solar panels

When deciding to implement a solar panel system for your business it is important to seek a private sector provider in providing advice for a system that would best suit you and your business. The Clean Energy Council provides a list of accredited solar panel installers and solar products to ensure easy access to expert advice:

<https://www.solaraccreditation.com.au/consumers.html>



Promoting Energy Efficiency

Engaging guests:

Hidden Valley Cabins are proud of their achievements and recognizes the importance of engaging with guests to spread energy efficiency to the wider community. They use various avenues in promoting their achievements.

Initiatives:

- Renewable energy workshops are provided in the Interpretive Centre for both guests and the general public.
- A "Solar System" tour is available that educate guests on the history of the system, how it works and the energy savings it provides.
- During check-in all guests are briefly informed about power conservation in the resort.
- A "10 Steps to Energy Efficiency" list is located in guest's rooms.
- The "10 Steps to Energy Efficiency" information sheet along with a "Certificate of Sustainability" is presented to guests at check-out.
- Interpretative signage can be found throughout the resort to further educate guests on the energy efficient initiatives adopted by the resort.

How to do it: promoting energy efficiency

You can easily promote your energy efficiency efforts through various avenues including:

- Give a tour of your energy efficiency initiatives to guests and neighbourhood.
- Give guests a memento to share with their friends to show their contribution to energy saving at the business.

Energy achievements in transport

Locally sourced:

Hidden Valley Cabins is committed to reducing their carbon emissions and has implemented various methods in their transport to achieve savings.

Initiatives:

- Use of locally sourced timber to construct cabins.
- Changing of their menus in order to source local produce.

How to do it: local procurement

To develop a local procurement policy, establish a criterion for 'local' e.g. a 50km radius for products. Then set a target, e.g. what percentage of products and services will be purchased locally.

References

Information provided by Hidden Valley Cabins, no date,

<http://www.hiddenvalleycabins.com.au/>