

GECA



Annual Review 2017



The GECA team

GECA Staff

Kate Harris

Chief Executive Officer

Shaila Divakarla

Standards and Technical Manager

Kim Andrews

Business Development and
Sustainability Advisor

Sarah Sannen

Office and Administration Manager

Paula Clasby

Marketing Manager

Emma Berthold

Communications Officer

Kendall Benton-Collins

Digital Marketing Officer

Katrin Thommes

Standards and Technical Officer

Jen Halldorsson

Standards and Technical Officer

2017 Interns

Isabel Yip

City University, Hong Kong

Christy Ho

City University, Hong Kong

Yanyan Xiao

University of Sydney

GECA Board Members

Patrick Walker

GECA Chair

Gordon Renouf

Chair of Business Development
Committee

Stephen Humphries

Chair of Finance and Risk Committee

Lorraine Stephenson

Chair of Standards Committee

Tom Godfrey

GECA Director

From the Chair

2017 has seen GECA make great progress. Following a strategic review in 2016, the Board and our dynamic CEO, Kate Harris, started to implement plans to broaden our impact on the sustainability of production and consumption. Our starting point, of course, was to look at ways to make our ecolabel even more impactful. GECA is proud of its identity as Australia's only independent, not for profit, multi-sector ecolabel and its unique status as the only Australian member of the GEN network, a not for profit alliance of international ecolabels spanning 27 countries from Australia to Ukraine.

However, our strategic review identified that we needed to find ways to make our ecolabel more relevant to today's producers and consumers, and to ensure that our customer experience and value proposition made a compelling case for businesses to certify with us.

Key initial areas of focus have been to look at ways to smooth the audit process, and to leverage the benefit of our GEN membership by adopting more internationally accepted standards, so we are able to certify an expanded range of products under our flagship ecolabel.

To supplement these initiatives, we sought to extend our offerings to other products and services, so we could offer Australian businesses and consumers a broader range of ways to demonstrate and promote sustainability. Here, initial steps have been to develop a claims validation product which, along with our new service in creating Environmental Product Declarations, means that businesses which are not able to move immediately to full ecolabel certification can take the first steps on a pathway to more sustainable production.

Finally, the Board has been keen for GECA to use its independent voice to advocate and promote sustainability in order to achieve lasting positive change. We have recently launched the Positive Procurement Pledge: taking the ISO 20400 standard for sustainable procurement, and engaging with government and business to "take the Pledge" and move to ISO compliant procurement within three years. We are delighted with the initial responses, with early Pledgers including Public Transport Victoria and Arup, as well as many SME's, and are excited about the opportunity to drive further positive change in sustainability through improved procurement decisions in the year ahead.

This is my first year as Chair, and I want to thank my predecessor, Gordon Renouf, for his leadership over the last few years. I am delighted that Gordon continues to offer his insights and passion as a Board member. My thanks also to my fellow Board members Lorraine Stephenson, Tom Godfrey and Stephen Humphries for their input and support. Above all, my thanks go to our CEO Kate Harris, and our passionate and committed GECA team. We have come a long way in 2017, and have a great opportunity to build a more sustainable future in the years ahead.

Patrick Walker



Finance report

GECA's total revenue for the 2016-17 financial year was \$764,891. GECA's overall loss was \$37,542.

Although a loss was made this year, this was due to a delay in the scheduling of audits, as a result of which certain income (which would ordinarily have been brought to account in FY17) will now be recognised in FY18.

Without this delay, we estimate that GECA would have achieved a significant profit in FY17 and results would have been well ahead of budget, instead of the loss.

This reflects a year of new initiatives and is confirmation of new channels of growth and revenue.

Current stats

Currently, GECA has 3,169 products certified under 22 standards across 135 licensees.

From the CEO

It has been a big year with an ongoing focus on built environment, with expansion to big business and beyond. Through engaging broader business, government and their supply chains, we are committed to making sure that everyone knows what an ecolabel is, why it matters and how we make change happen.

Strategy update

After a co-design process with the board directors and the team, we are thrilled to announce our three year GECA strategy. We had the opportunity to create and collaborate on our road map and we look forward to bringing you along for the ride. The focus of our strategic plan is described below:

- ***Grow***

Whilst remaining wholeheartedly committed to our existing offering as an independent best practice ecolabel, we are also ensuring our organisational growth through new products and new revenue that gives new opportunities to products, services and organisations through capability building.

- ***Ecolabel***

Our ecolabel remains core to our business and our offerings. We commit to ongoing improvement and expansion

of our standards and our recognition through global schemes and harmonising with other leading standards.

