



## TRAVEL TRENDS

# Take the pledge

—Do you promise to tread lightly and protect the places you love to visit?  
 Feel serene about your travels by signing up to do just that—

WORDS — SARAH REID

> So, you're never caught without your reusable tote and your own water bottle. But have you really got it covered when it comes to travelling sustainably?

Tourism bodies are recognising the need to not only increase awareness of green travel, but also to engage travellers to become proactive participants in the process of responsible tourism.

An increasing number of destinations are creating region-specific guidelines called tourism pledges that encourage travellers to be respectful and mindful of the local environment and culture and, consequently, make a positive contribution to the destination.

According to a survey conducted by AIG Travel, 52 per cent of global travellers believe sustainable travel is important, but one in three do not know where to start. Clearly, the trend is speaking to the current Zeitgeist.

It all started with the Palau Pledge. The Pacific island nation (reached via Manila, Seoul or Taipei) now requires visitors to sign a passport stamp promising to act in an ecologically responsible way to be granted

**"TOURISM PLEDGES ENCOURAGE  
TRAVELLERS TO BE RESPECTFUL  
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entry. Other tourism pledges are less formal, with destinations simply prompting travellers to voluntarily abide by guidelines usually listed on their websites.

Apart from inspiring legions of travellers, the pledge concept is also motivating the industry. For example, in Phuket, a collective of hotels and tour operators have joined forces to reduce, reuse and recycle single-use plastics, encouraging their customers to follow suit.

"Since launching New Zealand's Tiaki Promise in 2018, we've seen a groundswell of support from operators across the country, from the introduction of grassroots recycling initiatives to new sustainability programs," says Andrew Waddell, Tourism New Zealand's General Manager in Australia.

If you too want to give back to your holiday destination as much as you get from it, these are the pledges you need to take before you visit.



LADY ELLIOT ISLAND

### NEW ZEALAND

> Tiaki means "to care for people and place" in te reo Maori and visitors are now asked to take the Tiaki Promise, pledging to be good stewards for New Zealand's environment, respect the culture and take the necessary safety precautions during their stay.

[tiakinewzealand.com](https://tiakinewzealand.com)

### MARIA ISLAND TASMANIA

> Known for its wildlife, this picturesque isle, just 45 minutes by ferry from the east coast town of Triabunna, asks that visitors help to keep its wildlife wild by vowing not to chase animals with selfie sticks or get too close to their babies.

[eastcoasttasmania.com/maria-island-pledge](https://eastcoasttasmania.com/maria-island-pledge)

### ISLAND OF HAWAII

> Created to combat overtourism and increasing visitation to potentially dangerous attractions, the Island of Hawaii's Pono Pledge asks visitors to agree to be pono or "righteous". It covers strong safety messaging, including a directive not to "defy death for breathtaking photos", as well as admiring wildlife from afar and caring for nature.

[ponopledge.com](https://ponopledge.com)

### LADY ELLIOT ISLAND QUEENSLAND

> The only resort on this coral cay at the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef asks guests to help protect the ecosystem, which provides a sanctuary for over 1200 marine life species, by pledging to take sustainable actions such as refraining from collecting seashells.

[ladyelliott.com.au](https://ladyelliott.com.au)

NEW ZEALAND

