

# ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE



## Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a term that is frequently misunderstood. It refers to nature-based tourism that takes place in natural areas, is ecologically sustainable, and educates visitors about the environment through interpretation. Additionally, ecotourism must contribute to both local conservation efforts and the well-being of local communities.

**The O'Reilly family were pioneers of ecotourism in Australia, starting in 1915 by guiding visitors through the park. Their story is a quintessential example of how ecotourism can provide local landholders with a sustainable alternative to farming in regions of significant environmental importance.**

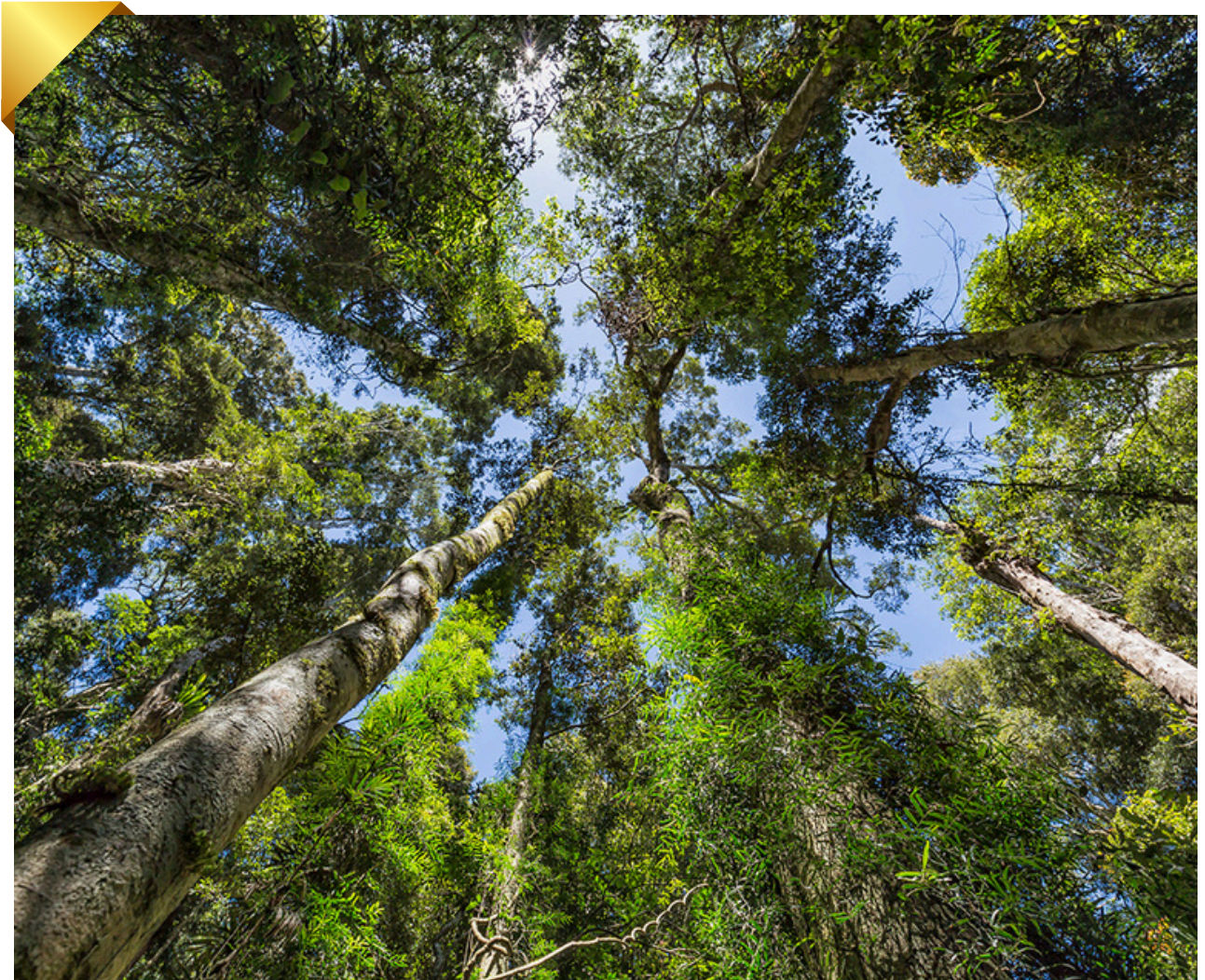
## Eco Certification



In recent years, O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat has earned Advanced Accreditation under the prestigious Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP), administered by Ecotourism Australia.

