



LANE COVE RIVER TOURIST PARK, AUSTRALIA

CONSERVATION AWARD

FINALIST 2009

CASE STUDY

The **Lane Cove River Tourist Park (LCR)** project is a business unit of the Australian Department of Environment and Climate Change (National Parks and Wildlife Division). Built on a landfill, it encompasses 30-40 acres bordering the 650-hectare Lane Cove River National Park, set within Sydney's city limits. It contains almost 300 caravan, campervan and tent sites, as well as 28 self-contained guest cabins with all facilities. The park accommodates over 110,000 visitors every year.

LCR offers an excellent model of how even a relatively small enterprise in a tourism sector not usually associated with sustainable practices – a campsite/recreational vehicle (RV) park – can make sustainability a priority and achieve significant results.



The company has shown itself to be a leader in working with the local community and in investing in sustainability – from its educational programmes and certification schemes to tests on renewable energy and water-saving technologies.

LCR spreads the message about sustainable business through events and through its ongoing relationships with educational institutions. As an example, an annual Community Open Day attracts hundreds of people who receive local and endemic plant tours and learn about park initiatives and green products. Working with local educational institutions like the McQuarry Business College, LCR developed an environmental management and ecotourism programme through which tourist park staff help teach, provide curriculum, and use interns from the college. LCR also participates in an adopt-a-school and a work placement programme in conjunction with the Northwestern Business Education Network. Through this programme, LCR offers students exposure to the Travel & Tourism industry and the chance to learn about sustainability in this context, supporting them in making future career decisions.

CASE STUDY



LCR is investing broadly in a range of sustainability initiatives, from certification to technology testing. The company invested nearly A\$30,000 in meeting certification requirements to become certified at the Advanced Ecotourism level by Ecotourism Australia. Recognising the need for a certification specifically geared to campsites/RV parks, the company devoted staff time and money in 2006 to pioneer Green Park, a certification scheme specifically for campsites/RV parks, sending a strong message to the industry about sustainable practices. It has so far received 16 applicants for the Green Park certification. Further building on the Green Park guidelines, LCR then helped establish a local non-profit called SONIC to start Sustainability Tick, a certification scheme for local travel-related businesses.

LCR has also invested significant resources to enhance its natural environment as well as reduce its onsite environmental impacts. The company works in tandem with the National Park to reduce impacts. Some notable results:

- Within the last 3-4 years the bandicoot population has regenerated
- Threatened owls have returned (those with a 600-hectare range) – 3-4 breeding pairs are now in the park
- Land has been re-vegetated with native species over the course of two years through the use of harvested water, and LCR is now expanding this ‘habitat zone’ and creating additional ‘habitat zones.’

In addition to conservation activities geared towards protecting Australia’s endemic biodiversity in conjunction with the National Park, LCR applies the latest technology for solar power and water treatment to further reduce its environmental impacts. By way of example, although LCR is tied to Sydney electrical, water and sewage lines, the company’s goal now is to reduce its reliance on the power grid and water system as much as possible. To this end, it installed two systems to distribute recycled water throughout the grounds in mid-2008. These systems treat wastewater through ultra-porous membranes that filter nano-particulate bio-matter, allowing LCR to reuse the water as ‘Class A’ water for washing laundry, flushing toilets and watering the grounds. This remarkable system uses one-fifth of the energy required of a normal wastewater treatment facility. In terms of power, the company is approaching this challenge on multiple levels, including acting as a pilot project for Earth Utility, which generates solar power for customers.

