



GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL
CHOICE AUSTRALIA

Annual Review 2016



The GECA team

Kate Harris

Chief Executive Officer

Shaila Divakarla

Standards and Technical Manager

Kim Andrews

Sustainable Development and Senior Accounts Representative

Sarah Sannen

Office and Administration Manager

Paula Clasby

Marketing Manager

Emma Berthold

Communications Officer

Matthew Kolisnyk

Standards and Technical Officer

Katrin Thommes

Standards and Technical Officer

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

This AGM sees my celebration of one year at GECA and what an exciting year it has been. With our continued focus on integrity and independence, we have also ensured that we are ultimately looking at driving impact in all that we do.

In order to drive our impact for planet and people it has been a year of focus on relationships, relevancy and recognition.

Relationships

This year a primary focus for the organisation has been on strengthening our key relationships, and for me to meet with them as a new member of GECA.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be welcomed into the Green Building and ecolabel ecosystem and to collaborate and cooperate on a shared vision with many wonderful organisations such as GBCA, ISCA, ASBEC, Responsible Construction Leadership Group and the Better Buildings Partnership.

These like-minded organisations are made up of passionate, capable and committed individuals and I thank them all for being an integral part of our mission at GECA.

Our global relationships have also been an important part of our network in

deepening our engagement with such organisations as UNEP 10 YFP, UNGC, US Green Building Council, Cradle to Cradle, the International Living Future Institute, the APEC Green Supply Chain network and of course all our Global Ecolabelling Network members from across the globe.

It gives me faith and hope when I meet so many who are committed to working together towards a shared sustainable future despite the barriers of language, geography, economy and policy.

I have also experienced the wonderful privilege of meeting many of our licensees who are an inspiration to Australian manufacturing and sustainability and are so important to all that we do.

I also thank our own GECA team who are equally passionate and dedicated to the cause, going above and beyond because we care about what we do.

The relationship with the GECA board is also a very important one and I want to thank all the Directors for helping us navigate the complexity of the standards world whilst also delivering meaningful, credible and practical mechanisms for change.

Relevancy

The focus on relevancy has come with the understanding that we need to respond in order to enable others to respond to the challenge at hand.

This means we are continuing to strengthen our scheme and honour the importance of being Australia's only independent, not for profit Type 1 ecolabel. This is quite a responsibility to uphold and acknowledge the role that ecolabels play as a vehicle of change to navigate responsible consumption and production.

In addition, we recognise the need to offer value beyond an ecolabel and are consciously creating offerings for launch in 2017 that will support the pipeline of best practice sustainable solutions for Australia and beyond, whilst still upholding our values of integrity, independence and impact.

This has led us to work with not only the supply side, but increasingly the demand side, through working on sustainable procurement across all sectors and ultimately committing to solutions for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (in particular, Goal 12).

Our team has also played an important international role through working on the upcoming ISO 20400 standard for Sustainable Procurement - a

commitment we were pleased to make and a guideline we feel has an integral role in the future of business in Australia over the next 3 years.

We have also played a larger role within our Oceania and Asia Pacific region through fostering streamlined opportunities with our New Zealand colleagues at Environmental Choice New Zealand (ECNZ) and in particular through supporting the development of other global ecolabels in South East Asia.

This is a big challenge, but also a big opportunity to create a solution for systemisation of standards at a global scale. Increasingly, we are aware that we are indeed a global economy with a global supply chain and cannot work in isolation if we are to truly address our future challenges.

Recognition

And last but not least, recognition.

Thanks to all our partners, stakeholders and, of course, our licensees who have helped grow our recognition throughout 2016.

We have had countless opportunities to speak, present, facilitate, write and promote the importance of GECA and what we stand for, and we are grateful for all the support from the leaders driving sustainability in Australia and beyond.

We continue to be recognised by the Global Ecolabelling Network and our global partners that we are a unique offering in our ability to offer true sustainable solutions - not just environmental solutions, but social and health solutions throughout the whole life cycle.

