



GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL
CHOICE AUSTRALIA

Annual Review 2015





GECA's vision is for a society in which people demand sustainable products and services.

In order to achieve our vision we aim to transform the actions of business and consumers to drive a substantial increase in the sustainability of consumption, which we do with our ecolabelling program.

The GECA team

Kate Harris
Chief Executive Officer

Barry Gordon
Chief Operating Officer

Shaila Divakarla
Standards and Technical Manager

Paula Clasby
Marketing and Administration Officer

Emma Berthold
Communications Officer

Bobby Ali-Khan
National Business Development Manager

GECA Innovation Project 2015

Ben Waters
Director of Strategy / General Manager

Anna Scott
Director of Innovation

GECA Board Members

Gordon Renouf
GECA Chair

Stephen Humphries
Chair of Finance and Risk Committee

Patrick Walker
Chair of Business Development Committee

Lorraine Stephenson
Chair of Standards Committee

Tom Godfrey
GECA Director

From the CEO

We are in an opportune time to lead the way in sustainability through driving sustainable consumption and production. Ultimately, GECA aims to help companies in all sectors of the economy with their sustainability journey, to drive meaningful change and celebrate those engaging in best practice.

Having recently come on board as CEO, I am excited and committed to strengthen and expand our offering in partnership with you, our stakeholders.

There has been a big shift within Australia and 2016 will see this momentum grow. With the launch of Australia's sustainable development goals within a global initiative, we too at GECA are committed to driving best practice and bringing all of you with us.

It is a great time to have an environmental and ethically certified product as we at GECA promote your products to businesses and all levels of government.



We see an increasing demand for businesses to manage their reputational risks, accuracy and transparency in supply chain procurement. For those who have GECA certification, this means you are ahead of the curve and increasingly attractive to our clients in the green building industry and beyond.

Our commitment to being a not for profit offering and having full independent auditing is a key component of our attractiveness to business and our GECA label.

Our membership with the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) and The Sustainability Consortium is also a demonstration of our commitment to creating a significant impact within Australia and also addressing international longer term horizons.

This is a priority for us all in a globalised world with increasing free trade agreements and a desire for international harmonisation.

During the year we worked hard to improve wider recognition of the value of GECA products and the importance of certification through increasing our advertising and media output. We successfully increased our presence at industry events throughout the year. This included campaigns such as the 'GECA Eco Trail' of certified

exhibitors at Sydney Indesign in August and attendance at a number of high-profile industry conferences both in Australia and internationally.

2016 will also see an exciting calendar of events and I look forward to meeting, collaborating and cooperating with you in the near future.

May it be an exciting year for us all.

Kate Harris



From the Chair

2015 has been an opportunity for GECA to build on its long history as Australia's only independent, not for profit multi-sector ecolabelling program.

During the past year we engaged Ben Waters and Anna Scott as Directors of Strategy and Innovation, respectively, to investigate the most effective new ways for GECA to achieve our vision and mission. The Board adopted Anna and Ben's recommendations in June 2015. Reports arising from the project on GECA's environmental impact and the wealth of information compiled during the project will be published in the near future.

Once adopted, the Board moved to appoint Kate Harris as CEO to lead GECA's implementation of the recommendations. We are delighted to welcome Kate, and with her vision, passion for sustainability and leadership qualities she is the perfect choice to implement our new strategy.

I'd like to thank each of my fellow Directors and all the staff who have worked for GECA during 2014-2015 for their contribution. I particularly acknowledge the leadership of Rupert Posner who served as GECA's CEO from 2012 until he left to take up other opportunities in October 2014.

Gordon Renouf

What we've been up to

GECA began exploring new strategic directions in 2015. We welcomed Ben Waters and Anna Scott to the team in December 2014 to map out new possibilities in line with the organisation's vision and mission. Their work over the year culminated in a plan for renewed growth for GECA as a leader in sustainable production and consumption by fostering new partnerships while maintaining its role as the only not-for-profit, multi-sector ecolabelling program in Australia. Anna also worked to produce a report examining trends in sustainable production, procurement and consumption, while Ben moved into a General Manager role as GECA began to implement the new strategy.

The new strategy helped forge some new partnerships with likeminded organisations around the world. One such partnership is with The

Sustainability Consortium, a US-based global organisation of diverse participants working collaboratively to build a scientific foundation to improve the sustainability of consumer products. TSC develops methodologies, tools and strategies to improve the environmental and social sustainability of consumer products. The Consortium brings decision makers and some of the world's largest organisations together to build knowledge of sustainability and drive impact on a range of product categories. Working groups cover sectors such as retail, food, packaging, textiles, and more.

