



# Leave Only Footprints Program Summary

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## Encouraging an environmentally responsible tourism industry on Kangaroo Island

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### Project Background

The Kangaroo Island TOMM (Tourism Optimisation Management Model) is a community initiated destination management model, developed in 1997 due to concern that a rapidly expanding tourism industry may have detrimental impacts on Kangaroo Island's distinctive environment and community. This unique process measures tourism impact through a range of indicators on the local community, environment and economy, including visitor market and visitor satisfaction.

The environmental components of TOMM will be strengthened through the implementation of a program that aims to develop partnerships between the natural resource management sector and tourism industry. The Leave Only Footprints program is co-funded by the State and Commonwealth Government's Natural Heritage Trust through the Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Board and TOMM Stakeholders (Kangaroo Island Council, Tourism Kangaroo Island, Kangaroo Island Development Board, Department for Environment and Heritage, Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Board, Industry and Community).

### Project Description

An outcome of the Leave Only Footprints program will be an environmental reporting program that value adds to the information already being collected by TOMM and natural resource managers. The existing TOMM framework will be used to draw together information, which is currently being collected through a variety of mechanisms, to form a picture of how/where tourism is *actually* impacting on the environment. This information will then be used to identify where impacts are occurring, and through TOMM possible management solutions can be identified. Another important outcome will be the reporting of this information to the tourism industry and the community in an understandable and actionable fashion.

The Leave Only Footprints project is important in boosting the knowledge and participation of the tourism industry in managing impacts on the environment. It is anticipated that the ultimate outcome of this project will be greater active participation of tourism operators in the management and care of the environment.

### Project Outcomes

The Leave Only Footprints Program aims to contribute to the following outcome:

*A sustainable tourism industry on Kangaroo Island responsible for the natural resources it depends upon through an on-going monitoring program, environmentally sustainable practice and opportunities for participation in environmental repair and management programs.*

It is also anticipated that the Kangaroo Island TOMM becomes the “Landcare of tourism” through:

1. The development of a set of suitable and measurable environmental indicators that monitor the impact of tourism on the environment and link to the existing KI TOMM indicator program.
2. A reporting procedure that allows environmental data (including existing data) to be reported through KI TOMM to tourism operators in an understandable and actionable fashion.
3. The establishment of a set of networks that enable key natural resource management personnel to feed information into the tourism industry to develop an understanding of environmentally sustainable practice and opportunities for participation in environmental repair and management programs.
4. The identification of knowledge gaps in environmental data collection and the development of a process for these to be addressed, to ensure a big picture approach is taken to monitoring our environmental health.

## Assets and Threats Addressed by the Program

Kangaroo Island is a popular tourist destination because of its natural environment. TOMM data shows that over 90% of visitors are motivated to visit the Island to view and interact with nature and wildlife. This creates an interesting paradigm - where the tourism industry is based on nature experiences, however there is also potential for tourism to negatively impact on this environment. The industry therefore faces the risk of compromising the quality of Kangaroo Island's natural assets and the very foundation its success is dependant on. Leave Only Footprints provides an excellent opportunity to engage tourism operators in protecting the environment and in turn the industry.

Tourism is undoubtedly an important industry to the Kangaroo Island community and is a significant contributor to the Island's economy. It is imperative that Kangaroo Island ensures it is a sustainable tourism destination, and encourages operators to become involved and responsible for managing the Islands natural resources. As Landcare has demonstrated within the agricultural sector, the aim is to change the attitude and mindset of the Island's tourism industry to enable natural resource management to become a part of everyday operations. It is intended that this will encourage industry sustainability, and most importantly, that the Island environment continues to thrive in the future.

## Links to Other Programs

One of the key's to the success of this program will be the development of strong links between Leave Only Footprints and existing tourism and natural resource management programs, including the following:

Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Board and Department for Environment and Heritage programs - *Island Refuge* Biodiversity Monitoring Program, *Repel the Invaders* Border Detection and Feral Animal Management Programs, *Back from the Brink* Threatened Plant Species Recovery and Glossy Black-Cockatoo Recovery Programs, *Oceans of Blue* Coast and Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Program.

Tourism Kangaroo Island Operator workshop series

Kangaroo Island Development Board - Business Sustainability Project

Community Groups including, but not limited to Eco-Action, Local Landcare groups, Progress Associations, Kangaroo Island Community Education Marine and Environment program

## Further Information

For more information regarding TOMM and the Leave Only Footprints Program, please visit [www.tomm.info](http://www.tomm.info) or contact the TOMM Project Manager:

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