- ***Continual improvement***

We also continue to focus on continual improvement in areas such as customer service, quality of our scheme, and auditing processes. Our aim is to simplify the processes that are required to ensure transparency and trust.

- ***Advocacy***

A key part of our responsibility is to ensure that we continue to spread the word about materials, their environmental, social and health concerns, and sustainable alternatives - not only for businesses but all of our community.

Stakeholders

We have had significant support and positive endorsement from many key stakeholders such as GBCA, ISCA, ASBEC, Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN), RCLG, UNEP, BBP, JAS-ANZ, ISEAL, USEPA and the APEC economies.

We continue to proudly represent the Australian Federal Government as their representative of the Green Supply Chain Network and continue to spread the word globally about our GECA ecolabelled products.

We are also grateful to have partnered strategically with other organisations who are aligned with our mission. This has enabled us to secure funding and seed investment to develop standards, such as the Waste Collection Services standard (complete and ready for pilot) and the Steel standard (commenced). Many thanks to City of Sydney, NSW EPA, Office of Environment and Heritage and the Better Building Partnership for their support this year.

Speaking and exhibiting

We continue to speak and exhibit at many events around Australia and across the world.

In some ways our leadership and best practice is better recognised globally and regionally for our high standards, integrity and leadership than we are locally. But that is changing and we are rapidly bridging the gap of understanding in the relevancy and rewards that assurance of your supply chain can bring on a local level.

GEN Conference in Sweden

I had the pleasure of recently returning from our Global Ecolabelling Network meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. It was kindly hosted by Nordic Swan and gave me an insight into a possible future.

We stayed at an ecolabelled hotel, conferenced at an ecolabelled venue, ate in ecolabelled restaurants, shopped at ecolabelled supermarkets and enjoyed ecolabelled wine- and the best part? Being taken to the airport in the ecolabelled carbon neutral train.

Success

So Sydney might not yet be Stockholm, but we have had successes this year of which we are proud.

We:

- Launched our new-look ecolabel and our wonderful website
- Grew the number of certified products available substantially
- Launched our new Cement, Concrete and Concrete Products standard - and will launch another three new standards before the end of the year (watch this space)
- Launched the Positive Procurement Pledge (sign up now if you haven't already!)
- Hosted our first licensee-only conference
- ... and much, much more.

My thank yous

Firstly, I want to thank all our licensees and key stakeholders. Without your support in valuing our ecolabel, through your ongoing commitment to leading the way towards sustainable solutions, we could not keep doing what we do.

I concur with our Chair, Patrick Walker, as I, too, am very thankful for all the great team work that has happened with both the board and staff coming together this year.

Our organisation is supported by many smart sustainability experts who believe in our mission and in making it happen.

The staff are a small team and passionate about all we do - and we work hard.

Our Board Directors, and in particular our Chair, generously give their time and brain power to support an ambitious vision and commitment to action.

So onwards and upwards to 2018.

The road is mapped and we look forward to putting things into place and continuing to grow GECA over the next three years.

Thanks to all for coming along for the ride with us and our mission.

Kate Harris



Global recognition

GECA recognised as 'best for the world': B Corp

GECA is honoured to have been recognised by B Corp as one of 61 Australian and New Zealand companies that are 'best for the world'. Each year, B Lab honours companies around the world that are "leading the movement of business as a force for good".

The Best for the World Honorees are recognized for creating the most positive social and environmental impact. These companies have earned an overall score in the top 10% of all Certified B Corporations on the B Impact Assessment, a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of a company's impact on its workers, community, and the environment.



United Nations Global Compact

This year, GECA joined the UN Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative. It requires participants to align strategies and operations with principles around human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption, and to take actions that advance societal goals.

Joining the UN Global Compact demonstrates GECA's commitment to these aims, and reflects GECA's level of engagement with other stakeholders to support even wider adoption of sustainability-focussed business practices. As of February 2017, over 9,000 companies and 3,000 non-businesses from around the world are signatories to the Compact.

"We're proud to be a participant of the Global Compact and stand alongside so many other organisations who are demonstrating their commitment to turning sustainability principles into action," said Kate Harris.

United Nations 10YFP Sustainable Public Procurement Programme

GECA is pleased to announce that it has been selected to participate in the new multi-stakeholder advisory committee for the United Nations 10 Year Framework for Sustainable Public Procurement Programme.

GECA will provide important input and guidance on the development and operation of the Sustainable Public Procurement Programme. “We’re very pleased to have been recognised and look forward to collaborating with other likeminded organisations to further promote sustainable public procurement,” said GECA’s Standards and Technical Manager, Dr Shaila Divakarla, who will also be joined by Kim Andrews from GECA in the program.

