



COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Magnums Accommodation

As one of the first accommodation partners of the Whitsunday Healthy Heart Project (WHHP), we were so excited to hear about what Magnums Accommodation are doing to reduce their carbon footprint. With a long and prominent history in the area, it's great to see this month's community champion adopt practical solutions that will help our region achieve a sustainable destination accreditation.

What attracted Magnums Accommodation to become a WHHP Partner and what kind of benefits are you hoping the project will provide?

Magnums has been an Eco Certified business for Nature Tourism with Eco Tourism Australia for more than 5 years now, so eco sustainability is a huge part of who we are as a business. We are deeply committed to reducing carbon emissions, recycling, and achieving benchmark industry levels. Magnums is also committed to "making things better" for the entire Whitsunday Region.

Becoming a partner in the WHHP was a no brainer! As a provider of affordable accommodation, we have a responsibility to do what we can to reduce our impact on the environment. Working with Eco Tourism Australia, the EcoBiz program as well as being part of the WHHP family is something we are very proud of.

What kind of accommodation does Magnums provide and what is your target market?

Magnums has gone through some major and exciting changes in the last two years, pivoting from a very well-known backpackers, providing shared accommodation, to a 3.5-Star "unique accommodation" provider. Magnums offers completely renovated ensuite cabins as well as private rooms with shared bathrooms for more budget-conscious travellers. Our new target market are couples and travellers, 18 years and over, seeking affordable accommodation.

Have you observed a change in visitor perspective on sustainability?

We certainly have! Sustainability is very important in the travel and tourism industry, even more so since COVID. Today's travellers are looking for accommodation providers who have integrated green practices into all aspects of their business.

A recent Siteminder survey suggests that as many as 79% of travellers worldwide say it is important to them, and that they choose accommodation with real eco-friendly and sustainable practices. Many of



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our Online Travel Agents (OTA's) have introduced a section where we can proudly display our eco-accreditations.

Is this the first time that Magnums has measured its carbon footprint?

This is the first time we've had the ability to accurately measure our carbon footprint. Thanks to Lee Hawkins, Climate Change Resilience Officer at the Whitsunday Climate Change Innovation Hub, for introducing our Team to the EarthCheck portal through the WHHP.

Our initial reaction, when first accessing the EarthCheck portal was, to be honest, quite daunting. However, after a few quick calls with Lee, the system quickly became "workable". We very quickly learnt what was required for each of the relevant categories and have put extra procedures in place to ensure this data is captured each time a bill is received from our suppliers, to streamline the data entry process at each month end. Having the tools to accurately measure our carbon footprint has become a business "must have" for monitoring and continually reducing our footprint. It's a WIN, WIN...

Do you have any tips for other accommodation providers who may be looking at joining the project?

The knowledge and support received from Lee and the team at WHHP has been nothing short of amazing. The registration process was easy and effortless. Plus, it's FREE!

Enabling the data from EarthCheck to flow onto other environmental programs such as EcoBiz further streamlines the process of upholding certifications, removing the need for doubling up on data entry. The WHHP offers weekly partner support if required, so any questions can be quickly answered.

Carbon footprint measurement and data entry can be a daunting task for a business, but Lee and the EarthCheck portal make it all worthwhile. The WHHP also offers advice on how to decrease your carbon footprint in ways we wouldn't have thought of.

Do you have any recommendations on how to make data collection/entry into the carbon calculator easier?

Magnums have always captured a fair amount of data at the time of entering bills into our accounting package. After our initial review of the type of data required for the carbon calculator, we have now streamlined our data collection process by recording a bit extra into our accounts as each bill is



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received. This allows us to simply export the data from our accounting package, and whoo hooo... all the data is there at our fingertips to enter into the EarthCheck programme at the end of each month .

Magnums Accommodation has set a 2040 net-zero target! It is great that businesses participating in the WHHP are feeling confident to commit to achieving ambitious net-zero emissions targets. Has Magnums already made some operational changes to reduce emissions and/or improve sustainability?

We sure have! Magnums is always changing for the better and we are already implementing many recommendations from the recent Climate Hub event, EcoBiz program visit and Eco Tourism Australia audit.

What were your top 3 goals in your decarbonisation efforts?

