



'EarthCheck' reporting  
2010-2016

## Executive Summary

The objectives and targets for the Perisher Range Resort Environmental Management System (PRREMS) were established based on known or potential impacts to the resort environment. There were also aspirational targets that relate to global and intergenerational impacts to the environment such as energy use and sourcing of renewable options.

By reporting each year through the on-line EarthCheck site, on progress towards the objectives and targets the PRR Lodges are demonstrating environmental responsibility and accountability. The reporting focuses on the core values and threats to those values. It shows a commitment to maintaining environmental standards and reducing impacts on the sensitive alpine environment.

Over the last six years (2010-2016) of reporting some significant improvements have been made. 78.6% of lodges now annually review their environmental risks and there has been a 12 % increase in the number of lodges meeting the PRREMS targets. Other achievement highlights include:

- A 19% increase in the number of lodges undertaking **weed control** on their lease
- 589 small **native mammals** have been captured, relocated and recorded from lodges using Elliot traps
- 9 lodges have implemented **rehabilitation projects** with assistance from NPWS
- There has been a 21% improvement in the **awareness and management of grease traps**
- 9.4% of lodges have reported **improved management of fuel tanks** and there has been a 9.5% reduction in use of hydrocarbon storage tanks with many lodges decommissioning and validating old systems
- 91.5% of **lodges regularly inspect their lease for erosion problems** – this is a 14% increase over 4 years. At the same time there has been a 14.6% reduction in the identification of erosion issues due to the positive actions taken by lodges.
- Average annual **water consumption per visitor night (179L/VN)** has consistently been well below the industry average (220L/VN) and **70% of lodges are implementing water saving measures**
- There has been a 9% increase in the **installation of timer switches and sensors for lighting and heating** and 8.7% increase in the number of **lodges providing signage to encourage energy conservation.**
- 7.5% of lodges are reporting sourcing **renewable energy** through their own solar installations or by purchase of GreenPower
- 86.3% of lodges estimate their lodges recycle more than 50% of their waste. This is a 20% increase over 6 years. 95.7% of lodges display signs to **encourage guests to recycle**
- There has been a 10.2% increase in the number of lodges **using biodegradable products**
- A 6.2% reduction in lodges using appliances with **ozone depleting substances** and a 3.2% decrease in lodges using an **open fireplace as their primary source of heating** (Only 6.8% using open fireplaces)
- 71.8% of lodges are consistently educating members and guests about cultural heritage of PRR
- 99% of lodges report a well maintained lease area – free of building materials
- 98% of lodges are consistently reporting against the PRREMS EarthCheck site. (This is a 21% increase) and there has been a 22.5% increase in the number of boards and committees discussing their environmental risks.

The lodges should be commended for their continued support of the PRREMS, collectively measuring their footprint and taking steps to minimise impacts to the environment. Their actions and adoption of a 'continual improvement' philosophy help maintain a sustainable tourism destination while protecting the special values of the area.



## Why have the PRREMS?

*To protect the special values of place!! – shared environmental stewardship!*

The Perisher Range Resort is located within fragile alpine and subalpine environments that are exceptionally rare on a continental scale. This places a large onus on the lessees and regulating authorities to ensure that all operations are undertaken in ecologically sustainable ways.

The Perisher Range Resort Environmental Management System (PRREMS) was developed by NPWS in 2002 to bring together all the individual operators and lessees in the Resort under the framework of one common EMS. The aim was to assist in the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the area's environment, as well as the environmental management of appropriate and high-quality tourism in the area.

### **The PRREMS vision**

We will adopt a strong philosophy of continuous improvement in addressing environmental issues and endeavour to become recognised as a leader in ecologically sustainable tourism in Australia.

## Why report?

*To assess performance and demonstrate environmental responsibility*

The PRREMS on-line EarthCheck reporting was adopted in 2009 to streamline the former system of biannual reporting against objectives and targets and the annual filling out of a lengthy workbook. It also provided an opportunity to benchmark some targets against industry standards. The main desire of the reporting is to collectively monitor environmental aspects that could lead to improved environmental outcomes. It also ensures that environmental values remain an important consideration in the on-going operation and management of the resorts.

Understanding the combined effects of activities on the environment is vital to delivering well-planned, well-managed and sustainable tourism destinations. Under the PRREMS objectives and targets have been set based on the core values of the area. Reporting against them allows for performance evaluation and identification of opportunities for improvement.