Standards recognised by US EPA

Three of GECA’s standards have been officially accepted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as part of the EPA’s Recommendations of Specifications, Standards, and Ecolabels for US Federal Government procurement. GECA’s Paints and Coatings, Floor Coverings, and Furniture, Fittings & Foam standards fulfilled the requirements of the Guidelines Pilot Assessment.

“We’re thrilled to have three of our standards included by the US EPA in their official recommendations, as we know this will be of huge benefit to our licensees in terms of international procurement. The application process for that approval was incredibly detailed and robust, and to make it through to ultimately be included in those recommendations is a testament to the credibility of our scheme,” said Kate Harris.

The Global Sustainability Standards Conference: The Future of Trust (ISEAL Conference)

The 8th Global Sustainability Standards Conference took a look into the future of trust. Key issues included:

The importance of trust and transparency in demonstrating the credibility of sustainability labels is not only about what labels do but also what they don’t do.

Much of the European Union (and the government of Switzerland in particular) is “very supportive” of sustainability labels, especially those that follow ISEAL’s credibility principles.

Moving forward, sustainability labels should seek to embrace “big data” – the use of data beyond certification programmes to analyse, inform strategy and actions.

China Environmental United Certification Centre (CEC)

GECA welcomed visiting members from the China Environmental United Certification Centre (CEC) and the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) in December 2016. The visit was a fantastic opportunity to share knowledge and develop a stronger working relationship between GECA and the CEC, who are also fellow GEN members.

Both GECA and CEC signed an MoU at the end of the visit, agreeing to share further knowledge and resources between the two organisations.

Korea Environmental Industry and Technology Institute (KEITI)

In April, GECA was pleased to welcome fellow GEN members, the Korea Environmental Industry & Technology Institute (KEITI), as visitors to Australia. It was a fantastic opportunity for both organisations to share insights with each other and compare ecolabelling schemes between Australia and South Korea.

APEC GSCNET Conference

In July 2017, the annual APEC Green Supply Chain Network (GSCNET) conference was held in Beijing, China. As one of the early members of GSCNET, GECA co-hosted the event.

Representatives from various countries in the region, including GECA as a representative of Australia, presented developments in their respective countries and shared best practice with others for creating more sustainable supply chains.

The establishment of the APEC Green Supply Chain Network, and subsequent developments in the area, have been “very encouraging,” according to Divakarla, “particularly as so many global supply chains extend into Asia.”



www.gecapledge.eco

This year, GECA launched a bold new campaign: the Positive Procurement Pledge.

GECA recognises that truly sustainable procurement is about moving beyond tokenistic gestures. So, as the global marketplace increasingly looks for solid sustainability credentials, GECA is challenging businesses, government agencies, industry groups and NGOs around the world to elevate themselves above the greenwash.

The Positive Procurement Pledge is open to any organisation – regardless of its sector, size and location – that is involved in procurement decisions and processes. Pledgers agree to develop, document and implement a sustainable procurement policy to govern all purchasing decisions by 31 December 2020.

Pledgers will need to measure and prove their progress to GECA over a three-year period and allow GECA to publicly share their key achievements.

Sustainable procurement is about considering the environmental, social and economic impacts of purchased goods and services. Through sustainable procurement, organisations can build resilience and become future proofed through increased efficiency and effectiveness.

In April 2017, the International organisation for Standardisation (ISO) released the world's first ISO 20400 International Standard for Sustainable Procurement. ISO 20400 is designed to ensure that the procurement policies of organisations, both big and small, are robust and address sustainable supply chain issues.

To date, 18 businesses, organisations and government bodies have taken the pledge. We're looking forward to seeing many more pledgers signing up to do good for our planet and the people on it!

Standards update

2017 was a massive year for the standards team. GECA's two furniture standards were revised and substantially updated this year, incorporating new research and opening the door to certifying a wider range of products, including mattresses.

The standards team also worked hard to develop a new standard for Waste Collection Services in collaboration with the City of Sydney, NSW EPA, and the Office of Environment and Heritage. The standard, due for official launch next year, will increase transparency in the waste and recycling sector.

Five new standards for freight services, printers, windows, office activities and absorbent hygiene were fast tracked for development. 'Fast tracked' standards are based on existing standards criteria that have been developed by fellow GEN member organisations around the world and adapted (where necessary) for an Australian context. This allows GECA to be agile and rapidly develop new standards that enable a wider range of products and services to become certified, without compromising the credibility and robustness of the scheme.

