



Case Study

UPCLOSE

Zero Waste SA Industry Program



Hotel reduces ecological footprint

Hilton Adelaide has taken a leadership role in pursuing environmental sustainability for the hotel and restaurant sector.

The 5-star hotel has developed an environmental improvement program that touches just about every aspect of its operation.

A combination of inspiration, lateral thinking, social responsibility and careful planning has helped it slash its waste to landfill and make big savings in energy and water. Changes from the kitchen to the guest swimming pool and everywhere in between are minimising the hotel's ecological footprint.

Sound environmental management is a goal of Hilton International globally. The company's 'we care' initiative encourages hotels throughout the group to individually respond to improving sustainable business practices.

The hotel's broad-scope environment plan covers energy and water efficiency, renewable energy, CO₂ reduction, waste minimisation, building design and construction, hotel and corporate operations, chemical management and purchasing.

In 2008, Hilton Adelaide joined the Zero Waste SA Industry Program for help with meeting its environmental targets.

The hotel is also delighted to be the winner of both the 2009 Australian Hotel Associations SA Award for Excellence in Best Environment Practice and the Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism at the 2009 SA Tourism Industry Council awards.

“Hilton Adelaide has a clear goal to be recognised as a champion for the environment in the hospitality industry, leveraging our industry and community partners to create positive environmental opportunities.”

Chris Ehmann
General Manager
Hilton Adelaide



Government of South Australia
Zero Waste SA

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“Initially we had some restaurant customers jumping up and down because we’re an international hotel and they expect all their food to be on tap. But they support what we are doing once we explain the environmental benefits.”

Simon Bryant
Executive Chef
Hilton Adelaide

Sustainability objectives

To demonstrate world’s best practice in environmental and social performance in the hospitality industry.

Outcomes

- cost savings in waste to landfill
- enthusiastic employee involvement
- community recognition of the hotel’s green credentials
- guest participation and support
- meeting market expectations
- improving market perceptions
- operational cost savings

Annual savings

Waste disposal – 54% less waste to landfill per guest night

Energy use – 16% less electricity per guest night

Gas use – 10% less gas per guest night

Water use – 16% less water use per guest night

Zero Waste SA support

- funded sustainability diagnostic (a software-based tool for assessing, benchmarking and managing sustainability within organisations)
- support via ‘Recycle at Work’ program
- funded waste review and waste contract advice
- sponsor of Adelaide Hilton’s ‘2009 Earth Hour Event’
- ongoing assistance with sustainability actions
- development of a case study

Buy local program

A pristine environment is an essential ingredient when it comes to good food. Hilton Adelaide executive chef Simon Bryant is passionate about both. At his restaurant, The Brasserie, Simon has implemented initiatives to encourage sustainability and reduce waste.

Not afraid of a challenge, he introduced a buy local program, Seriously South Australian, spending more than six months sourcing locally grown ingredients.

It’s about keeping the ‘food miles’ down – the less distance a product has to travel, the lower the carbon footprint.

“Sometimes it’s a bit more complex than that because you also need to take into account the production methods – but on balance food miles is an important benchmark,” says Simon.

EARTH HOUR

The Earth Hour global warming event in March 2009 was an ideal opportunity for the Hilton Adelaide to promote its green credentials.

The hotel hosted a candle-lit dinner under the stars where environmentalists could enjoy locally grown produce.



Today about 97% of all food used in The Brasserie is grown in South Australia, with only coffee and pepper proving a problem. Simon also hopes to inspire young children to understand and enjoy quality local food as patron for the Adelaide Showgrounds Farmers' Market Kids' Club.

As part of the hotel's commitment to the community, as well as the environment, prepared food that has not been sold goes to feed underprivileged and homeless people at the Hutt Street Centre.

Simon believes throwing out good food is immoral and has a strong stance on animal ethics, preferring to purchase free-range products. Hilton Adelaide was an early supporter of the RSPCA's Choose Wisely program and the 350,000 eggs it uses annually are all sourced from free range farms.

Simon also lends his celebrity status to numerous community organisations, including the Animal Welfare League, Meals on Wheels and Animals Asia. He was an ambassador for Earth Hour and took an active role in the Stirring the Possum community forum, 'Eat to Save the Planet', a Department of Environment and Natural Resources event that examined the environmental impact of the food we eat.

Simon's next challenge is to encourage suppliers to use less packaging while still complying with food packaging codes.

Cutting waste to landfill

Zero Waste SA's \$3 million Recycle at Work program helps SA waste recovery businesses install systems to support food waste collection.

Hilton Adelaide chose a waste contractor in the Recycle at Work program and has reduced its waste to landfill by an exceptional 22% in the 12 months to February 2009. Various new recycling initiatives are aimed at staff, guests and suppliers.

Staff use an extensive bin recycling system to separate materials such as newspaper, office paper, cardboard, plastics, glass bottles, cans and fluorescent light tubes. The hotel collects unused prepared food, and containers of soap and shampoo from guest rooms, for a homeless shelter in Adelaide.

