

# the CARBON guy

If you'd like to reduce your impact on the environment, but can't commit to solar panels or a hybrid car, a new local company could have an answer. KATHLEEN SKENE reports on Townsville's fledgling carbon offset scheme

If there's anyone in Townsville who can sell people something they can't see, it's Townsville sustainability consultant Guy Lane.

It's been a bumpy take-off, but after five years and two failed attempts, he will launch Townsville's first carbon offset and education scheme, My Clean Sky, today.

The company has partnered with two other Townsville businesses - Escape Travel and Prime Carbon - and hopes to become a national leader in carbon trading.

My Clean Sky allows airline passengers to compensate for greenhouse gases generated by their flight by contributing to carbon-reducing projects through the program.

Mr Lane said until air travel became more environmentally-sustainable, offset programs were the only way to make up for the carbon released by aircraft.

"Carbon offset provides one of the rare opportunities where mums and dads can actually create carbon benefit incrementally," he said.

"You can offset one air trip or two air trips - you don't have to install solar panels or paint your roof white.

"I wanted to focus on air travel, because air travel can easily

double a household's carbon imprint."

Passengers who have booked or returned from a flight use the online calculator to work out their share of the journey's emissions and buy 'carbon credits' according to the distance and other variables.

My Clean Sky buys the credits wholesale from Prime Carbon, a Townsville company which invests in projects aimed at reducing carbon in the atmosphere.

Once a passenger buys a carbon credit, they receive a certificate and the credit is 'retired', meaning it cannot be sold again.

Travellers can choose to offset some or all of their emissions - offsetting a return trip to Brisbane would cost around \$16.

In an industry where customers are effectively buying something they will never see, transparent business practices and a flawless reputation are vital.

"I think there are some offset programs that are quite profitable and I guess that puts an extra onus on the business to double their efforts in communication," Mr Lane said.

"There will be a process whereby we'll have our books audited."

Left: Guy Lane launching Townsville's first carbon offset and education scheme

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