As well as presenting at a number of conferences and events, the standards team worked with industry partners on a number of technical projects, such as the Responsible Construction Leadership Group Materials Matrix, and alignments with other schemes. GECA is also in the process of developing a resource guide on sustainability labels for the ISO20400 standard website and contributing to the Australian handbook on ISO20400.

ISO20400 Sustainable Procurement Guidance standard launched

After 4 years of development involving 52 countries and 11 international organisations, ISO20400, the first international standard on sustainable procurement, was officially launched in May this year.

GECA formed part of the mirror committee (*pictured*) and contributed to the development of the standard, and presented at the official NSW launch event. The ISO20400 standard also forms an integral part of the GECA Positive Procurement Pledge and will provide important guidance to procurement professionals around the globe.

GECA recognises Greenguard

In response to frequent enquiries regarding USA-based UL Environment's Greenguard certification, GECA has established that the Greenguard Gold standard meets GECA's TVOC requirements, as well as Formaldehyde emissions, in both furniture standards.

A Greenguard Gold certificate can therefore be used as evidence for satisfying these two requirements.

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) have also given their approval to ensure this decision does not affect the Level A/Level B recognition they have given us under the GreenStar program.

The GECA furniture standards will be amended accordingly and re-issued.



Marketing and events

2017 was an enormously successful year for GECA's marketing and events activities. We were involved in an even greater number of speaking engagements, sponsorships and exhibitions where we engaged with industry and spread the word about sustainable consumption and production.

Big wins for the marketing team included the launch of the new website and refreshed GECA branding, the launch of the Positive Procurement Pledge campaign and its associated website, the development of the GECA Licensee Only conference, and building the 'Materials in Mind' interactive pod.

It was fantastic to see a growing interest and a strong focus on sustainability across all of these events. We'd especially like to thank our wonderful licensees for contributing samples and brochures for us to showcase at our stands – and thanks to everyone who stopped by to say hello!

GECA events

Tomorrowland and the Licensee Only Conference

Following on from 'Tomorrowland', an event run by The Fifth Estate, GECA hosted its first licensee-only event. It was great to spend time with some of our valued licensees, brainstorming how certification has helped them and new directions that we can explore collaboratively.

'Materials in Mind' pod: Sydney Indesign 2017 and Randwick Eco-Living Fair

GECA was proud to be a Supporting Partner of Sydney Indesign, and our modified shipping container, Materials in Mind, was very popular with visitors.

"Visitors loved the design and look of the container and enjoyed the interactive elements of learning more about what environmental, health and social criteria to look for in a material or product," said GECA's Marketing Manager, Paula Clasby.

The pod later made its way to the Randwick Eco-Living Fair, where it continued to be a hit.

Havwoods Info Session

An information session explaining the value of GECA certification to an audience of architects and designers.



Events - exhibitor

Green Cities

GECA worked with Zenith Interiors as Display Sponsors for Green Cities. Along with the range of inspiring talks from throughout the event, we loved being able to provide delegates with a beautiful sustainable gift: old plastic bottles and cotton cone reels re-purposed into potted plants.

DesignBuild 2017

As well as exhibiting at the event, Kate spoke about how to achieve credible and creative outcomes for a sustainable future.

Total Facilities 2017

Kate spoke on a panel discussion on why energy efficiency and sustainability still matter. Thanks to Camatic for providing some of their GECA certified seats to showcase.

HIA Sydney Home Show and Melbourne Home Show 2017

For the Sydney event, GECA teamed up with tiny house experts The New Joneses to demonstrate practical but stylish ways to design a sustainable, healthy home. GECA licensees KE-ZU supplied beautiful furniture for the event, and Kate spoke about the benefits of choosing third-party certified products for the home.

Sydney Build 2017

Kate brought the message of sustainability and the importance of certified products to her workshop on sustainable building, which was well attended by people from the education and health industries as well as construction industry professionals.

Green+ Building 2017

Kate spoke on the future of sustainable procurement, and GECA's stall at the event was well attended.

ISSA Cleaning & Hygiene Expo 2017

Kate spoke about the importance and demand for green certified cleaning products and services.

Events - speaking and facilitating

Sustainable Development
Goals conference

ACTS Leadership in Sustainability summit

Leading the Way: What is
leadership in sustainability?