The NEAP accreditation logo signifies that O'Reilly's has achieved best practices in key areas such as ecological sustainability, natural area focus, education and interpretation, conservation efforts, collaboration with local communities, cultural history, client satisfaction, and responsible marketing.

**For our guests, this advanced accreditation under NEAP ensures a high-quality, ecologically responsible tourism experience. For more information about the NEAP program, please visit [Ecotourism Australia](#).**



## Green Globe Benchmarked Certificate



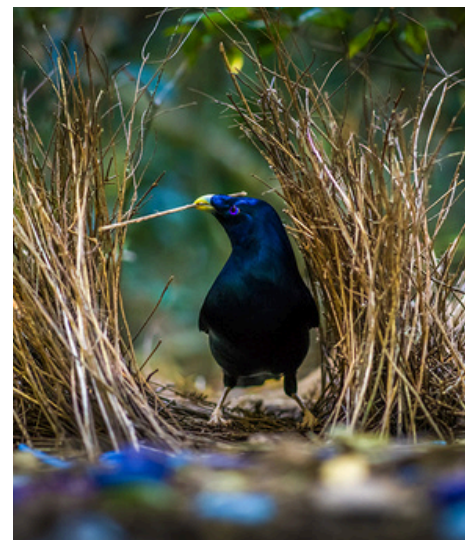
In 2005, O'Reilly's received the prestigious Green Globe Benchmarked Certificate under the new Green Globe Certification program, highlighting its commitment to the highest global environmental standards.

Green Globe is an international benchmarking, certification, and improvement system that helps the travel and tourism industry achieve sustainability. It addresses major environmental challenges such as the greenhouse effect, overuse of freshwater resources, biodiversity loss, waste production, and social issues. For more information, visit [Green Globe 21](#).

**O'Reilly's has spent considerable time benchmarking our energy and water consumption, waste production and disposal, as well as implementing an integrated environmental and social policy. These measures will deliver ongoing reduction of non-renewable resources, extensive cost savings, and secure a sustainable commercial and ecological future for us.**

## Green Power

In line with our commitment to the environment, O'Reilly's has joined the GreenPower program, through which we purchase a portion of our energy from renewable sources. GreenPower is renewable energy derived from the sun, wind, water, and waste, and is procured by energy companies on behalf of households and businesses. In 2005, O'Reilly's use of GreenPower prevented 72 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions from being released into the environment, equivalent to taking 17 cars off the road or planting 299 native trees. For more information, visit [Green Power](#).



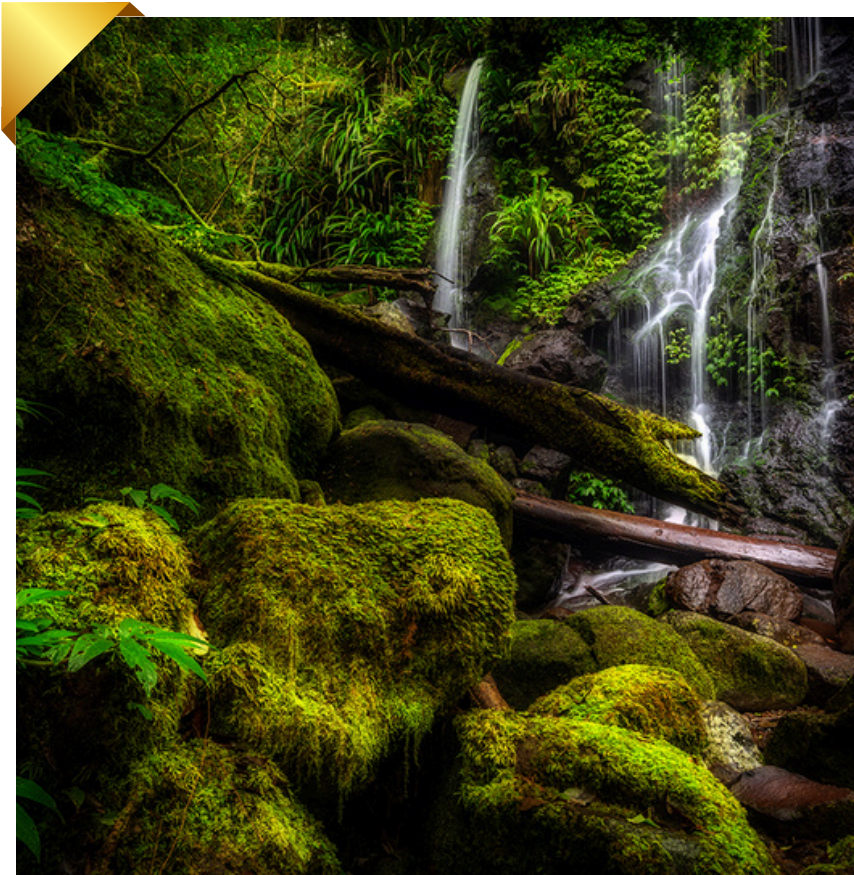
# HOW DOES O'REILLY'S PRACTICE ECOTOURISM?