1. Reduce water usage by changing to evening watering of gardens
2. Introduce a garbage recycling program
3. Source bio-degradable toiletries and cleaning products

From the onset, our gardens were designed to be very eco-friendly, requiring limited irrigation even during the driest of seasons. To further enhance our sustainability, we have now changed from using our irrigation systems during the day, to the evenings (if required), to further minimise the loss of water through evaporation.

Our largest project is the introduction of our extensive recycling program. We aim to provide full recycling capabilities across the entire property before the end of October 2022. We have also sourced more sustainable toiletries such as biodegradable liquid formula and PET bottles made from EcoPure

Were there any surprises that came out of your benchmarking?

The biggest surprise came from digging deeper our local recycling options. Once we contacted JJ Richards directly, we got a much better idea of the services provided and just how manageable, & affordable, they could be.

The introduction of recycling is by far our biggest challenge as we've had to introduce new policies and procedures to ensure we're recycling properly across the grounds. We are now up & running with our recycling program and looking to save at least 3 cubic meters of landfill waste each month! Although



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we initially had to purchase the recycling bins, if we can swap out a general waste collection for the recycling collection the costs for servicing the bins should be the same. And if we can cut back our general waste collection even more we may even save money. We are hoping to see an initial saving of approximately \$800 during our initial “trial year”.

We have designed our own bin wraps to make our recycle bins more attractive, with educational with messages on them such as, “Don’t be trashy... recycle! There’s no planet B.... recycle! Think outside the trash... recycle!”. We also have two bins in each room to make it easy for our guests to separate their waste.

Power is the most significant expense for most accommodation providers. What kind of initiatives have you implemented to reduce energy consumption?

Magnums invested in solar energy back in 2018. In the last financial year, our solar panels saved 105,624.65kg of CO2 emissions, which is the equivalent of 2,049 trees planted (source: SolarEdge).

Other initiatives include:

- Installing energy efficient LED lighting to 90% of the resort.
- When purchasing new appliances, priority is given to high-energy rating products.
- All our air-conditioning units are set at 25C and are regularly checked, serviced, and cleaned for maximum efficiency.
- We have also added a Green Purchasing policy to our Environmental and Sustainability Management Plan.

Why has it been important to communicate your eco accreditation and the sustainability initiatives to customers and staff?

At Magnums, we firmly believe that it’s our responsibility to engage, teach and bring awareness to environmental issues. We regularly share tips, advice, and news of what we have been up to as a business to engage our guests and followers on our website and social media platforms.

We all know the saying: “Great things are done by a series of small things brought together” and we want our guests to jump on board this environmental journey with us. Each year, our staff are asked to give us ideas or suggestions on how we can make things better from an environmental point of view.



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Over the years, many of these ideas have been successfully implemented. Working for a better planet is a group effort at Magnums!

What will a sustainable destination accreditation mean for Magnums Accommodation?

Being part of something that will benefit the entire Whitsunday Region is exciting. Having different businesses joining together for this project brings a real sense of “if we work together, we can achieve so much more”! Combining the knowledge of the WHHP team with genuine advice from other businesses and their experiences, brings the term “teamwork” to a whole new level.

A sustainable destination accreditation is huge in this new world we live in, and with a backyard like ours, with the Great Barrier Reef right on our doorstep, we have a responsibility to do everything we can to ensure the next generations can continue to enjoy this paradise we call home.

Here at Magnums our whole team is encouraged to embrace our Vision Statement:

“A future of growth and sustainability both financially and ecologically, a future where by being wholly inclusive, we play our part in creating a better world”.

The WHH project is a step in the right direction and enables us to proudly stand up and be identified as a community that has earned the right to be called a sustainable destination. It’s an aspiration to be proud of as long as it is authentic.

For more information or to register interest in joining the Whitsunday Healthy Heart Project, please visit our website <https://www.innovationhub.whitsundayrc.qld.gov.au/whitsunday-healthy-heart-project>

The Whitsunday Islands is one of three key locations with projects currently underway as part of the Great Barrier Reef Foundation’s Reef Islands Initiative, which is working to restore critical island habitats to protect ecosystems and save vulnerable species. The 10-year program is supported by funding from Lendlease, the Australian Government’s Reef Trust, the Queensland Government, and the Fitzgerald Family Foundation.