We are also pleased and honoured to announce that we have been accepted and endorsed by the Australian Government to be the Australian representative for the APEC Green Supply Chain Network, which has a mission to promote all the sustainable products and services that Australia creates to all economies through the APEC region.

It has been a busy and successful year for solutions for sustainability leadership.

We are looking forward to an even bigger and better 2017 to keep driving solutions for sustainable consumption and production, and ultimately create a sustainable future for all.

Let me end with wishing all our licensees, our partners, and our team a wonderful festive season for the end of year and we look forward to working with you for a full and exciting 2017.

Kate Harris



From the Chair

2016 has been a year of enormous change and growth for GECA – one where we've taken every available opportunity to have a real impact on driving the sustainability agenda in Australia.

With improved recognition both in Australia and internationally, we are well placed to deliver even greater value to our licensees, stakeholders and the wider built environment industry.

GECA has been fortunate indeed in securing Kate Harris as our CEO and I know that in her first year she has impressed both the Board and GECA's key stakeholders.

I'd like to thank Kate and everyone on the GECA team, our Board of directors, our auditors at BSI and DLCSI, and GECA's key suppliers for all of their hard work over the past year, and look forward to another year of driving sustainable consumption and production.

Gordon Renouf



Finance report

GECA's total revenue for the 2015-16 financial year was \$687,996. GECA's overall loss of \$14,105 was in line with Directors' expectations, as the Board approved a budget for 2015-16 designed to reposition the company for growth.

Current stats

Currently, GECA has 2208 individual products plus 22 full product ranges certified, across 125 licensees.

While our two furniture standards are still by far the most popular GECA standards overall, GECA saw a big increase in the number of clients requesting certification for cleaning products over the past year.

Awards and achievements

GECA becomes a certified B Corporation

GECA is proud to announce we are a certified B Corporation! We look forward to collaborating and networking with other businesses who share our commitment to making sustainable choices and value the credibility of independent third-party certification.

B Corp certification is a third-party verified demonstration of our commitment to working sustainably. Performance standards are comprehensive and transparent, measuring a company's impact on all its stakeholders (e.g. workers, suppliers, community, and the environment). In other words, B Corp certification is "like Fair Trade certification but for the whole business, not just a bag of coffee".

Certified B Corporations meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, legally expand their corporate responsibilities to include consideration of stakeholder interests, and build collective voice through the power of the unifying B Corporation brand. As of June 2014, there are more than 1,000 Certified B Corporations from over 60 industries and 34 countries, representing a diverse multi-billion dollar marketplace.



GECA voted one of top 50 Trusted Brands for 2015

GECA was included in the 2015 Architecture & Design's Trusted Brands Survey.

GECA came in at 41st place, and also won the Environmental Products category - a very respectable result from the 500 nominated brands!

It was fantastic to see such recognition for the ecolabel and all of its licensees, proving that GECA is a powerful indicator of commitment to sustainability.



New partnerships

GECA joins APEC Green Supply Chain Network

Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) has been officially endorsed by the APEC Ministers of Trade as being the Australian representative for the APEC Green Supply Chain Network.

The APEC Green Supply Chain Network was launched in 2015 to facilitate environmentally-friendly, economically viable purchasing, production activity, and distribution and consumption of goods and services through developing green supply chain networks in APEC economies.

GECA is one of the newest officially endorsed members of the network and will be working with the platform to promote certified products throughout the APEC region and to support developing South-East Asian countries in improving sustainable consumption and production practices.

“GECA is proud to be a part of the APEC Green Supply Chain Network, and we look forward to collaborating with other network members,” said Kate Harris, CEO of GECA. “This is a great opportunity for Australia to have a bigger impact on sustainable purchasing in the Asia-Pacific region.”

“We are excited at the potential to develop a pilot centre of sustainable materials, products and services for promotion of sustainable procurement in Australia and beyond. We hope to work with the Australian Government to realise this vision and to bring our fellow APEC Green Supply Chain Network members to Australia in the near future, to expand the opportunities and benefits for Australia and all our Asia Pacific neighbours.”