The answer is multifaceted and is best understood through the framework of Ecotourism Australia's Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP). This program evaluates products based on several key criteria.

1. [Natural Area Focus](#)
2. [Ecological Sustainability](#)
3. [Education and Interpretation](#)
4. [Contribution to Conservation](#)
5. [Cultural Sensitivity](#)
6. [Working with Local Communities](#)
7. [Client Satisfaction](#)

O'Reilly's commitment to these principles ensures a comprehensive and responsible approach to ecotourism.



**O'Reilly's is deeply committed to preserving the unique natural environment surrounding our guesthouse, so that friends, family, and guests may enjoy it, as we do, now and into the future.**



# NATURAL AREA FOCUS

This is an easy one to start with. O'Reilly's is surrounded by the World Heritage listed Lamington National Park and adjoining Border Ranges National Park. While many of our guided activities take place on privately owned land, this area is now used only for conservation and tourism purposes.

**O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat has been owned and operated by the O'Reilly family for three generations. The family settled on the mountain in 1911, four years before Lamington National Park was gazetted.**



## **We will:**

- Set a standard of environmental best practice within our industry and work to communicate our efforts and performance to staff, guests, partners, and stakeholders
- Achieve sound environmental practice in all departments
- Maintain our commitment to compliance with all relevant environmental legislation
- Minimize waste production through choosing to purchase products with minimal packaging and by reusing and recycling materials whenever possible
- Minimize our use of freshwater resources
- Maximize energy efficiency and minimize emissions
- Maintain biological diversity on the property and in Lamington National Park
- Use only biodegradable, low nutrient, and chlorine-free detergents and cleaning products
- Minimize the use of fertilizers, residual herbicides, or pesticides on the property
- Undertake to minimize noise pollution and monitor noise generated by our operations
- Use native plants only for landscaping and where possible, use local endemics
- Maintain a dark skies policy to avoid unnecessary light pollution
- Give preference to local producers and local products and when purchasing, consider waste reduction, energy efficiency, and resource conservation
- Whenever possible, employ people living in our local area
- Support and foster local environmental groups and initiatives
- Maintain our cause to educate our guests and help them to understand and appreciate the natural environment
- Meet the certification requirements of Green Globe 21 and Ecotourism Australia
- Measure our environmental impact and aim to make continual improvements where possible
- The Coxen's Fig Parrot is probably Australia's rarest bird. Populations of this small elusive parrot have plummeted as humans destroyed the lowland rainforests where the birds lived. O'Reilly's has been an active member of the Recovery Team charged with the responsibility of saving this species from extinction.



# ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

## Energy

Since 1997, our greenhouse gas strategy has been applied to all building projects and refurbishments. This approach has resulted in the implementation of gas and solar services for space and water heating in most cases. In some buildings, heat pumps have proven to be more efficient.

Additionally, existing electric hot water and space heating systems are managed by an Electrical Load Flattener, which reduces demand during periods of high usage.

## Construction

Whenever possible, we use recycled materials in the construction of our facilities, whether for lightweight cabins or accommodation blocks that feature significant thermal mass.

## Water

At O'Reilly's, our water supply comes from a natural spring high in the mountains. Gravity carries the water to the Guesthouse, where it undergoes sand filtration and UV light treatment to provide high-quality, chemical-free water. To reduce water usage, we have installed 'Gem-flo' flow restrictors on all taps throughout the property.

## Wastewater

Our flow-balanced tertiary treatment system ensures thorough processing of effluent. Initially, the effluent undergoes primary separation and filtration, followed by an activated sludge secondary stage. Prior to tertiary sand filtration, a clarification step is implemented, after which the effluent undergoes disinfection before being dispersed.





# EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

At O'Reilly's, our commitment extends far beyond providing unforgettable rainforest and mountain experiences. We believe in the power of education and conservation to create a sustainable future for our planet. With a legacy spanning 90 years, we have cultivated a reputation for excellence in our interpretive discovery program, blending immersive experiences with valuable insights into our natural world.

