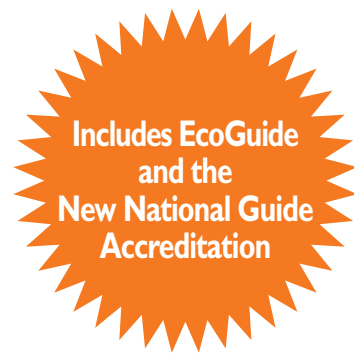


ecoguide
AUSTRALIA
CERTIFIED
GUIDE



A certification program for the
Australian guiding industry

NEW GENERATION 3RD EDITION 2007 A product of Ecotourism Australia

This book is printed on recycled paper.



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This edition of the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program – EcoGuide Australia III

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WHAT IS THE ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM?

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program is a voluntary, industry-driven and managed certification program for Nature and Ecotour Guides.

The aim of the program is to promote professionalism, and practice guiding standards, within the nature and ecotourism sectors. It sets out to achieve this by establishing a set of consistent and specific standards and by recognising and rewarding those individuals committed to working to this standard. These standards have been developed through extensive consultation with the nature and ecotourism industry (at both operator and guide level) and other major stakeholders.

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program was developed through an extensive industry-based consultation process. This was coordinated and facilitated by a steering group of major stakeholders, including representatives from the mainstream tourism industry, protected area managers, training providers, our industry training advisory board, guiding and tourism/ecotourism associations, and of course the guides themselves!

Dissemination of information on the program occurred through direct mail-outs, conference and workshop presentations and numerous articles in industry-based newsletters as well as a dedicated section in Ecotourism Australia's *Ecotourism News* and monthly EcoBytes e-newsletter.

This development phase also included a full pilot of the certification process to test the viability of the overall process as well as its inherent elements.

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program is an assessment and certification credential endorsing the recipient as an individual who will deliver an authentic and professional ecotourism experience with knowledge and recognition of the importance of sustainable tourism.

This workbook outlines in detail the various steps and requirements associated with your assessment process, with a summary of these steps provided on page 11 and in Appendix one (page 63 – 66).

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program is managed by:

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BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program is designed to provide a range of benefits to a variety of nature and ecotourism stakeholders.

Ecotourism Australia is proud to present you two stories of successful EcoGuides – Jeff Brenton and Barry Davies, both recipients of the EcoGuide Australia National Award.

EcoGuide Australia case studies:

Jeff Brenton:

“Giddy, my name is Jeff Brenton. Since 2000, I’ve had the extraordinary privilege of escorting people to one of the world’s premier natural destinations; the Karijini National Park which is situated in the central Pilbara Region of Western Australia. Prior to the situation, I would not have been adjudicated as a tour guides’ map book. In fact, previously I have never worked as a tour guide. Since moving from Perth to Tom Price which is barely an hour’s drive to the Karijini National Park, I’ve accidentally stumbled across the attribute of passion. In 2005, I ventured out in my own business. The tour I conduct is an adventure based one day journey to the incomparable gorges of the Karijini National Park. Potentially, there’s danger for travellers in these places but when people participate in my company, I make sure all the safe practices are in place. With regard to the yummy homemade cakes and the lunch preparation credit goes to Bev, my wonderful supportive wife. It was not my volition to take part in the accreditation programme of Ecotourism Australia but a very close friend in that organisation who believed in my latent ability encouraged me to embark upon the course. From that experience has grown self belief and I have gone from strength to strength. In this work, I have the opportunity to meet many people from all walks of life & from all over the world. Amongst those folk are achievers in their own right. My call to you tour guides & aspiring tour guides is to give the Accreditation Programme serious consideration and you’ll never look back. Long live Tourism!”

Barry Davies:

Like many guides I became a guide by chance. A timely phone call to Binna Burra Lodge was answered by the familiar voice of an old National Park Service colleague and that led to my first guiding job. I had no formal training as a guide and very limited experience both in the rainforest and with the abseiling and other adventure activities that I was expected to lead. I was nervous but, with hindsight, I needn’t have been because I had served the perfect apprenticeship without even realising it.

My passion for wildlife started early and much to my mother’s disgust, I filled my room with all manner of creepy crawlies. Being in New Zealand, they were mostly harmless. It was only by coming to Australia that I discovered the joys of snakes and dangerous spiders! This passion for nature, whether it starts at an early age or is of adult onset, is essential for EcoGuides. When I was employing Guides at Binna Burra, the qualification I rated most highly was genuine enthusiasm for nature.

After leaving QNPWS I travelled the world for 18 months, including many months hitch-hiking in North America, visiting parks in Canada and the USA. Whilst I don’t advocate that prospective guides should hitch-hike around the world (times have changed and the world is not as safe a place), travel provided me with self-confidence, understanding and tolerance that I don’t think I possessed before I went. Having experienced other countries and cultures has been a significant advantage to me as a Guide. Knowledge of the countries my overseas guests have come from provides a point of reference that I find acts as an important ice-breaker. Knowledge of their wildlife, and even more importantly, the current affairs of their homeland are also useful. Fortunately I have always been interested in current events, geography and history.

The experience of travelling on my own has made it much easier for a relatively shy person like me to be sociable, engage easily in conversation and to become an effective public speaker, all essential skills for an EcoGuide.

That was my apprenticeship: a love of nature, travel, a degree and a personality that doesn't rub too many people up the wrong way. I couldn't have asked for a better background for a career as a Guide.

I spent about 20 years as a Guide at Binna Burra Lodge and was very fortunate at the beginning to have a wonderful mentor. ECO Certification accredited places like Binna Burra provide excellent opportunities for Guides and are especially good for starting a career. They usually have experienced Guides who act as mentors and they have wonderful guests who are not only enthusiastic receivers of knowledge but are often excellent sources of knowledge. They can also become friends and in my case one has been my partner for 23 years. One of my proudest moments at Binna Burra was winning the Gold Coast Tourism Supreme Hospitality Award in 1993. This is an award given to one person per year, selected from all hospitality and service industries in the Gold Coast region, so it was a great honour to receive it.

When I left Binna Burra in 2004, I had been an 'Eco' Guide for 20 years but didn't apply for certification as an EcoGuide with the Ecotourism Australia until I had established my own business. I think the reason I didn't apply earlier was that the process looked too difficult, but when I did apply it was really quite simple. With hindsight I should have done it earlier because, although with my long experience it probably wasn't going to make me more employable, it was a commitment that I should have made to support the development of Guiding as a valued profession.