Guests are encouraged to use special compartmentalised bins in rooms and public areas. During the week of World Environment Day Adelaide Hilton donated \$5 to Trees for Life for each day a guest asked not to have their room serviced.

Guests had the satisfaction of saving 110 litres of water and 1500 watts of electricity each day their room was not serviced. Take-up of the 'Green Guest' program has been overwhelming, with about 100 guests taking part in the first month.

The hotel is also actively influencing the supply chain by asking suppliers to collect chemical containers for recycling and consider reduced packaging. Fruit and seafood foam boxes are also returned for reuse. In offices, recycling stations are being established for batteries and printer cartridges; paper is re-used by printing on the reverse side.

Recycling wins over

Chris Ehmann, General Manager, who was responsible for developing and implementing the hotel's sustainability program, found a way to catch the attention and support of all heads of department to the hotel's environment program.

"It was clear that if the heads of department didn't appreciate what we were trying to achieve, it would be very difficult to win the support of other staff," says Chris. "We have some very passionate people here but we had to convince everyone else that we could make a difference."

During an internal launch of the sustainability program Chris organised for the 22 leaders to sort through sacks of rubbish collected from guests' rooms. Their brief was to remove anything that could be recycled or reused.

"From the 20 sacks of rubbish that we started with – waste that would normally go to landfill – we ended up with just seven," says Chris. "We were all amazed but everyone got the message."

Training in sustainability is now routine for hotel staff and at least 10 minutes must be set aside for environmental discussion at monthly departmental meetings. Staff are also urged to take part in environmental training through the online Hilton University. Hilton staff visited a major Adelaide composting site to see the processing journey of food waste to compost.

Other awareness initiatives include a monthly environmental newsletter that updates progress, and an accountability statement on the importance of sustainability in all job descriptions.

Reducing energy consumption

Tens of thousands of guests stay at the Hilton Adelaide every year. Not surprisingly, power use is high from activities such as heating, cooling and lighting. Through various energy efficiency measures, the hotel has managed to cut electricity use. For example, in April 2009 each guest used 14% less electricity per night than in April 2008.

Hilton Adelaide plans further significant improvements in 2009 with the inclusion of a heat recovery system connected to a replacement energy-efficient chiller being installed in the hotel infrastructure.

The \$120,000 project will capture waste heat from the chiller system to pre-heat incoming ablution water. Engineers estimate yearly energy savings from hot water generation of about 230 MW or 840 GJ.

Other initiatives to reduce energy and lower the hotel's carbon footprint include:

- investment in a building management system that can program energy efficiencies into the hotel operation, and can be integrated into the air conditioning and lighting systems in all public areas, guest rooms and function rooms
- connection of refrigeration to the water condenser system
- replacement of washing machines with new energy and water efficient models
- liquid film on the swimming pool surface which reduces heat loss by 1°–2°C and lowers chemical use
- guest televisions activated automatically
- signage and stickers to remind staff of the 'use the stairs' and 'switch off' team awareness campaign.

The Hilton is investigating other options including alternative energy sources such as solar hot water, co-generation opportunities in partnership with Adelaide City Council, and the potential for carbon neutral events and guest stays.

Special 'Earth Break' packages now help guests reduce their carbon footprint while staying at the hotel. The packages include bicycles or a fuel-efficient Smart For Two car to explore Adelaide, a native seedling to take home and plant, and a National Parks pass.

At the corporate level, the hotel has developed a 'meeting impact calculator' so organisers can work out the carbon emissions generated by their event, including travel and accommodation – and help plan carbon neutral events.

Conserving water

Water usage at the hotel fell by 23% in 2008 from the previous year thanks to:

- a computerised reporting system that alerts maintenance to leaking taps and running toilets implemented with the support of SA Water
- flow restrictors on taps and dual-flush toilets installed in two-thirds of guest rooms (an ongoing project)
- flow restrictors installed on tapware in the kitchens
- sheets laundered every third day, unless guests request otherwise, and guests asked to hang up towels that do not need to be washed
- unused potable water and ice going into the swimming pool
- awareness stickers in all team and public bathrooms to highlight water conservation.

During 2009 Hilton Adelaide is planning the phased installation of greywater toilet flushing in all guest rooms and public toilets.

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Hilton Adelaide

The Hilton Adelaide is part of the Hilton group which has more than 3200 hotels in nearly 80 countries and territories.

The chain supports the environment through initiatives to reduce energy and water consumption, and the volume of waste generated and chemicals used. Hilton Adelaide is a 5-star (AAA) hotel with 374 rooms, conference facilities, restaurants and bars, a large kitchen and a commercial laundry.

www.adelaide.hilton.com

Zero Waste SA

A South Australian Government agency that advances improved waste management policies and the development of resource recovery and recycling. The Zero Waste SA Industry Program advises and supports companies to achieve sustainability goals in waste, water and energy.

www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au



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