Australasian Waste and Recycling Expo

ACCSR Sustainable Procurement
and the Chain of Responsibility

Plasticity

2017 Annual Infrastructure Sustainability
Conference and Awards (ISCA)

Precast Concrete Conference

GovProcure 2017 (upcoming)

Events - participation or sponsorship

Clean Up Australia Day
World Environment Day Awards
Flickerfest
Green Gown Awards
Green Globe Awards
Living Future Institute of Australia Symposium
TAKE2 Business Roundtable
Local Government NSW Conference
IACCM webinar
Greenseal webinar on ecolabels (with Greenseal and Nordic Swan)
Holmes College presentations
Low Carbon Living CRC
AIEN Industrial Ecology Conference
Product Stewardship Cluster
Modern Slavery Roundtable Discussion
Beyond Zero Emissions: Rethinking Cement roundtable
Architecture & Design Sustainability Awards
International Green Interior Awards
Banksia Awards

Advertising and editorial

Govlink
The Fifth Estate
Sourceable
Architecture & Design
InClean magazine
The Executive Housekeeper

Social media

We increased our newsletter subscribers and followers significantly across all social media channels this year, and GECA is now on Instagram too!



Good Environmental News
4378 subscribers



GoodEnvironmentalChoiceAustralia
800 followers



@GoodEnvChoice
938 followers



GECA Good Environmental Choice Australia
503 followers



thegecaecolabel
381 followers



@geca_official **NEW!**
66 followers

New website and branding

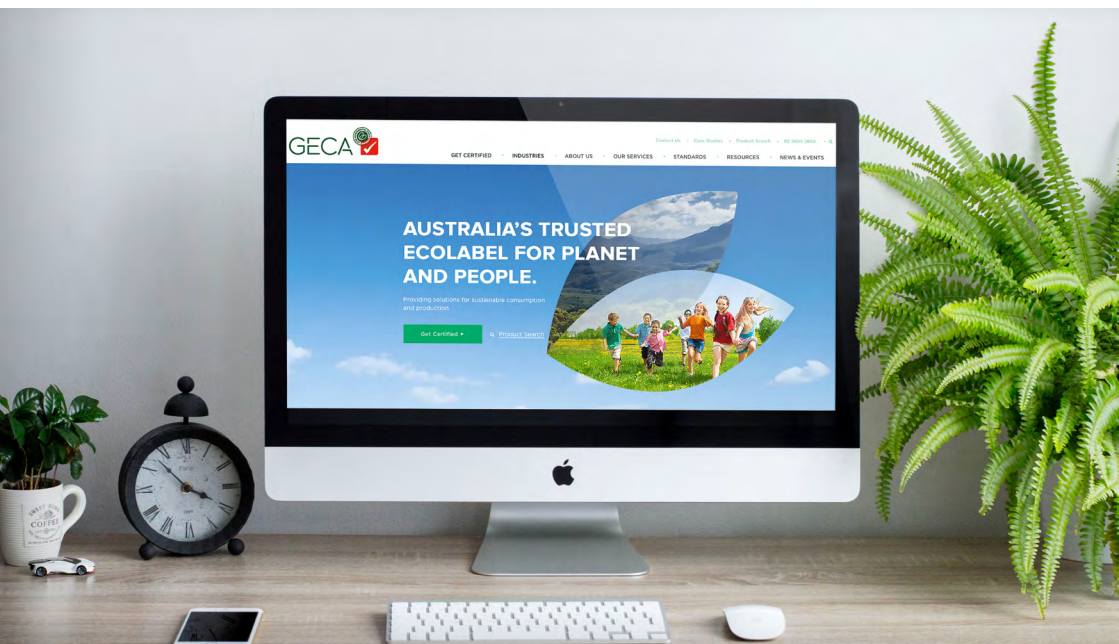
This year, GECA launched a fresh new look, unveiling a completely redesigned website and updated logo.

The website (www.geca.eco) has been completely redesigned with a bold new look and feel, is easier to navigate, and is among some of the first organisations to use the new .eco domain.

The product search feature has been updated and made more user-friendly, enabling everyone from architects and designers to consumers and procurement professionals to

easily choose the best third-party certified products and services. The new website is mobile-friendly and easy to use from any device.

The launch of the new website supports GECA's broader mission to provide solutions for sustainable consumption and production. It now showcases the full range of services offered by the organisation, including consultation and advisory services, education and training opportunities, and advocacy links across the globe.



GECA's web address features a new web address ending, ".eco". This ending, known as a top-level domain, is for anyone committed to positive change for the planet. .eco web addresses are available to any business, government, non-profit or individual working toward a sustainable future.

Along with a new website, GECA has also officially launched new branding and a redesigned logo. The ecolabel has been given a fresh, modern update, and remains a recognisable symbol of trust and credibility in communicating sustainability.

"It's more than just an environmental label – GECA takes a truly holistic approach to sustainability, making sure products are better for your health, and have a positive social impact too," said GECA's Marketing Manager, Paula Clasby.