The benefits to me were almost immediate because I won the EcoGuide of the Year award in 2005. I was sponsored to go to the Ecotourism Australia's National Conference in Hobart to receive my award and had the opportunity to attend the conference and give a paper. The contacts I made at that conference have been invaluable in developing my business.

For the past 3 years I have been a freelance EcoGuide in a partnership called Gondwana Guides. I lead walking and wildlife tours all over Australia, New Zealand and Norfolk Island. Next year I have been asked to be a Naturalist on a month long tour through Melanesia, including New Guinea. Most of this guiding is on a sub-contract basis but I also organise wildlife tours and lead bird watching tours for inbound travellers. I lecture and run field workshops in Australia for an American University, run training workshops for Guides and consult as an Ecotourism adviser.

This mix of employment allows me to make a very interesting and diverse living. I get to enjoy being in beautiful wild places with interesting people. What more could an EcoGuide wish for?

BENEFITS TO NATURE AND ECOTOUR GUIDES

- A recognised industry qualification
- Baseline benchmark to determine the degree to which their services meet the standards of best practice nature and/or ecotour guiding
- An opportunity to promote guiding services as genuine nature/ecotourism
- A defined competitive edge rewarded through factors such as better job opportunities
- Access to relevant, appropriate and reduced cost training materials and networking opportunities
- Pathway to nationally recognised and portable formal qualifications within the Australian Qualification Framework (Certificate III Tourism (Guiding)) (also beginning of the pathway for the Certificate IV in Tourism (Guiding) and Certificate IV in Tourism (Natural and Cultural Heritage))
- Opportunity to work with a Registered Training Organisation in obtaining nationally recognised qualifications
- Excellent networking and professional development opportunities with guides going through certification and already certified guides who are encouraged to attend or organise joint training and workshopping sessions
- Discounted training, workshop fees and conference attendance will be provided where possible.

BENEFITS TO NATURE AND ECOTOURISM OPERATORS

- A simple method of recognising and recruiting quality guides
- A standard or benchmark within which guide performance can be continually improved to a standard recognised as best practice
- An opportunity to promote guide-based products as best practice nature and/or ecotour guiding, so as to give them greater product appeal and a marketing advantage
- Improved guiding practices that lead to fewer negative environmental and cultural impacts and increased client satisfaction.

BENEFITS TO NATURE AND ECOTOURISM CONSUMERS

- An assurance that guides are committed to providing quality nature or ecotourism experiences in a safe, culturally sensitive and environmentally sustainable manner.

BENEFITS TO PROTECTED AREA MANAGERS

- Improved guiding practices that lead to fewer negative environmental impacts
- Guides are role models and ensure good environmental and culturally appropriate behaviour
- Guides who are committed to a partnership in providing a front-line defence in environmentally sensitive or fragile areas
- Ability to identify operators who employ staff with appropriate training and qualifications for reviewing permit applications in sensitive areas
- A framework of standards applicable to interpretive rangers.

BENEFITS TO THE ENVIRONMENT

- Guides providing relevant and appropriate interpretation that inspires clients and workplace employees and encourages minimal impact actions and a conservation ethic. This is reinforced by the Guide practicing and modelling behaviour in support of minimal impact principles.
- Opportunities are sought and created that generate conservation outcomes for the environment. This can include direct involvement of ecotourism based activities within hands on projects and promoting dialogue between different stakeholders on how to achieve sustainable outcomes for the use of an area.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION?

To be eligible for certification, Guides will have to meet the **minimum criteria** of either:

- Relevant work experience as a Tour Guide that equates to or is greater than the equivalent of 12 months full time (approximately 1200 hours), or
- A nationally recognised guiding qualification (e.g. Certificate III Tourism (Guiding), Certificate IV in Tourism (Guiding), Certificate IV in Tourism (Natural and Cultural Heritage)) or an equivalent ecotourism-based qualification and relevant work experience as a Tour Guide that equates to or is greater than the equivalent 3 months full time (approximately 300hours).

The Guide will need to have gained this experience within the past 5 years.

Anyone who meets these minimum requirements can apply for certification, regardless of their current or previous employment status. Commercial guides, interpretive rangers and volunteers are equally eligible as long as the basic eligibility requirements are met.

NOTE: The work experience may be paid or unpaid. A substantial part of the work experience should be in a position that includes guided tours or interpretive activities and delivering guided experiences. The work experience may be in any sector of the tourism industry and tours may be in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sector.

The EcoGuide Australia Certification program has been designed so that it is equally relevant and accessible to guides with AND without formal education / qualifications.

STEPS IN APPLYING FOR ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA CERTIFICATION

Certification with the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program requires you to complete the following steps (discussed in greater detail in Appendix 1).

STEP 1

Visit Ecotourism Australia's homepage (www.ecotourism.org.au) and navigate to the EcoGuide Australia section. Apply for an workbook online or print the form and fax/send it to Ecotourism Australia's National Head Office. A hard copy of the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program workbook will be sent to you in the following days.

STEP 2

Read through the documents to make sure you agree with what is required and to familiarise yourself with the certification requirements.

STEP 3

Complete the application page which asks for contact details, referee details.
Complete the self-assessment criteria.
Sign the declaration to adhere to the set of Ecotourism principles

STEP 4

Forward your application to Ecotourism Australia who will assess your application and advise you accordingly.

STEP 5

If you are successful with your application you will receive Provisional Certification with full Certification pending an on-site verification.

If you are unsuccessful Ecotourism Australia will provide the necessary assistance to assist you work toward being successful in gaining Provision Certification.

STEP 6

You will need to complete an on-site verification within a 12-month period of receiving your Provisional Certification.

It is proposed that these will take place as part of an Ecotourism Australia's National Conference, an Ecotourism Australia organised event and/or some other group activity. You can organise for your own on-site verification and/or one for a group of other applicants but this will require additional fees to cover the cost of assessors. It is best to liaise with Ecotourism Australia regarding the logistics of organising your on-site verification.

STEP 7

If you are successful at your on-site verification you will receive full EcoGuide Australia Certification.

STEP 8

In order to maintain certification, a re-assessment of the on-site verification is required every four years.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Certification fees

Certification costs include two components, a one-off application fee, and an annual fee.