More specifically the PRREMS EarthCheck reporting for lodges helps to collectively:

- Understand performance against environmental aspects
- Evaluate the effectiveness of management actions & identify opportunities for improvement
- Benchmark performance against industry standards
- Inform changes to objectives and targets
- Improve operating practices and establish best practice
- Learn from others experiences & communicate achievements
- Demonstrate compliance with Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management, leases, legislation and policies
- Demonstrate commitment to minimising the impact of lodge activities and ensuring the sustainable future of one of Australia's most sensitive environments.

## Environmental outcomes and improvements

The following is a summary of improvements and environmental outcomes that have been reported by PRR lodges over the six year period (2010-2016) since the current EarthCheck on-line annual performance reporting commenced. It also includes a reference to actions undertaken by NPWS and other PRREMS stakeholders to assist lodges achieve the objectives and targets.

The information is grouped under the core areas of the PRREMS outlined in the PRREMS *Lodge Environment Manual*. The objectives are based on the natural and cultural values and how to minimise threats to those values.

Some of the information from the PRREMS annual EarthCheck all lodge report are included in the combined *NSW Alpine Resorts environmental performance report*. It is published on the OEH website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/alpineresorts/NSWARER.htm>

This summary does not show the improvements made by individual lodges. In some cases lodges have been able to use the annual EarthCheck reporting to track their progress towards significant reductions in water and energy consumption as an outcome of refurbishments and/or behavioural changes.

## Flora and Fauna (protection/enhancement)

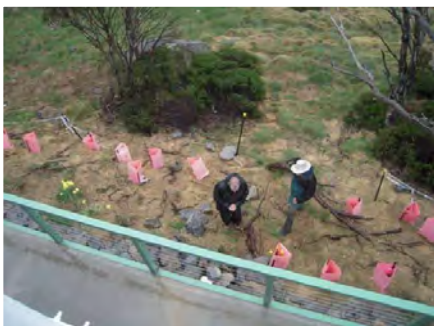
**Objective:** To protect flora, fauna and ecological communities, prevent loss of biodiversity and restore native vegetation and ecosystem functions to previously disturbed areas.

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- 19% increase in number of lodges undertaking weed control on their lease.
- 589 small native animals have been successfully captured, relocated and recorded from lodges.
- 9 lodges have implemented rehabilitation projects with assistance from NPWS.

### Initiatives & management responses to lodge comments:

- Elliot traps, engraved with lodge names provided to every PRREMS lodge for the safe capture and release of small native mammals.
- A lodge copy of Alps Invaders Weed ID book provided to assist with the identification and control of weeds around lodges.
- Rabbit control work undertaken by NPWS, mapping of warrens, spread of control viruses.
- Assistance provided for lodge rehabilitation projects, including plants & materials and a copy of the Australian Alps rehabilitation Field Guide (2013) provided to each lodge.



## Soil and Water (contamination/pollution)

**Objective:** To prevent and manage leaks, spills and unlicensed discharges of potentially harmful substances to the Environment.

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- A 21% improvement on the awareness and management of grease traps.
- 9.4% of lodges have reported improved management of fuel tanks and there has been a 9.5% reduction in use of hydrocarbon fuel storage tanks.
- Only 7 reported incidents in 6 years – they were all managed in a timely manner.

### Initiatives and management response to lodge comments:

- Grease trap policy developed by NPWS and audit undertaken – advice provided to lodges
- Information flyer developed (in consultation with EPA) on decommissioning of fuel tanks and validation reporting. Advice provided to EPA on exemption under the POEO Act UPSS reg. and to lodges for effective management of tanks.
- DPE developed expedient decommissioning arrangements for fuel tanks – issuing an improvement order under the EPA Act on request.
- Testing of boiler room drainage to sewer by NPWS Perisher team on request.



## Air Quality

**Objective:** To improve local air quality and reduce or off set carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions.

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- A 6.2% reduction in lodges using appliances with ozone depleting substances.
- A 3.2% decrease in lodges using an open fireplace as their primary source of heating (Only 6.8% using open fireplaces).

## Water (Conservation & Erosion control)

**Objective:** To protect the environmental health and aquatic ecosystems of alpine streams from resort activities.

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- 91.5% of lodges regularly inspect their lease for erosion problems – this is a 14% increase over 4 years. At the same time there has been a 14.6% reduction in the identification of erosion issues due to the positive actions taken by lodges.
- 70% of lodges implement water saving measures.
- PRREMS lodges average annual water consumption per visitor night (179L/VN) has been consistently well below the industry average (220L/VN).