## Education Initiatives:

Our daily Discovery Program, a cornerstone of our offerings, kicks off at the crack of dawn and continues until late evening, ensuring ample opportunities for learning and exploration. Guided walks through lush rainforest trails, four-wheel drive bus trips to remote vistas, adrenaline-pumping adventures on our 190-meter flying fox, and captivating wildlife spotlighting sessions are just a few highlights of our comprehensive program.

We recognise the importance of instilling a love for nature in the next generation. That's why our children's activity program, held during Queensland school holidays, offers immersive and fun nature education for kids. From hands-on learning experiences to interactive workshops, we aim to foster a sense of wonder and stewardship for the environment among our youngest guests. And while the little ones are engaged in enriching activities, parents can unwind and savor the sunset with a quiet dinner.





# CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION

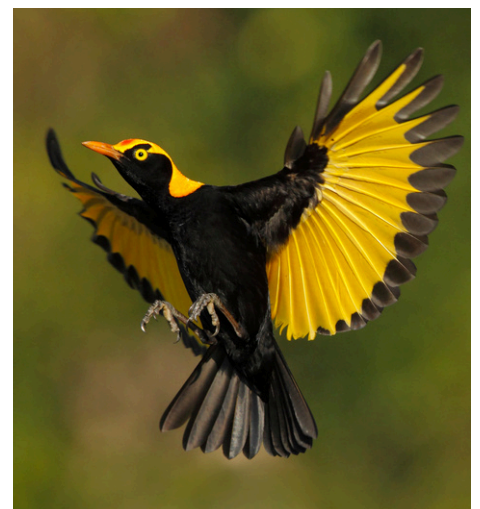
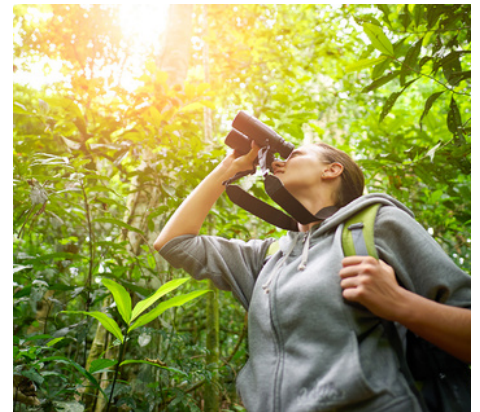
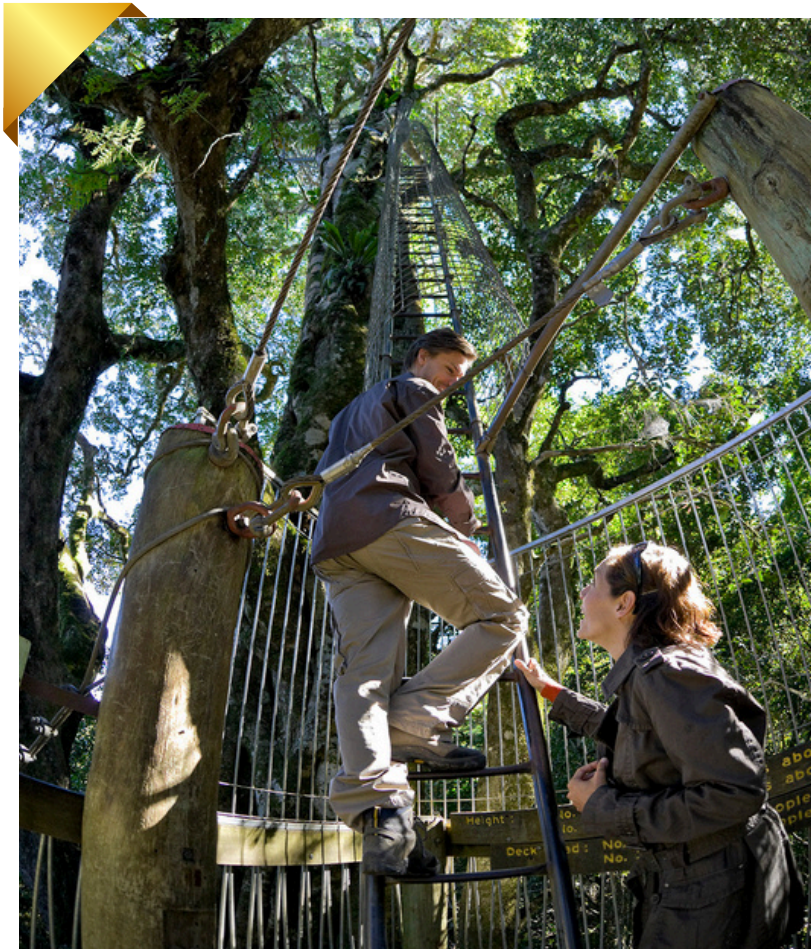
By investing in these areas, we are not only enriching the experiences of our guests but also contributing to a brighter and more sustainable future for generations to come. Join us in our journey as we continue to inspire, educate, and conserve the wonders of our natural world.