FEES

Workbook	Once only Initial Assessment Fee	Annual Fees (incl. Ecotourism Australia Membership) Pro-Rata Period			
		1 year	$\frac{3}{4}$ year	$\frac{1}{2}$ year	$\frac{1}{4}$ year
\$45.00	\$125.00	\$165.00	\$123.75	\$82.50	\$41.25

You will need to pay your assessment fee as part of Step 1 of the certification process. There is no time limit or restrictions on how long you take to submit steps 2 and 3 of the process. Once you have paid your annual fee, you are entitled to receive, or continue receiving:

- Listing on the Nature and Ecotour Guide Database
- Web access and name listing
- Delivery of Ecotourism Australia's monthly EcoBytes e-newsletter
- Eligibility for reduced cost for selected publications and training materials
- Discounted EcoGuide Australia professional development workshops
- One full vote at Ecotourism Australia's Annual General Meeting
- Discounted Registration to Ecotourism Australia's Annual National Conference

On-site verification fee

The on-site verification fee will vary depending on how you choose to undertake this assessment with the options including:

- Attending an assessment event organised by Ecotourism Australia
- Organising for an EcoGuide Australia Assessor to assess you on an individual basis
- Organising for an EcoGuide Australia Assessor to assess both you and other colleagues as part of a workplace assessment.

Note –If you want to organise your own individual assessment (the latter two options) it is most likely that you will also need to pay an additional amount to cover travel costs for an EcoGuide Australia Assessor.

Contact Ecotourism Australia for assistance with organising your on-site verification.

THE ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA AND GUIDES OF AUSTRALIA PARTNERSHIP

Ecotourism is committed to the Guides of Australia National Tour Guide Accreditation Program. This program has been established to be a national standard for all Guide classifications including Museums guides, Natural Area Guides, Cultural Guides, Site Guides.

The Guides of Australia Program is managed by Guiding Organisations Australia (GOA) and further detail including benefits is available through the website www.goa.org.au.

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program has been designed so that you will automatically be assessed against the majority of the Guides of Australia framework whilst you are undertaking the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program.

To gain Guides of Australia Accreditation you will need to be successful in your application for EcoGuide Australia Certification in addition to successfully completing the following additional requirements:

- Provide evidence of current CPR Certificate
- Sign GOA Code of Guiding Practice



APPLICATION FOR ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA CERTIFICATION

The following application for Certification requires you to:

- Provide personal details
- Provide details of 2 referees
- Complete the self-assessment application document
- Attach a signed commitment to the EcoGuide Australia Code of Practice
- Attach a curriculum vitae

If you need assistance at any time please contact Ecotourism Australia.

Personal Details

Please complete the following:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Contact Details of Two Referees

Referee 1

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Referee 2

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Self-Assessment Process

The next step of your EcoGuide Australia Application has been developed to be a self-directed and self-paced assessment process. It has a mix of assessment and certification requirements, which include:

- Short phrases that highlight desired behaviours and practices that would be expected of an EcoGuide. You will need to acknowledge that you agree with these and are either practicing the same or will do so at a relevant time in the future.
- Statements that ask you to provide a short response to a question or statement. When completing these limit your response to only a few sentences (approximately 100 words).
- Request for evidence. Be sure to include evidence as suggested (suggestions are included in Appendix 2). Attach these in the order in which they are requested to make them easier to reference to appropriate sections of your application. Also include any additional evidence that you believe highlights your competence and supports your application for EcoGuide Australia Certification.

GENERIC AND ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA SPECIFIC GUIDING COMPETENCY UNITS

The self-assessment section of your application is divided into two broad competency sets – Generic Guiding and EcoGuide Australia Specific Guiding. Each of these two sets have the following competency assessment units:

GENERIC GUIDING COMPETENCY SET

- 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
- Develop and Deliver Tour Activities
- Knowledge of Subject Matter relevant to Tour Activity
- Prepare and Present Tour Commentaries

ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA SPECIFIC COMPETENCY SET

- Plan and Implement Minimal Impact Principles
- Ensuring activities are sustainable and generate social and environmental benefits
- Committed to ongoing professional development
- Individual ethics and values

EXEMPTION FROM COMPLETING THE ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA SELF-ASSESSMENT

One reason why the self-assessment process has been grouped into the 2 broad competency sets as outlined above is to provide the opportunity for people with existing qualifications and / or who have existing accreditation from related programs to receive partial exemption from this process.

You will not need to complete the Generic Guiding competency set if you already have:

- Certificate III in Tourism (Guiding)
- Certificate IV in Tourism (Guiding)
- Other equivalent qualification such as a university degree
- Existing accreditation through the Guiding Organisations Australia program

All applicants are required to complete the EcoGuide Australia competency set and are required to complete an on-site verification.

1. GENERIC GUIDING COMPETENCY SETS

1.1 Knowledge of the Tourism Industry

This competency set is aimed at assessing your knowledge and understanding of the tourism environment in which a Guide works including different industry sectors, relationships between these sectors, key and relevant legislation, and the ability to maintain currency and keep up to date on activities within the tourism environment.

A WORKING UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

You have gained experience in working with a variety of different industry sectors. These different industry sectors can include accommodation, restaurants, attractions, tour operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have gained experience in working with a variety of organisations representing different industry sectors. This could include working with a variety of tourism-based working groups, committees, organisations; being a member of relevant and appropriate industry associations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are aware of the different tourism markets and have a working understanding of the unique needs of different market sectors. For example, inbound, domestic interstate and intrastate, self-drive, caravan and backpackers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are able to source information on the tourism industry relating to working as a Guide and matters affecting the Guiding industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>

KNOWLEDGE OF LEGISLATION AND INDUSTRY ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

You have a working knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation which applies to the tourism sector including licensing, customer protection, public liability, environmental legislations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You adhere to relevant legal and industry codes that are relevant to your workplace and the tourism industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are aware of the safety practices and policies in place to protect customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>

UNDERSTAND THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, THE ENVIRONMENT, OTHER INDUSTRIES AND OTHER SECTORS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

You are aware of the relationship that tourism, and in particular guiding, has to other industries and to the Australian community/social environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------

MAINTAIN AN UPDATED KNOWLEDGE OF MATTERS AFFECTING THE INDUSTRY

You understand the current trends within the tourism industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You keep up-to-date with issues affecting the tourism industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have an understanding of developing technologies and their impact on the tourism industry – e.g. use of audio guides, use of internet as an interface between visitor and destination, use of internet for research, use of multimedia.	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to any relevant evidence that supports your competence in this unit this can include:

- Evidence of having worked in different tourism industry sectors. Please include:
 - ☞ Log books from periods of employment
 - ☞ Letters from organisations where you have worked
 - ☞ Position descriptions of current and/or previous work
 - ☞ Job statements
 - ☞ Letters of employment
- Reports on research activities you have prepared that have a focus on the tourism industry.
- Activity plans / project forecasts / project planning which have involved researching different organisations, client groups and liaising with different industry sectors.
- Membership of relevant and appropriate industry associations.
- Involvement with industry working groups and/or committees.

