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Press Release: Rough Guides and Climate Change

<http://www.roughguides.com/climatechange/>

Rough Guides announced today the launch of a new feature on its website at <http://www.roughguides.com/climatechange/> to encourage responsibility in air travel by offsetting the carbon emissions caused by flying. Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that all life relies upon, and air travel the fastest-growing contributor to the problem.

All Rough Guides' staff and authors' travel is now "climate neutral" – achieved by offsetting the relevant carbon emissions by making payments to carbon offset schemes that invest the money in indigenous reforestation and initiatives to reduce energy demands.

Mark Ellingham, the founder of Rough Guides, said: "Travel, overall, is a global benefit, and it offers huge advantages to developing economies as well as the benefits of social contact between peoples. But we are keenly aware of the role that responsible travel information can play in tackling the issue of climate change. I believe we should encourage our readers, and by extension airlines and governments, to treat the issue with the gravity it demands. As well as the website, we're putting a page about climate change into every Rough Guide, and our friends at Lonely Planet are doing exactly the same."

One person taking a return flight between Europe and California produces approximately 2.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide gas – roughly equivalent to the yearly output of the average car. Mark Ellingham continued: "We have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming, and that means giving thought to how often we fly, and what we can do to redress the harm that our trips create."

Although some airlines are looking at new aircraft fuel developments, most are doing little to address the problem, or are even rejecting their responsibility entirely, as with Ryanair, whose CEO recently issued a statement that declared that concerns about climate change were nothing to do with him and said of those calling for a carbon tax on aviation fuel that it was his job "to annoy the fuckers" (*Guardian*, 3 Nov 2005).

To maximise our powers of persuasion, Rough Guides is joining forces with rival publishers Lonely Planet to press the issue home. Tony Wheeler, the founder of Lonely Planet, and Mark Ellingham, Rough Guides' founder, are available together for interview.

Notes for editors and interviewers

• Rough Guides and Lonely Planet, the two biggest travel publishers in the UK (and long-standing rivals) are putting aside their differences to raise the issue of air travel and climate change.

(cont.)

- Both publishers are putting relevant information into each of their travel books, making clear the damage that flying does to the climate and making two suggestions to readers:
 - (1) Fly less often, stay for longer!
 - (2) When you do fly, pay a small supplement to offset the emissions by logging onto the publishers' websites.
- Rough Guides have put up a website (<http://www.roughguides.com/climatechange>), in association with ClimateCare, where readers can calculate and offset their emissions. LP are doing the same in the near future.
- Rough Guides and Lonely Planet invite other travel publishers to come on board and do the same.
- In September, Rough Guides are publishing The Rough Guide to Climate Change, written by an expert from the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado, and covering all aspects of the issue, from the science and possible global solutions to low-carbon lifestyle advice.
- Lonely Planet are publishing a book on Responsible Tourism, addressing climate change among other issues, in May.
- Mark Ellingham and Tony Wheeler, founders of Rough Guides and Lonely Planet respectively, are both in available for interview.
- Interesting angles:

What caused Mark and Tony to come together and raise this issue? In light of global warming, how do they feel about the companies they've established? If this campaign results in fewer books being sold, is that a price worth paying? Can an environmental conscience be reconciled with travel publishing, or is it too late for that? Is carbon-offsetting worthwhile or just a sticking plaster?

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