## Contribution to conservation

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**Beyond education, we are deeply invested in conservation efforts aimed at preserving the delicate ecosystems that call our surroundings home. Through initiatives such as habitat restoration projects, biodiversity monitoring programs, and sustainable tourism practices, we strive to minimize our environmental footprint while maximizing the positive impact on our natural surroundings.**

Our Bird and Wildlife Week surveys provide annual snapshots of fauna populations in the region. All of the data collected through the course of each week is collated and provided to the QPWS for accumulation in their records database. The Green Mountains Natural History Association (GMNHA) has worked hand in hand with O'Reilly's since 1976 producing numerous projects that enhance the visitor experience in this section of Lamington National Park. Joint projects include the internationally famous Tree Top Walkway and the wheelchair-accessible Python Rock Track and Lookout. Since 1916, O'Reilly's has actively supported research into the natural environment of Lamington National Park. Topics have included canopy arthropods, bird behavior, botany and forest dynamics, and impacts of tourism.





# CULTURE, COMMUNITY & GUEST SATISFACTION

## Cultural Sensitivity

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O'Reilly's are respectful of the Yugambah people, a name given to several family groups of Aborigines sharing a common language in an area roughly bordered by the Tweed and Logan rivers.

## Working with Local Communities

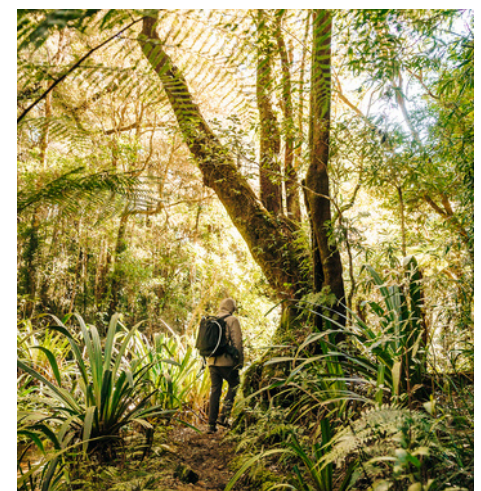
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O'Reilly's policy of employing local people and purchasing from local suppliers whenever possible ensures that ecotourism benefits the local community.

## Guest Satisfaction

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At O'Reilly's, the combination of return and referred guests totals about 55% of our annual patronage. It is the best quality assurance we can offer. All guests are invited to participate in our exit survey to provide feedback on their O'Reilly's experience.





# ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Environmental Management Policy

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O'Reilly's has a detailed Environmental Management Plan (EMP). The plan forms the basis for the operation of our business and is reviewed, audited, and updated regularly. We are committed to setting a standard of environmental best practice within our industry and communicating our efforts and performance to staff, guests, partners, and stakeholders. In pursuit of this commitment, we strive to achieve sound environmental practices in all departments and maintain compliance with all relevant environmental legislation. Below is an outline of the '*O'Reilly's Environmental Management Policy*' which provides a summary of the full EMP.

### 1. Waste Reduction:

- Choosing products with minimal packaging
- Reusing and recycling materials whenever possible

### 2. Conservation of Resources:

- Minimizing freshwater usage
- Maximizing energy efficiency and minimizing emissions

### 3. Biodiversity Preservation:

- Maintaining biological diversity on the property and in Lamington National Park
- Using only native plants for landscaping and local endemics whenever possible

### 4. Pollution Prevention:

- Minimizing and aiming to eliminate the flow of pollutants into the environment
- Using only biodegradable, low-nutrient, and chlorine-free detergents and cleaning products

### 5. Agricultural Practices:

- Minimizing the use of fertilizers, residual herbicides, and pesticides on the property

### 6. Noise Reduction:

- Undertaking to minimize noise pollution and monitoring noise generated by our operations

### 7. Light Pollution Control:

- Maintaining a dark skies policy to avoid all light pollution

### 8. Supporting Local:

- Giving preference to local producers and products
- Employing people living in our local area whenever possible
- Supporting and fostering local environmental groups and initiatives

### 9. Guest Education:

- Maintaining our commitment to educate guests about the natural environment and fostering appreciation for it

### 10. Certifications and Continuous Improvement:

- Meeting the certification requirements of Green Globe 21 and Ecotourism Australia
- Continually measuring our environmental impact and aiming for improvement opportunities.