1.2 Knowledge of the Roles and Responsibilities of a Guide and in particular an EcoGuide

A Guide plays an essential part of any tour-based experience. They can add a significant richness, enjoyment and quality to a person's visit to a particular place. Specific competency sets that assess your work as a Guide are incorporated throughout this application process. This unit is focused on your knowledge and understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Guide and in particular an EcoGuide.

KNOWLEDGE OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GUIDE

You are aware of the different roles and responsibilities of different Guides e.g. site guides, tour managers, adventure guides, extended tours, driver guides.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You understand the role a Guide plays in the overall tourism and hospitality industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You understand the relationship between tour wholesaling, tour operations and the role of a guide. This includes an understanding of the role of different operators within the tourism and hospitality industries relevant to Guiding – coach companies, tour operators, airlines and other public transport operations, food and beverage operations and establishments, attractions and accommodation establishments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have an awareness of industry associations and the services they provide to guides.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have an awareness and understanding of the services available to you to enhance the quality of your work as a Guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>
When working as a Guide you understand, and operate within, the legal, ethical and safety frameworks accepted and established within the industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have an understanding of the specific responsibilities associated with working as an EcoGuide. This can include ensuring your activity adheres to principles and practices associated with minimal impact, interpretation, and ecological sustainability.	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to any relevant evidence that would support your competence in this unit this can include:

(See the related items of evidence within the previous unit "Knowledge of the Tourism Industry" unit)

- Experience you might have gained in representing Guides within the Tourism Industry e.g. member of an industry organisation, participation in working groups, focus groups, discussion forums.
- Experience in representing Guides within a workplace.
- Member of relevant and appropriate industry associations.
- Participation in famils focusing on Guiding activities e.g. you might have attended a tour operated by a Guide from a different sector and/or workplace within the industry such as a Site Guide when your primary work is with extended or day tours.

- Experiencing working as a Guide in a variety of workplaces – please include
 - ☞ Log books from periods of employment
 - ☞ Letters from work
 - ☞ Job and position descriptions

1.3 Communication Skills

Communication skills are a critical aspect of any work as a Guide, and are used in a variety of situations that can include liaising with other industry colleagues, working with suppliers and facilitating the experience of customers.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

You have worked in positions of public contact. This can include front of house positions such as those associated with a visitor centre, information centre, and retail outlet as well as position in Guiding, driver of public transport vehicles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have been involved in liaising with the community, stakeholders, special interest groups and/or industry colleagues when developing and planning a tour. For example, involved in liaising with other organisations when preparing commentaries, tour plans, food and beverage requirements; consulted with landholders and land managers when organising tour logistics including routes and itineraries.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have liaised with stakeholders, suppliers and other industry colleagues as part of your day-to-day operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have been involved in either leading or actively participating in meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have experience in managing groups within either a leadership and/or facilitation role.	<input type="checkbox"/>

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

You have prepared written correspondence. This can include memos, reports, emails, faxes, and/or contributions to newsletters, journals, newspaper articles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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APPLY COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES TO A TEAM SITUATION

You have gained experience working in a variety of workplaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have worked as a member of a team	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have worked in a supervisory or management capacity, e.g. team leader, project manager/supervisor, tour manager	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPLY COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES WITHIN AN ORGANISATIONAL AND INDUSTRY CONTEXT

You articulate information clearly using language and terminology acceptable and relevant to the industry and workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You communicate according to the requirements of the social, cultural and business environment in which you work.	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPLY COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES WITHIN A CROSS CULTURAL CONTEXT

You are aware of the unique characteristics of different cultural groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are able to identify different cultural groups within a workplace context and apply this understanding when communicating with these same people.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have communicated with people from different cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to any relevant evidence that would support your competence in this unit. This can include:

- Samples of position descriptions and/or Work Duty Statements and in particular highlight those aspects of these jobs which require effective communication skills.
- Letters of support, appreciation and/or references from employers, industry colleagues and guests.
- Reference to any courses and workshops you may have completed in such as in communication techniques.
- Proficiency in other languages.
- Letters of support from colleagues including supervisors.
- Courses in supervision, leadership, project management.
- Knowledge of the social, cultural and business conventions applicable to working as a guide.

On-site verification activity

Part of your on-site verification will be focusing on you being able to demonstrate effective communication and presentation skills.

1.4 Customer Service

ABILITY TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY LEVELS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

You have worked in positions of customer service. This can include positions within the tourism and hospitality industries as well as retail.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have been involved in establishing 'best practice' through active involvement in workplace committees, industry associations and/or task groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You demonstrate high quality customer service by practicing the following:	
▪ Identifying customer needs and expectations and in particular any persons with special needs and seek to meet these as best as possible within your operational frameworks.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ You take responsibility for the health, comfort and satisfaction of visitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ You limit group sizes to a number that is appropriate to the activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ You liaise with relevant organisations, industry standards and/or government agencies in setting maximum numbers for group sizes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ You provide accurate information when meeting customer requirements and any special requests.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ You follow up on any issues and/or questions, which were raised during the activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You manage customer complaints in a positive, sensitive and professional manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGING SOCIAL DIVERSITY

Social diversity can arise from unique cultural backgrounds, socio-demographic backgrounds, needs, interests, expectations, religious beliefs, and attitudes amongst many other characteristics.