### Initiatives and management response to lodge comments:

- NPWS continue to provide lodges with *Waterwise* campaign material to facilitate behavioural change including hospitality standard tent cards, flyers and bookmarks.
- NPWS Perisher team extended internal road concreting areas and assisted some lodges with improvements to erosion control on lodge access tracks.
- Rehabilitation works undertaken by NPWS and Perisher resort every summer including along disused trails and access areas - stabilise ground surfaces and reduce runoff



## Waste

**Objective:** To minimise waste, maximise resource recovery and prevent environmental harm from waste disposal.

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- 95.7% of lodges display signs to encourage guests to recycle.
- 86.3% of lodges estimate their lodges recycle more than 50% of their waste (A 20% increase over 6 years of reporting).
- A 10.2% increase in the number of lodges using biodegradable products.

### Initiatives and management response to lodge comments:

- A kitchen waste compost stream introduced to waste collection (kitchen caddies provided).
- Waste transfer facility constructed in Perisher Valley.
- Advice provided by NPWS Perisher team on waste huts design and location.



## Energy

**Objective:** To improve the efficiency of energy consumption and increase the use of renewable energy

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- 9% increase in the installation of timer switches and sensors for lighting and heating.
- 8.7% increase in lodges providing signage to encourage energy conservation.
- 7.5% of lodges reporting sourcing renewable energy through their own solar installation or by purchase of GreenPower.

### Initiatives and management response to lodge comments:

- *Energy Efficiency for Small business program* subsidised for lodges by NPWS (energy audit, action plan and rebates for works undertaken).
- Elgas offered to provide usage data for lodges on request.
- *Energy power saver kit* available for loan from NPWS to test energy use in lodges.



## Cultural Heritage & Visual amenity

**Objective:** To conserve, promote and enhance the cultural heritage values and amenity of the alpine resort areas.

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- 71.8% of lodges consistently educating members and guests about cultural heritage of PRR
- 99% of lodges report a well maintained lease area – free of building materials (2% increase over six years)

### Initiatives and management response to lodge comments:

- NPWS provided all lodges with a copy of “Highway to Heaven” – A history of Perisher and the ski resorts along Kosciuszko Road by Peter Southwell-Keely (Published 2013)
- Lodge lease audits undertaken in 2013 by NPWS EMS officer – advice provided to lodges on amenity & environmental aspects.
- NPWS & Perisher Blue have worked collaboratively to try and increase awareness of litter through print, signs and media campaigns.
- Annual post season clean-up day conducted by Perisher and NPWS staff

## Sustainable tourism

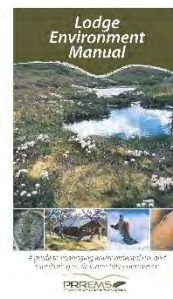
**Objective:** To ensure that the recreational opportunities and facilities of the alpine resorts are provided and managed sustainably.

### Improvements and environmental outcomes:

- 98% of lodges consistently reporting against the PRREMS EarthCheck site. (21% increase)
- A 12% increase in the number of lodges meeting the PRREMS targets (65.5%)
- 78.6% of lodges annually review their environmental risks and a 22.5% increase in the number of boards and committees discussing their environmental risks.

### Initiatives and management response to lodge comments:

- A copy of the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management (KNPPOM (2006)) issued to each lodge.
- Revised Lodge environment manual developed - distributed on USB stick.
- PRREMS annual *Commitment awards* 2010 – 2016 – 15 winners (resource efficiency & advocacy).
- “Back to Perisher” jointly organised with SLOPES & NPWS.



## Room for improvement

Whilst the annual reporting has demonstrated some significant improvements there are still areas where further improvements can be gained.

### Potential on ground improvements include:

- Poisons, baits and snap traps should only be used with NPWS approval. The lodge issued Elliot trap is to be used for the safe capture and relocation of small mammals.
- All lodges with operating kitchens need to have grease traps.
- Weed control could be undertaken by a greater number of lodges. Keeping grass slashed and mowed before it can set seed is one way of controlling weeds.
- More fuel storage systems require a professional decommissioning process to ensure no residual contamination to soil or ground water.
- All lodges should be providing their lodge members and guest with facilities to recycle.

### Potential Improvements to reporting include:

- Accuracy and completeness. Some lodge reports are left out of the combined data due to the significant inaccuracy of the information.
- Lodge EMS representatives need to have a thorough and up to date understanding of their lodge operations and environmental aspects. There are still lodges reporting don't know to some fairly important and straight forward aspects including grease traps.
- Members of committees and/or boards need to ensure they are appropriately supporting their EMS representatives by providing information in a timely manner. Delays in lodgement of reports generally relates to the reporting officer not being able to access information.