

Environmental Good Practice in Hotels

Case Studies from
the International Hotel &
Restaurant Association
Environmental Award

GREEN HOTELIER





International Hotel & Restaurant Association

251 rue du Faubourg Saint-Martin

75010 Paris - France

Tel +33 (1) 44 89 94 00

Fax +33 (1) 40 36 73 30

E-mail: infos@ih-ra.com

Web: <http://www.ih-ra.com>



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

39-43, Quai André Citroën

75739 Paris Cedex 15 - France

Tel +33 (1) 44 37 14 50

Fax +33 (1) 44 37 14 74

E-mail: unepie@unep.fr

Web: <http://www.unepie.org/home.html>



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About this publication

The case studies presented in this publication have been selected from applications to the IHA Environmental Award 1992-1995, which were judged in 1995 by the United Nations Environment Programme-Industry and Environment.

The growing response to the award over this period indicates that an increasing number of hoteliers are recognizing the importance of environmental action, starting to implement their own initiatives and seeing the benefits of such programmes.

The case studies selected are drawn from around the world, from small independent hotels and large international chains. They reveal a diversity of approaches to environmental management, based on criteria such as:

- 1 The environmental priorities of each region
- 1 The cost of water, energy, waste disposal and other resources
- 1 The location and size of the property
- 1 The availability of technology
- 1 The level of green consumerism

This publication is not intended to compare the environmental programmes presented, nor to evaluate on a uniform scale the economic and environmental benefits of each programme. In making this publication available, UNEP IE and the IH&RA aim to:

- 1 Commend the efforts undertaken by pioneering hoteliers
- 1 Provide practical examples of what is, and can, be achieved
- 1 Further promote good environmental practice in hotels worldwide
- 1 Encourage national hotel associations and public authorities to disseminate information on environmental management processes and technologies to promote industry-wide environmental action.

While many active steps have been taken, there is room for progress and greater industry awareness of the need for:

- 1 The use of resource inventories, environmental impact assessments and the incorporation of environmental design elements before building plans are finalized
- 1 A systematic approach to environmental management, starting with environmental audits to identify where and how to begin
- 1 Comprehensive programmes prompting action in all areas
- 1 Improved integration of environmental programmes into day-to-day operations
- 1 Continuous improvement, with monitoring systems in place from the outset
- 1 Life-cycle assessments to ensure that the best environmental and cost options have been chosen
- 1 Better communication of environmental performance to guests and other audiences

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Kingfisher Bay Resort & Village

Fraser Island, Australia



ABOUT THE HOTEL

Kingfisher Bay Resort & Village is located on the west coast of UNESCO's World Heritage-listed Fraser Island, 250km north of Brisbane. The site encompasses 65ha and includes a 152-roomed hotel, 75 self-contained villas, a 114-bed Wilderness Lodge, a day-visitor pavilion, the staff village, 3 restaurants and conference rooms for up to 300 people.

Kingfisher Bay was built to strict environmental guidelines with the aim of offering a modern resort to blend harmoniously with the island's sensitive ecosystem. Before construction began, extensive environmental impact assessments were performed. Additional research was undertaken to examine certain areas in more detail: topography vegetation and fauna surveys, an hydrology survey and studies of previous aboriginal use and habitation of the site. Findings of these studies gave rise to several management challenges and further advice was obtained to ensure that construction and operation of the resort would be carried out with minimum disturbance to the ecosystem. Kingfisher Bay estimates that over 57 person years of research, planning and design went into the project.