GECA has also formed promotional partnerships with ISEAL and GreenSeal, with informational webinar sessions currently in development.



Team updates

Team retreat: a time to refocus

In July 2016, the GECA team members dedicated two days to a series of intensive brainstorming and strategy planning sessions - and some team building time - in the Blue Mountains.

Armed with many, many Post-It notes, the team mapped out priorities and strategies for the next 12 months. The result was a comprehensive roadmap focused on streamlining organisational processes, exploring new ways to deliver greater value to licensees, assigning responsibilities and reviewing our core mission and values.

Of course, there was also some time to relax and explore the stunning Blue Mountains scenery before coming back to Sydney refreshed and ready to put the plans into action.

Staff movements

Since December 2015, we have farewelled Barry Gordon and Bobby Ali-Khan, and welcomed Sarah Sannen, Kim Andrews and Matthew Kolisnyk to the team. Katrin Thommes was also welcomed back to GECA to assist with standards development.

We were also fortunate to have interns Ally Wing Yue Lo and Ian Chuk Lam Tsang from City University, Hong Kong, who assisted with finding new potential opportunities for exploring Asian markets, and Jana Birner from Göttingen University, Germany, who assisted the Standards team with exploring international standards.



Marketing and events

2016 was perhaps one of GECA's most active and successful years for marketing and events. We were involved with a massive number of speaking, facilitating, exhibiting and sponsorship engagements that provided countless opportunities for spreading the message of sustainable consumption and production. Many of these events also provided opportunities for GECA to work with licensees to actively participate and showcase their certified products.

Our communications this year focused on topics such as reducing supply chain risk, sustainable procurement, the Sustainable Development Goals, and what makes an ecolabel trustworthy. These messages were also echoed across events GECA participated in throughout the year.

Kate, Shaila, Kim and Paula represented GECA by speaking at and facilitating a range of events both in Australia and internationally, working in an educational capacity to highlight what the GECA ecolabel means and to promote certified products.

Launch of key marketing publications

2016 saw the launch of some key marketing publications: the GECA Marketing Toolkit for licensees, and a series of Green Star information sheets, to communicate the value of the GECA ecolabel. We also launched Anna Scott's report, *Key Insights into Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns in Australia*.

GECA events

Collaborate, Innovate, Celebrate
GECA's industry event centred around the latest trends in sustainable production and consumption, the forthcoming ISO standard for Sustainable Procurement and GECA's direction for the coming year.

Aspect Info Sessions
A series of information sessions explaining the value of GECA certification to an audience of architects and designers.

Sustainable Procurement Breakfast
An event with key stakeholders to discuss the future capability building for cross-sector sustainable consumption and procurement practices in Australia.



Events - exhibitor

Green Cities

As well as being a supporting sponsor, we worked with our clients to furnish some of the conference and pre-conference areas with GECA certified furniture, as Production Partners to the event. Thanks to Aspect Furniture, Zenith, StyleCraft, Dunlop Foam and KE-ZU.

DesignBuild 2016

Our stall featured furniture from GECA licensee Hub Furniture, and Kate spoke on how China and Australia's free trade agreement will affect the quality and safety of Australian construction.

CleanScene 2016

GECA was able to feature a wide range of certified cleaning products at our stall and spoke to a number of industry professionals at the event.

Events - speaking and facilitating

Sydney Build 2016

DesignBuild 2016

ISO20400 Sustainable Procurement Evening Conference

Sustainable Brands conference

SEE Sustainable Experience

Collaboration for Good

Australasian Waste and Recycling Expo

Melbourne InDesign

Future Best Practice in Western Sydney

Sustainable Built Environment 2016

Australian Technology Association

Sustainable Development Goals Australia 2016 Conference

Surface Coatings Association of Australia conference

GovProcure 2016

GECA organised a range of certified furnishings and fittings to be used within Green Cities



Events - participation or sponsorship

Clean Up Australia Day

Total Facilities

Green Building Day

Living Building Challenge
Awards (judging)

Living Future Institute

Green Globe Awards (judging)

Architecture & Design
Sustainability Awards

Advertising

Govlink

InDesign magazine

Green magazine

Architecture & Design online

Editorial

The Fifth Estate

Sourceable

Architecture & Design

InClean magazine

Flooring magazine

Govlink



676



861



393



338



4142

*Our social media channels and monthly enewsletter allow us
to engage with a wide and diverse audience*

New & revised standards

The development of a new standard for cement, concrete and concrete products was a key highlight for GECA's standards development team this year. Cement and concrete are significant materials with significant environmental impacts and they represent an ever growing sector, so the standard was created in response to industry needs.

