

# SUSTAINABILITY, STORYTELLING & SYDNEY'S WILD SIDE: AN UPDATE FROM AUSTRALIA BY NATURE

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Recently, Caroline had the pleasure of joining Thomas and the incredible students at Flight Centre Travel Academy for a virtual Supplier Spotlight. It was a rewarding session, and we were grateful for the chance to update them on our ongoing sustainability journey at Australia By Nature.

We covered a lot of ground, from our eco-conscious practices to the bigger picture of climate resilience and responsible travel. Here's a deeper dive into what we shared.

## Who Are We?

Australia By Nature is a family-owned ecotourism company based in Sydney's Northern Beaches. We specialise in private and small-group guided nature tours that connect travellers with the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of New South Wales.

Our tours are designed to go beyond sightseeing. Whether you're walking through ancient bushland, spotting kangaroos in the wild, or learning from Indigenous guides, we're about immersive, meaningful experiences that reflect the real Australia.

## Operating Lightly, Thinking Deeply

We know that true ecotourism means more than just getting outdoors—it means taking care of the places and cultures we visit. Our business is rooted in the principles of responsible travel, and we hold ourselves to high environmental and ethical standards.

## Environmentally Responsible Practices

- Small group sizes and low-impact tour routes
- Adherence to “Leave No Trace” principles
- Refillable, recyclable water bottles from partners like Wallaby Water
- Wildlife-safe protocols and educational briefings for guests
- Partnering only with tourism operators and businesses who align with our values

Transport is our largest source of emissions, so we offset our carbon footprint by donating \$10 from every tour to Greenfleet, which restores biodiverse forests in Australia and New Zealand.

## Cultural Protection

- Collaborating with Indigenous guides for immersive “Walk on Country” experiences
- Sharing traditional knowledge around bush foods and plant use
- NSW National Parks EcoGuide certified, with regular training and updates

## Continuous Improvement

We've completed the Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard through Ecotourism Australia, and will begin full certification this July. It's a deep process, but one we're committed to. Caroline also holds a Professional Certificate in Sustainable Tourism Management (GSTC) and has even taught sustainable tourism right there at Flight Centre Academy!

## Climate Change: The Challenges Ahead

Like many in the travel industry, we're already seeing the effects of climate change. From extreme weather events and bushfires to coastal erosion and biodiversity loss, the risks are real and growing.

These impacts can:

- Disrupt itineraries and guest experience
- Limit access to national parks and reserves
- Affect wildlife visibility and habitats
- Drive up costs (insurance, repairs, compliance)

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## The 3 Pillars of Sustainable Tourism: People, Planet, Profit

We align our practices with the core pillars of sustainable tourism:

### People

- Supporting local Indigenous tourism and cultural knowledge
- Prioritising local suppliers and small businesses
- Creating inclusive, accessible experiences for all travellers
- Using citizen science apps to help guests actively contribute to biodiversity tracking and conservation

### Planet

- Minimising impact through smart logistics and environmental stewardship
- Offsetting emissions
- Choosing partners who uphold sustainability values

### Profit

- Ensuring financial sustainability through quality service and ethical growth
- Building a resilient business that can adapt to change and lead by example

## Advice for Future Travel Professionals

For students stepping into this industry:

- Lead with Purpose: Ask yourself how you can make a difference through tourism.
- Stay Curious: The industry is evolving so should you.
- Respect Cultures: Listen more than you speak. Learn from the communities you visit.
- Think Sustainably: Embed the 3 Ps (People, Planet, Profit) into your mindset.
- Be Adaptable: Conditions change weather, guests, politics. Stay flexible.
- Find Your Niche: Whether it's adventure travel, wildlife guiding, or tour operations, there's space for you to thrive.



## What's Next for Australia By Nature?

We've just returned from Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) in Brisbane and the energy was contagious. The future of tourism is bright, and we're proud to be part of it.

## Here's what's ahead:

- 200+ new conversations with ITOs, wholesalers, OTAs, and retail agents
- A growing flow of bookings for our guided nature and wildlife tours
- Recruitment drive for new guides who share our vision
- Full Ecotourism Australia Certification in July
- Long-term expansion plans beyond Sydney into other Australian regions

## In Closing

At Australia By Nature, our mission is simple: to offer meaningful, sustainable travel experiences that inspire our guests to become stewards of nature and culture. Thanks again to Flight Centre Travel Academy for the opportunity to share our story. The future of tourism is in good hands with passionate students like yours.

If you're interested in collaborating, learning more, or just talking all things ecotourism, feel free to connect!

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