DESIGN

High level of environmental integration

From the outset, every effort was made to minimize environmental impact and achieve a high level of environmental integration:

- 1 Roads and buildings are planned around the major trees to the greatest extent possible.
- 1 All buildings are designed to harmonize with the environment using Queensland-style architecture made of wood with open verandas and curving tin roofs to reflect the sand dunes. Colours reflect the surrounding bush vegetation.
- 1 Buildings are limited to 2 levels, and are below the tree line.
- 1 All timber used is from indigenous species
- 1 The hotel centre complex (conference rooms, reception, lounge rooms, restaurants, administration offices and toilets) is designed without air-conditioning. Natural convection currents are created by windows and vents at the upper and lower levels of the building. In summer, cool air is drawn into the building throughout the day while hot air escapes through the large ceiling vents. In winter, vents are closed to trap warm air resulting in a "glass house" effect.
- 1 All rooms and public areas have enough natural light during daylight hours to eliminate the need for artificial lighting on fine days. Insulation has been maximized in all rooms.
- 1 All public areas, conference rooms, bedrooms and offices are non-smoking. Smoker bedrooms are available on request.
- 1 Impacts on the dunes and swamps are minimized through the use of either hardwood boardwalks or wood chip walking tracks.
- 1 The resort has an on-site sewage treatment plant.

Economic & environmental benefits:

The design of the resort is estimated to save over 500,000kwh of energy each year, which is equivalent to the energy consumption of 100 households.

CONSTRUCTION

Minimizing Environmental Impact

The introduction of mainland soil diseases was prevented by using landfill obtained from the Kingfisher Bay site itself or from approved mainland sources. Natural materials removed from the site were mulched and used for landscaping.

Landscaping

Native plants from the site and surrounding area were used for landscaping. Thousands of plants were removed prior to construction and held in an on-site nursery for replanting later. A further 150,000 native plants were raised from seeds and cuttings. The on-site nursery continues to provide for all the resort's landscaping needs.

Run-off from roads and roofs is diverted into large lakes within the resort area to reduce scouring, creating natural-looking peat lakes which attract a diverse range of wildlife.



WATER

Waste water treated through the biotechnological plant is not used for irrigation as the nutrient requirement levels of the soil and vegetation on Fraser Island are very low. Treated water is released into the fast-moving channel in the Great Sandy Strait.



ENERGY

A key card is required to power each room. This ensures that all energy is turned off when the room is vacant. Air-conditioning units have to be switched on manually.



WASTE

All waste generated by the resort is separated, compacted, stored on site and sent to the mainland for recycling. Glass waste is crushed before being sent for recycling.



WIDER BENEFIT AND NETWORKING

Kingfisher Bay has set-up a community consultative committee to ensure the resort maintains good communication links with various interest groups in the community. Conservation, Aboriginal, and resident groups are represented on this committee.

Kingfisher Bay actively encourages research programmes relevant to the Fraser Island ecosystem and to ecotourism. These include:

- 1 Mammal research on the behaviour of small native marsupials,
- 1 Kingfisher Bay's parent company, Queensland Tourism Industries Ltd, offers 5 grants each year to postgraduate students doing Ecotourism research.

Within the framework of the resort's environmental interpretation programme, several educational initiatives are in operation to increase the environmental awareness and sensitivity of visitors. They include:

- 1 Fraser Wild Nature Programme, courses hosted by specialists to give guests an opportunity to further their knowledge.
- 1 Environmental Education Programme for Schools, conducted with practical interaction with the resort's rangers.



SUPPORT MEASURES

Staff

Staff induction programmes include an environmental good conduct video.

Visitor communication

A 4 stage programme is in place - promotion, orientation, involvement and reinforcement. Within this framework several interpretation programmes, self-guide tours, displays, publications and videos are available to guests. The interpretation programmes include guided walks, four-wheel drive tours, marine tours and "meet the ranger" activities. Kingfisher Bay employs 13 full-time rangers on these programmes.

CONTACT

Tony Charters
Kingfisher Bay Resort
Operations Pty., Ltd.
PO Box 913
Brisbane 4001
Australia
Fax: +61 (7) 3221 3270

"Kingfisher Bay has sought to integrate planning, design, landscapes, interpretative programmes, and tourism to truly represent the World Heritage values of Fraser Island. This integration is our major attraction. Fraser Island is the focus of our guest's holiday and Kingfisher Bay is the facilitator."

Tony Charters
Director, Environmental Management

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