During the year, work commenced on revising both of GECA's Furniture standards, and the Environmentally Innovative Products standard was re-released to provide a flexible alternative for certifying products that fall outside of the scope of existing GECA standards.

The standards team will soon begin development on standards for steel and waste collection services, as well as creating a new service for claims validation. GECA will also work in partnership with Environmental Choice New Zealand (ECNZ) to revise our standards for Thermal Insulation and Cleaning Services.

ISO20400 Standard

Standards and Technical Manager, Shaila Divakarla, contributed extensively to the development of the forthcoming ISO20400 Sustainable Procurement Guidance standard as part of the Australian mirror committee and also as a member of the Australian delegation to the ISO meeting in Sydney.

Representatives from 14 countries and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) took part in five days of discussions to finalise changes in the draft standard. The standard will undergo one final round of reviews of the changes made before being ready for publication and release by mid 2017.

The standard is designed to provide guidance for organisations seeking to incorporate sustainability principles in their procurement policies and practices. "I think the timing of the standard is perfect given the serious environmental and social risks in supply chains that organisations are currently facing," said Shaila.

The ISO20400 delegates after meeting in Sydney



Q&A: Clean Plus Chemicals

What does GECA certification mean for our licensees? We spoke with Dhaval Thakkar from Clean Plus Chemicals to find out.

What sets you apart from other cleaning companies and products?

We are an Australian family owned and operated manufacturing company with ISO certification and deal only with distributors (no end user supply business). Our team holds a lot of technical knowledge and we work on building partnerships. We customise almost everything for our customers, from formulations, labels, and colour coded charts to SDS and more. With over 325 products in our range, at any given time, we will have about 600+ pallets of finished products ready to go and we aim for dispatch within 48 hours of receiving an order.

Why did you choose to get GECA certification?

After comparing a few other certifying organisations, we found GECA to be more professional with their standards and specifications, with timely audits and a high level of technical understanding.

How important is certification to you?

We have carried green and biodegradable products for many years, but after getting GECA certification, we immediately saw a huge spike in sales for those certified products that were of interest to corporate and government buyers. We found certification helped to build an extra level of trust, both in the product itself and in our own capabilities. We are looking forward to expanding our GECA certified range soon.

What's changed for you as a result of either going through the certification process, or since achieving GECA certification?

We have adopted a more sustainability-focussed approach and have seen an increase in sales.

What do you think are the biggest sustainability challenges for the cleaning industry right now?

While suppliers do have a lot of biodegradable and sustainable raw materials, they come at a premium price, and sometimes that extra cost can be a bit difficult to justify.

Future directions

This past year has seen GECA grow in capacity and continue to drive positive production, procurement and purchasing behaviours. There has been a particular focus on minimising environmental and social supply chain impacts nationally, regionally and internationally, and creating solutions for sustainable consumption and production that are impactful, credible, accessible and scalable.

Moving towards harmonisation with likeminded organisations around the world is still a key focus for GECA. There has been considerable time spent forming strategic partnerships both in Australia and internationally, including

with leading tertiary institutions, prominent ecolabelling and standards organisations, and government bodies. 2017 will see GECA continue to strengthen existing relationships and form new ones to further increase international exposure and recognition.

Next year will provide further opportunities for GECA to highlight and celebrate those engaging in sustainable best practice. We hope to launch a refreshed and revitalised logo and brand guidelines soon, along with a redeveloped website to make it even easier to find certified products and communicate the value of GECA.