You demonstrate your ability to manage social diversity by:

Not being racist or prejudice to a person due to their unique characteristics (including those outlined above).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with industry colleagues, accepted standards, codes and practices and with visitors and customers to determine the best means of managing social diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respecting and valuing social diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.6 Group Management

LEAD TOUR GROUPS

To demonstrate your competency within this element, you have gained experience in at least 3 of the following:

You have led groups of people as part of a tour activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Led varying numbers of people within these groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Led groups of people with different needs, interests, cultural and socio-demographic backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Led groups in a variety of situations, landscapes, environments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You provide information about changes to visitors and keep them updated throughout the activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You move participants in a safe, efficient and effective manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You provide clear instructions to assist with group movements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are able to maintain your tour itinerary through effective group movements.	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS

You practice the following as part of your role in managing groups:

Maintain control of your group at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manage and meet as best as possible the individual needs of customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage interaction and group cohesion. This can include managing cliques, which might develop within the group and any other potential negative group fragmentation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring you have the skills to manage conflict and challenging behaviours.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attract the attention of all individuals within the group when necessary and as required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You avoid situations in which you might be seen to be favouring certain people in the group, rather you ensure you maintain equal attention amongst all members of the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>

LEADERSHIP ABILITY

You model appropriate behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/>
This can include ensuring you stay on designated tracks in the same way that you might be asking the same of your customer; whenever reasonable and appropriate and safe you collect rubbish as part of your activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You do not degrade and/or belittle other people, organisations and/or agencies regardless of their policies and operations. Instead you seek to remain objective and if you do disagree you do so in a professional manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate 'best' practice through modelling 'best' practice guiding principles	<input type="checkbox"/>
You monitor visitors' activities in order to ensure compliance with establishment or tour regulations and safety practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>

IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING CONFLICT AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

You can demonstrate your competency in this element through indicating your experience in:

Facilitating and/or assisting to facilitate a consultation process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing and/or supervising any group meeting. This can include non-tourism related activities such as involvement with community sporting groups, local service clubs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responding to and managing conflict and challenging situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are able to identify potential conflict situations and take appropriate steps to avoid and/or minimise the same.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have the skills to manage conflict within a group in a professional and calm manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have a working understanding of industry and workplace policies on managing disruptive behaviour of individuals. This can include abusive behaviour, drunk and disorderly behaviour, racist and unethical behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.7 Develop and Deliver Tour Activities

This unit is closely related to “Prepare and Present Tour Commentaries” but with a greater focus on the logistical aspects of developing and delivering a tour activity.

PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITY

When planning your activity you ensure that:

Your activity adheres to the conditions of relevant regulations, licenses and Codes of Practice and satisfy any other legal obligations, including adherence to local, state and federal statutory regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have the necessary insurance cover for conducting the activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have gained all the necessary permits, licenses and other permissions before beginning your activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You ensure that all your equipment, gear and vehicles are in good and safe working order.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operations are only undertaken in locations where nature tourism and ecotourism is an appropriate use and impacts are minimised.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have a contingency plan in place and know how to implement the same.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your itinerary is appropriate to the tour environment and participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>

ABILITY TO STRUCTURE AN ACTIVITY

You ensure you have a structure to your tour activities so that they have a beginning, middle and end.	<input type="checkbox"/>
When appropriate you adapt your activity in response to changes in environmental conditions, in participant interests, needs and behaviours.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You provide a clear start and end to your activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have prepared activity plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>

DELIVER AN ACTIVITY

Able to problem solve typical issues and problems that might typically arise during an activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjust tour itineraries based on changing circumstances.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use interpretive techniques to enrich the learning, enjoyment and experiential opportunities for participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVALUATING AN ACTIVITY

You have procedures in place to evaluate activities as soon as possible after their completion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have customer feedback forms and actively use these as part of your operation.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.8 Knowledge of Subject Matter Relevant to Tour Activity

DEMONSTRATED RESEARCH SKILLS

Effective research skills are essential in keeping your knowledge up to date and are an important element of delivering tour experiences. Researching requires accessing different sources of information such as magazines, journal, internet, books, films, documentaries and cable television.

You have developed a list of reference books.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are a member of relevant organisations and special interest groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are a member of a local and/or regional library.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have completed a research project as part of a recognised qualification and/or for your own interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You use a variety of sources of information when researching subjects e.g. internet, journals, other people, oral histories, books, magazines, newspapers, TV.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You use a filing system for keeping your research.	<input type="checkbox"/>

KNOWLEDGE OF THE REGION IN WHICH THE ACTIVITY IS BEING CONDUCTED

You are involved with various activities in the region.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have completed relevant induction courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have developed a network of contacts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have developed a strong understanding of the typical questions asked about the region and have developed a list of the most appropriate responses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where you are not familiar with the region in which the activity is to be conducted you undertake relevant research to increase your knowledge and understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF AUSTRALIA

You maintain a research portfolio of general topics of Australiana.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are involved with special interest groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have completed a relevant qualification with units focusing on Australiana-based information.	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On-site verification activity

Part of your on-site verification will include assessing your ability to provide information that is well researched, accurate and appropriate for the activity participants.

Complete the following activity:

Select a topic that is relevant to your workplace and that you could use in your commentary. Prepare a one-page sheet highlighting the key areas of this topic that you could use within a commentary and how you could research the same.

For example, if you do a number of activities around coastal areas you might choose geology as a topic. Some of the key areas within this topic that you could use within your commentary include: types of geology found within particular areas, how to identify different types of rock types, how rock type affects the shape of the landscape and how rock type affects the type of overlying vegetation.

You might source these key areas by using a geology map and identify where you would obtain such a map, using scientific journals from university libraries and/or from the net, use journals and information from special interest societies such as Geological Society, Society of Australian Plants. Please include this with your application.

Please provide a short response to each of the following questions:

How do you keep your knowledge up to date?

How do you file the information you have researched and collated?