The Green Building Council of Australia released new rating tools during 2015, rolling older 'legacy' tools into new tools to simplify the documentation process and costs for compliance, as well as the development of two new

tools. The new 'Design & As Built' and 'Interiors' tools brought with them a range of improvements, including the ability to assess any building or fitout type, a greater focus on outcomes rather than specific solutions, and a redefinition of best practice.

The new Sustainable Products credit was introduced to encourage transparency and sustainability in product specification, such as those with re-used or recycled content or an ecolabel, for example. Products with GECA or other third-party certification are able to contribute more towards this credit compared to uncertified products, making it easier for manufacturers of certified sustainable products to be specified into Green Star projects.

GECA is working with the GBCA to identify greater opportunities for credit eligibility and providing advisory

assistance to our licensees and sustainability consultants on Green Star.

In October, we welcomed Kate Harris as our new Chief Executive Officer. Kate joined GECA after six years at the Centre for Sustainability Leadership, including the last two years as CEO, and has extensive experience in coaching individuals, businesses and communities towards improved sustainability leadership.

Along with Ben, Anna and Kate, GECA saw a few more new faces in the office during 2015. Paula Clasby joined in May as our new Marketing and Administration Officer, and Scott Lemoine (Masters student from the University of Sydney) spent several months assisting Shaila's technical and standards work through GECA's internship program.

GECA has **125** current licensees, including **18 new** licensees since November 2014 - this is double the number of new licensees compared to the previous year.

Over **2,000** products are currently certified under **17** current standards (and **4** standards under review). **Cleaning Products** proved to be a popular standard this year.

We released **4** new standards:
Paper and Stationery Products
Sanitary Paper Products
Recycled Products
Refrigerants

A small loss of **\$16,942** was incurred during the 2014-15 financial year (vs the \$106,957 surplus in 2013-14). This was in line with expectations as GECA is repositioned for growth.

GECA event highlights

Standards and technical manager, Shaila Divakarla, flew to Berlin in May to attend the annual ISEAL Conference. The event explored how sustainability standards can have an impact beyond those certified under them and how their influence can be increased across the globe. Sustainability labels should ultimately seek to drive transformation in their target sectors, as well as simply providing credible certifications.

August was a busy month, with Sydney Indesign taking place, featuring the 'GECA Eco Trail' highlighting certified exhibitors. GECA ran a competition

encouraging visitors to see the showcases of as many GECA certified companies as possible, and ultimately awarded one lucky visitor with prize money to spend at Arthur G Furniture.

In the same month, GECA participated in the Powerhouse Museum's 'HotHouse LABs' event, speaking at a workshop about sustainable buildings.

In October, Shaila attended ESD Connect in Sydney. In attendance were 40 leading residential and high-density architects, building designers, project managers and ESD Consultants with a specific interest in environmentally sustainable design.

In November, our CEO, Kate Harris, flew to Brussels straight after her first week in the GECA office, where she attended two conferences. The first, the European Commission Product Environmental Footprint meeting, covered a range of issues related to the

environmental footprints of sustainable products and consumption.

The Supply Chain Sustainability Initiatives

meeting, run by The Sustainability Consortium, followed directly afterwards. This examined how organisations can work together to support the development of more sustainable supply chains.

As part of our work on enhancing the value of the GECA ecolabel, our chair, Gordon Renouf, attended the GEN Annual General Meeting and conference week in Hong Kong during November 2015. This was a great opportunity for GECA to make better connections with other ecolabels around the world and to explore recent developments with labelling schemes, particularly in regards to managing our carbon footprint.

GECA was also a supporting partner of DesignBUILD in April, SEE Sustainable Experience 2015 in June, the International Green Interior Awards in November and the Banksia Awards in November.

The future for GECA

GECA is positioned for strong organisational growth and to start implementing its new plans to drive sustainable sourcing, production and consumption throughout product supply chains.

Working towards harmonisation with likeminded organisations around the world will be a key focus for GECA moving forward. We are working to further enhance the value of our certification including through increased exposure and opportunities for international recognition.

We are exploring new areas where other ecolabels or tools can be used by our licensees to demonstrate their superior performance on sustainability.

2016 will provide further opportunities for GECA to highlight those engaging in sustainable best practice, including through events, website redevelopment, and other activities.

Our standards team are in the process of reviewing our Furniture & Fittings standards (particularly Level B), Environmentally Innovative Products standard, Thermal Building Insulation Materials and Printers & Printed Matter standards. We are also working with industry professionals and stakeholders to develop a new Cement and Concrete Products standard.



Follow the GECA eco trail and you could WIN \$1000!

GECA has some of Australia's leading design brands certified with our ecolabel, exhibiting at Sydney Indesign.

Printed on 100% recycled FSC certified EU ecolabelled carbon neutral paper

