

GREENHOUSE GAS SCHEMES BENEFIT AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COMPANIES

JAS-ANZ (Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand) launched one of the first greenhouse gas (GHG) accreditation programs in the world in mid-2008 to make it easier for businesses and consumers to recognise credible GHG claims. Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa talk about their experiences in being certified to a GHG scheme, and offer advice to companies that may be considering this option.



Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa

[Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa](#) is a luxury conservation-based resort located on Australia's Great Dividing Range and borders the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area in NSW. Fully integrated into its environment, the 40-suite resort supports wide-ranging conservation practices that focus on protecting local endangered species.

The resort, which is run by the Emirates Hotels & Resorts, is the first carbon neutral resort in the world to be certified through a JAS-ANZ accredited GHG scheme.

Its carboNZero^{Cert™} certification was obtained within just three months of opening the \$125 million resort. According to Tony Williams, Senior Vice President, Resorts & Projects, Emirates Hotels & Resorts, it was a good time to complete the audit because the engineering consultants, architectural consultants and contractors were still on site, available to assist carboNZero staff in the assessment process.

"At the time of audit we were finishing the construction phase, and although that was a very tense and challenging time, we believed it was important for us to do this assessment," Williams explains. "Opening a hotel of any kind can be a stressful process. Combining this with a rigorous assessment of our entire operation was particularly challenging. Joost Heymeijer, General Manager of the hotel, was very supportive of it because he and I believe that minimising an organisation's impact on the environment is a very important aspect of business these days."

It took about four weeks to collect all relevant data and estimate the resort's carbon footprint. The carbon footprint was already relatively low because green building principles had been applied in its design and construction, including the use of solar power and heat recovery. Electricity supplier Origin Energy had been contracted to supply 35 per cent of the resort's power from renewable energy. The resort is expected to be completely carbon neutral without needing to purchase any offsets within two to three years as reforestation takes hold and the rate of carbon absorption starts to increase.

Williams says that for many organisations, energy consumption is one of the major contributors to their cost of operation. "If you ensure that your carbon footprint is low, you will have a very efficient energy utilisation, and that is increasingly a massive benefit," he says. "Obtaining certification allows you to pinpoint where your carbon emissions are and in turn, where the business needs to focus its efforts on to find efficiencies. We selected carboNZero certification for the resort because of its rigorous and scientific approach, and third-party verification was important to us."

Williams believes that eventually every business will be required to specify how much energy it is using and how much it needs to spend on its offsets in order to run. "That is where the major cost for businesses will be because polluters are going to pay, and that could be substantial," he says.

Advice to others:



Williams advises that companies which realise the benefits of being carbon neutral should involve GHG specialists and suppliers as soon as possible. "Looking back, we may have reached the same result faster if we'd had more input from specialists sooner," he says. "Be sure to consult the right people who are knowledgeable in this particular field."

Commitment to the process is also essential. "You do need to be really committed to the outcome, and in the longer term, the ongoing process of improvement," says Williams.

Williams says that companies should look to the future. "Having the right certification will benefit your business in the longer term because people are becoming more environmentally aware," he says. "The more aware the staff are of their environment, the more they care; and the more they care, the better the customer is served and the better the business runs."

Tony Williams, Senior Vice President, Resorts & Projects, Emirates Hotels & Resorts

Organisations interested in learning more about measuring and reducing their GHG emissions

Contact a certification body accredited by JAS-ANZ for a GHG scheme – www.carbonzero.co.nz

This article is the second in a two part series focussing on accredited GHG schemes.

Read part one [Greenhouse Gas program helps businesses and consumers to recognise credible claims.](#)