1.9 Prepare and Present Tour Commentaries

PREPARE TOUR COMMENTARIES

When preparing tour commentaries you undertake the following:

Gain as much information as possible about your customer and incorporate this into your activity planning e.g. language, abilities, interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise your information so as to best meet the needs, interests and other requirements of your group.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise your information and activities to tell the story of place.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure you have all the relevant resources to support your commentary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seek to maximise the experience and learning of your participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have a contingency plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>

ABILITY TO INCORPORATE A MESSAGE AND THEME INTO A COMMENTARY

You focus your commentary on key messages.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have a central theme and thread to your commentary.	<input type="checkbox"/>

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

You have experience in delivering presentations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You answer questions in an appropriate manner and if appropriate you ensure that all members of your group can hear both the question and your response.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You present yourself in a professional manner wearing clothing that is appropriate and promotes a professional appearance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You deliver your commentary in a manner that is most appropriate to the group which might include adjusting your delivery as needed to ensure it remains appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA SPECIFIC COMPETENCY SETS

2.1 Plan and Implement Minimal Impact Principles

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program promotes and is committed to implementing minimal impact principles and practices. All activities associated with the tour operation/activity are to implement and promote minimal impact procedures and principles. Minimising of negative impacts relates to both the social and natural environments in which tours take place.

ACTIVITY WILL ADOPT MINIMAL IMPACT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES:

You have an understanding of minimal impact principles and practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You ensure the group size is appropriate to the type of activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have a working knowledge and understanding of relevant regulations and adhere to the same.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You demonstrate appropriate behaviour and are a role model for customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>

MINIMISING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

You have a "carry in - carry out" policy for all litter and waste (including food scraps). This also applies to human waste when working in remote and/or fragile areas. In environments that inhibit biological breakdown of waste (e.g. alpine and arid environments) waste such as toilet paper is not buried but carried out.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You adhere to specific detailed codes of practice that have been developed by a statutory body or a group of operators for a specific environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You conduct your activities in locations specifically recognised as appropriate by the area's management plan and/or the product meets site-specific requirements nominated by the protected area manager.	<input type="checkbox"/>
To reduce weed and disease dispersal, you ensure that you have clean boots before entering areas of high conservation significance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fuel stoves are used for all cooking.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimal impact codes are provided to customers in pre-tour information.	<input type="checkbox"/>

MINIMISING IMPACTS IN REMOTE AREAS

You actively avoid areas of high conservation value when setting new campsites in areas where it is not possible and/or feasible to use existing campsites.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You carry out washing activities at least 100 metres away from the nearest water body so that no soaps, detergents or toothpaste enter the water.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You actively discourage the use of soaps, detergents and toothpaste in natural areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting of campfires is actively discouraged, and the negative environmental impacts of campfires are explained to customers (e.g. risk of wildfire, scarring of campsites, erosion and trampled vegetation around campfire sites and environmental damage through collection of firewood).	<input type="checkbox"/>

TOILETING IN REMOTE AREAS

In situations where toilets are not available waste is to be buried in a hole at least 15cm deep, and at least 100 meters away from water bodies or campsites.	<input type="checkbox"/>
In environments that inhibit biological breakdown of waste (e.g. alpine and arid environments) waste such as toilet paper is not buried but carried out and you plan for the carry out of such waste.	<input type="checkbox"/>

LIAISING WITH RELEVANT AUTHORITIES AND AREA MANAGERS

You maintain regular and appropriate contact with natural area managers to ensure you have updated information on the environmental conditions in the area of operation (e.g. in the wet season more regular contact is necessary than in the dry).	<input type="checkbox"/>
You liaise and seek the advice of natural area managers when determining routes and acceptable levels of use acceptable in natural areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>

MINIMISING IMPACTS ON WILDLIFE

Interactions with wildlife are often associated with ecotourism based activities. Wildlife can include:

- Birds such as with bird watching;
- Nocturnal wildlife which are the focus for night walks and campfire nights;
- Marine animals – i.e. whales, dolphins, seals, sharks, whale sharks, rays, dugongs, turtles, etc.

As part of your tour operations you aim to minimise impacts and disturbance to wildlife by:

Varying routes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively discouraging the feeding of wildlife in their natural habitat.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engaging interpretive activities to explain and interpret the negative consequences of feeding wildlife.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modifying the viewing of wildlife during sensitive times of the year such as breeding/nesting seasons and/or for key and/or endangered species.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having activities which involve repeated interactions with wildlife (e.g. spotlighting, whale and penguin watching) assessed by the relevant government nature conservation agency.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing guests with pre-tour information on recommended clothing colours to reduce impact on wildlife.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively encouraging people to keep an appropriate distance from animals unless it is part of the activity e.g. reptile presentation. And only then keeping the health, state and interests of the animal as the first priority.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Following accepted codes of practice and/or legal requirements for identified/relevant animal groups e.g. whale watching.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not involving deliberate and regular intrusion into wildlife habitat that causes significant disruption to wildlife behaviour. The latter include disruptions to foraging, territorial or breeding patterns e.g. nesting bird sites and breeding areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting and practicing appropriate minimal approach distances to animal breeding sites (e.g. bird nests, seal breeding colonies).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carrying out activities in accordance with guidelines issued by the relevant government nature conservation agency. Especially for repeated activities such as spotlighting, whale watching, penguin parades.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not cornering, chasing or provoking wildlife and/or enticing wildlife into performing particular behaviours (e.g. flying, gliding, defensive displays).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring that your operation does not involve alterations to habitat that will result in detrimental changes to the wildlife population dynamics (e.g. trampling of vegetation, removal of nest trees, wetland drainage, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.3 Ensuring Activities are Sustainable and Generate Social and Environmental Benefits

ECOGUIDE IS COMMITTED TO ECO-EFFICIENT RESOURCE USE

You actively seek ways to ensure resources used within your activity are eco-efficient.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You play a part in reducing energy, resource use and waste - causing less pollution and contributing to more environmentally sustainable practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>

MAXIMISING THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BENEFITS OF ACTIVITIES

Activities, behaviour and actions that could be undertaken include:

Demonstrating and promoting an understanding of and respect toward local cultures and environments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conveying to visitors the value of local cultures and promoting appreciation for local traditions and environments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explaining what constitutes acceptable behaviour in the areas being visited.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leading by example, using positive reinforcement and taking corrective actions where necessary, to gain visitor compliance with suggested practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking to purchase appropriate consumables, equipment and services from the community in which they operate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collection of rubbish such plastic bags, fishing line and litter – provided these are undertaken within OHS guidelines. The latter can include ensuring that people have adequate and appropriate protection such as gloves, eye glasses, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular contact with the natural area manager is maintained to provide feedback on track conditions, appropriate routes and levels of use.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guides and industry colleagues share information on sensitive or impacted environmental conditions and on changed conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting environmental damage and pollution to the relevant authorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tracks, trails, roads, watercraft routes and/or regularly used mooring locations are actively rehabilitated or maintained (e.g. banks revegetated, areas closed for rehabilitation).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimal impact practices are actively promoted to all customers before and during the tour (e.g. interpretive commentary, group discussions, brochures and pre-tour information address this issue).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remedial works such as assisting water runoff from roads or revegetating closed tracks are undertaken.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in species monitoring programs, for example with government, university or industry research bodies and/or other involvement in scientific research.	<input type="checkbox"/>

