

Summary of the EcoGuide Program



The EcoGuide program provides individuals with a credential, endorsing the recipient as a guide who will deliver an authentic, environmentally responsible and professional experience. The program covers both generic guiding skills plus EcoGuide specific minimal impact skills.

The subjects covered in the program include:

Generic Guiding Skills

- ✓ Knowledge of the tourism industry
- ✓ Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of a guide and in particular an EcoGuide
- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Customer service
- ✓ Safety, OHS and risk management
- ✓ Group Management
- ✓ Developing and delivering tour activities
- ✓ Knowledge of subject matter
- ✓ Preparing and presenting interpretation

EcoGuide Specific Skills

- ✓ Planning and implementing minimal impact principles
- ✓ Commitment to ongoing professional development
- ✓ Ensuring activities respect Aboriginal culture and follow appropriate protocols regarding sharing of information on Aboriginal culture

The EcoGuide program now includes accreditation through Guides of Australia (GOA) for no extra cost.

Benefits of EcoGuide Certification:

- Certified **EcoGuides** gain the advantage of an industry credential and a pathway to nationally recognised and respected formal qualifications that will provide a defined competitive edge.
- **Operators** gain a sound method of recognising quality guides, a benchmark to use for training purposes and greater product appeal through employing and promoting the use of accredited EcoGuides.
- Both **guides** and **operators** gain an opportunity to promote guiding services as genuine nature tourism or ecotourism, providing a competitive edge for these niche markets.
- **Visitors** gain a guarantee of guides who are committed to providing quality nature tourism and ecotourism experiences in a safe, culturally sensitive and environmentally sustainable manner.
- **Environmental benefits** flow from improved guiding practices that lead to fewer negative environmental and cultural impacts.
- **Training providers** gain a benchmark of best practice guiding.
- A potential advantage for **protected area managers** is the ability to identify operators who employ staff with appropriate training and qualifications when reviewing permit applications in sensitive areas.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for certification, you will need:

- ✓ At least 12 months experience as a tour guide **or**
- ✓ A recognised and approved guiding qualification (for example Certificate III or IV in tourism guiding) plus 3 months work experience.