

# Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat, Queensland

The Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat property has undergone significant revegetation and the focus is now on educating guests on the sustainable use of energy. Taking initiative has resulted in the retreat achieving energy efficiency. Major achievements include:

- When booking increase by 30% over 12 months energy only increased by 5%
- Annual financial savings in energy of \$5000

## *The Vision*

Since 1994 when Jon and Peta Nott purchased the site of what is now Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat, they had a goal of converting the once degraded dairy farm into a rainforest paradise. The couple wanted to put into practice their strong environmental values and they have been more than successful in this pursuit.

## *The Business*

Over the past 15 years, owners Jon and Peta Notts have transformed the Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat into a successful ecotourism accommodation provider.

The retreat offers treehouse accommodation in a private rainforest setting that include fully equipped kitchens, large spa baths and wood fireplace. The retreat sources its water from a spring and has an in-house restaurant.

They actively engage their guests in their passion of business efficiency through education and have implemented various initiatives that have resulted in the business to significantly reduce their energy costs.

## ***The Challenges***

### **Option Availability:**

Due to the lack of sunny days and high winds, both solar and wind energy was not a viable option for the property and required the owners to have a more creative approach in saving energy.

## ***Energy Efficient Achievements***

### **Energy Efficient Fixtures:**

Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat has implemented energy efficient fixtures in various areas of the accommodation.

### **Initiatives:**

- Installation of gas hot water units, using 5-star instantaneous units and cooking facilities.
- Installation of eco-efficient lighting and appliances.

### **How to do it: Gas Hot Water Systems**

When deciding to install any new water heating system, it is important to seek expert advice, this advice can be found via various private sector providers e.g.

<https://australianhotwater.com.au/> (Private sector provider)

For more information on energy efficient water heating please refer to Factsheet 4.

### **How to do it: Efficient Lighting and Appliances**

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>

For a detailed description of energy efficient lighting and appliances refer to Factsheets 2 and 5.

## ***Using Efficient Design***

### **Energy Efficient Design:**

Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat has incorporated energy efficient design to reduce the need for energy usage.

#### **Initiatives:**

Passive solar design was incorporated into the treehouses (e.g. orienting treehouses to capture light).

### **How to do it: Solar Passive Design**

- Install shading devices over glass windows
- Insulate your building
- Glaze windows
- Install skylights

The Australian Government has developed a useful technical guide on passive design for homes that outline many helpful hints that small businesses can incorporate:

<http://www.yourhome.gov.au/>



## ***Promoting Energy Efficiency***

### **Engaging guests:**

Rose Gums Wilderness retreat is proud of their energy efficiency achievements and promotes these achievements to their guests.

## Initiatives:

Guests have the opportunity to partake in carbon offsetting by planting a rainforest tree on the property and receive a certificate detailing the resulting carbon credits, followed by yearly reports on tree plantings.

## 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 encourage them to take part in activities.
- Give guests a memento to share with their friends to show their contribution to energy saving at the business.

## The Future

Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat has improved their energy efficiency immensely since beginning on their journey and plan to continue their efficiency efforts by implementing the following:

- Replacing the older hot water storage units with 5-star units;
- Investigating a ram system to pump water from the creek which is 100m lower than the water tanks to save on electricity.

Piece of Advice:

Owners Jon and Peta Nott stress the importance of measuring and assessing your energy efficiency and seeking the advice of an independent auditor. Jon and Peta also encourage operators to recognize the skills of current employees, who are likely to have valuable input.

## References

Information provided by: Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat, no date,

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

Tourism Queensland, no date, Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat, Atherton Tablelands.