RESPECTS AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, SEEKS TO BUILD GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL PEOPLE, COLLEAGUES, CUSTOMERS AND VISITORS

You can demonstrate respect toward other people and seek to build good relationships through practicing such behaviour as:

Justice – fairness and good faith in dealings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competence – the delivery of services as promised.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utility - in practical terms, a determination to plan and deliver tours with maximum benefits for all concerned.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expecting and respecting differences in ability, ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs and personal values, including giving consideration to the space and privacy needs of all parties.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allowing adequate time for observation and reflection by customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMITTED TO PROFESSIONAL AND HONEST DEALINGS WITH CUSTOMERS AND INDUSTRY COLLEAGUES

You inform customers of any relevant terms and conditions regarding tour operations. This includes such items as payment and any cancellation conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You manage all customer concerns and enquiries fairly, amicably and professionally	<input type="checkbox"/>
You present goods and services in the best possible way.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You exercise all reasonable care to address customers’ safety and comfort.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where possible and relevant you inform customers of pertinent facts concerning other tours, transportation, accommodation or other tourist services available to our customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You adhere to industry codes of practice where they apply.	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to any relevant evidence that would support your competence in this unit – this can include:

- Reports that demonstrate regular monitoring of an environment.
- Letters and correspondence between yourself and an appropriate authority which focus on issues of sustainability and generating social and environmental benefit from activities.
- Involvement in remedial works and activities.
- Involvement in scientific research projects and/or wildlife monitoring projects.

2.2 Committed to Ongoing Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is an essential criteria for an EcoGuide to ensure that the Guide remains up to date with industry practices, standards and relevant codes.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

You endeavour to attend workshops organised either within your own workplace and/or through industry associations. This can include conferences such as Ecotourism Australia's conference.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You take an active interest in the activities of working groups such as industry forums, industry working parties, and industry networking sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>

RELATED HOBBIES AND ACTIVITIES

Some of your hobbies and/or spare time activities relate to your work. This does not necessarily mean that you are running tours in your spare time but can include your involvement in community group activities such as tree planting and bush regeneration projects, storytelling at local libraries, sourcing resource material for local schools, taking part in bird watching activities within a local bush reserve or even learning to cook such that the latter skills could be used to enrich the culinary experience of visitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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ACCREDITATION

Are you already accredited under one of the ATAA endorsed programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you already have GOA accreditation?	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to any relevant evidence that would support your competence in this unit. This can include:

<p>Membership of special interest associations and/or related industry associations</p> <p>For example, membership of the Australian Speleological Federation if you conduct cave tours, Royal Zoological Society if you conduct wildlife based tours.</p> <p>Please state: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2.3 Ensuring Activities Respect Aboriginal Culture and Follow Appropriate Practices Regarding Sharing Information on Aboriginal Culture

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal culture is respected and represented through appropriate practices and protocols.

Whilst Guides can have all the skills and abilities to be effective in leading tour groups, it is imperative that they also adhere to a set of ethics and values that promote 'best practice' within the ecotourism sector and wider tourism industry.

ACTIVITY WILL CONSULT WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

You have a working knowledge of how to liaise with Aboriginal communities in areas where you are conducting activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You seek permission and consult with local Aboriginal people as to the appropriate name for Country and name of clan/nation/tribe/language group for that country.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You seek permission to include this information in an acknowledgement to Country when starting your activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You do not share information on Aboriginal culture without the permission of relevant Aboriginal individuals/communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You respect the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interpret for their own country but not for any other community's country, unless they have been given permission. All people should respect and understand this.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You understand the role of Elders and the appropriate manner in which consultation is to involve these people.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You acknowledge that it is inappropriate to consult with one individual and/or a small group, so ensure that any consultation involves Elders and an as large a number of individuals as they nominate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You acknowledge that you will seek permission from Aboriginal communities even where there might be community politics and even division occurring.	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. COMMITMENT TO ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA CODE OF PRACTICE

All guides are required to sign a Code of Practice that has been generated by drawing on material provided by the United Nations Environment Program and other existing codes of practice. This code was endorsed through extensive consultation with guides, operators and protected area managers.

In becoming signatories to the code, guides are clearly declaring their intent to provide high quality nature and ecotourism experiences in a safe, culturally sensitive and an environmentally sustainable manner.

The Certified Nature or Ecotour Guide:

- **Adopts best practice standards in relation to safety, interpretation, customer service, product promotion and their own leadership and presentation**
- **Is committed to implementing minimal impact principles and practices**
- **Endeavours to maximise the economic, social, cultural and experiential benefits of the tours they conduct**
- **Is committed to eco-efficient resource use**
- **Respects and, where appropriate, seeks to build good relationships with local people, colleagues, customers and any other visitors to an area**
- **Is committed to ongoing professional development**
- **Is committed to professional and honest dealings with customers and industry colleagues**

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Through the Code of Practice, the EcoGuide Australia Program seeks to encourage guides' commitment to the long-term viability of the natural and cultural resources on which nature and ecotourism depends.

You will be able to find more information on accepted industry best practice on minimal impact for a range of environments and activities plus details on how to be eco-efficient in the ECOCertification Manual (2007).

I, _____ agree to abide by the above Code of Practice in all my dealings
(name)

with visitors and industry colleagues and in the way I develop and manage my tour activities.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

4. 'GUIDES OF AUSTRALIA' TOUR GUIDES CODE OF PRACTICE



The following is compulsory to complete your Guides of Australia Accreditation.

This Code of Guiding Practice outlines the responsibilities and standards of behaviour expected of Tour Guides working within Australia.

1. To provide a professional service to visitors professional in care and commitment, and professional in providing an objective understanding of the place visited - free from prejudice or propaganda.
2. To ensure that every effort is made to present true and accurate facts and ensure that a clear distinction is made between this truth and stories, legends, traditions, or opinions.
3. To act honestly, fairly and professionally in all dealings with all those who engage the services of guides and with colleagues working in all aspects of tourism.
4. Ensure that guided groups treat with respect the natural, cultural and heritage environments, and minimise impacts on these at all times.
5. As representatives of Australia, to welcome visitors and act in such a way as to bring credit to the country and promote it as a tourist destination.
6. Regularly update and upgrade my guiding skills and knowledge through training and professional development activities.
7. Declare to customers any relevant personal commercial interests, including commissions, and never force visitor purchases or solicit tips.
8. Be mindful at all times of duty of care and other health and safety issues.
9. Provide all goods and services as presented in the tour itinerary and promotional material.
10. Abide by all national, state or territory legislation governing the operation and conduct of tours, tour operators and tour guides.

I agree to Abide to the above Tour Guides Code of Practice:

I will demonstrate the Australian Tour Guides' Code of Guiding Practice in my own actions and encourage its implementation across the industry through my interactions with tourism businesses, organisations and other Tour Guides.

Name: _____

Date: _____

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO INCLUDE WITH YOUR APPLICATION

CURRENT CURRICULUM VITAE

Ensure that you include an estimate of the equivalent number of hours in which you have been working as a Guide.

You will also need to attach a copy of your current first aid certificate.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO GUIDES OF AUSTRALIA ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS



The Guides of Australia Accreditation requires you to demonstrate the following experience in working as a Tour Guide:

- 12 months experience as a Tour Guide (or full time equivalent of 200 days) OR
- 6 months experience plus a Certificate III in Tourism (Guiding) or equivalent as issued by a Registered Training Organisation
- Hold current CPR

Please provide this evidence when submitting your curriculum vitae.

6. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once you have completed the application workbook and supporting documentation, please mail it to:

Team Leader – EcoGuide Program
Ecotourism Australia
GPO Box 268
BRISBANE QLD 4001
Ph: (07) 3229 5550
Fax: (07) 3229 5255
Email: info@ecotourism.org.au

Once you have submitted your application form it will be assessed by an EcoGuide Australia Assessor. If successful you will gain Provisional EcoGuide Australia Certification with full Certification pending successful completion of an on-site verification.

Ecotourism Australia will provide you with the necessary assistance throughout the application process.

7. ON-SITE VERIFICATION

Ecotourism Australia will provide you with additional information relating to this part of your assessment once you have attained provisional certification.

Your on-site verification will require you to demonstrate your competency in:

- Leading and managing a tour group
- Specific Guide related skills such as group management, presentation skills and interpretation techniques
- Knowledge of relevant subject areas.

You will be required to complete an Activity Plan before you undertake your on-site verification. This activity will demonstrate your ability to plan and structure an activity.

8. APPEALS

If you are not happy with the process or result, and think you have been unfairly dealt with, you can appeal the decision. You should lodge a formal appeal to the EcoGuide Australia Committee within 14 days of receiving the final results of the assessment and ask them to investigate the situation. The Committee may co-opt additional independent expertise to investigate your appeal. They may:

- Uphold your appeal
- Reject your appeal
- Organise a new assessment for you.

You can have a workmate, a supervisor, or any other person you choose to assist you with your appeal. The EcoGuide Australia Committee is keen to solve any problems with assessments and improve the system for future candidates, so your concerns will be treated seriously and fairly. If you are still unhappy, you can appeal to the State Training Authority who will investigate the matter. For more information, contact Ecotourism Australia.

Guides of Australia Accreditation

Appeals relating to the Guides of Australia Accreditation Program are to be sent in writing to Guiding Organisations of Australia within 14 days of the decision or event.

An independent evaluator will be assigned to liaise with you and your EcoGuide Australia Assessor.



Guiding Organisations Australia encourages you to provide any feedback which can improve the accreditation process.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1 New Generation EcoGuide Australia Certification Program

Our sincere thanks is extended to John Pastorelli who tirelessly developed and wrote the new EcoGuide Program based upon new concepts and a framework proposed by Stephen Pahl.

Significant support was also put into the development of the new program by Sabrina Kaman and Christine Koblun, both working as interns from Holland between January and July 2007. Christine also developed the EcoGuide Marketing Plan in support of the new EcoGuide Program.

9.2 Original EcoGuide Australia Certification Program

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program was originally developed with the aid of seed funding from a National Tourism Development Program Grant from the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources to Ecotourism Australia.

Additional cash support was provided by Ecotourism Australia. Major in-kind support was provided by Ecotourism Australia, Monash University and NRE Victoria.

The following working party provided input into the development of the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program Version II (2003):

Project Team: Stephen Pahl, Stuart Lennox, Jean-Pierre Issaverdis, John Pastorelli, Roxane Shadbolt.

Special thanks also go to those who provided input into the original development of the EcoGuide Australia Program. The Project Team, Steering Committee, Guides, Assessors and Organisations involved included:

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10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Additional information relating to your application for EcoGuide Australia Certification

Appendix 2 - National Qualifications Framework

Appendix 3 - Example of Evidence

Appendix 4 - Relationship of EcoGuide Australia to other Accreditation Programs

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL NOTES TO ASSIST WITH YOUR APPLICATION FOR ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA CERTIFICATION

Application form

The following notes are provided to assist you with completing your application form. This application form would have been sent out with this manual. If you do not have an application form, contact the Ecotourism Australia Office or go to the website. It is recommended that once you complete this form you keep a copy for your records.

The application form has been bound to help make it easier for you to follow and it contains all required elements.

The application form will require you to:

- Provide personal details
- Provide contact details for 2 referees
- Complete a self-assessment process
- Read through and agree to commit to the EcoGuide Australia Code of Practice
- Provide an up to date curriculum vitae including details of first aid certificate
- Submit payment together with completed application form

Personal Details

The application form has space for you to include your personal details.

Contact details for 2 referees

You will need to provide contact details for 2 referee's who:

- Must have a working knowledge of you and your guiding experience;
- Be able to endorse your commitment and experience to ecotourism principles.

Examples of possible referees:

- Land managers
- Tour operators
- Industry specialists
- Staff from a relevant government agencies – e.g. tourism industry, land management

Your referees will be asked to provide information that includes:

- General comments on your work performance as a nature/ecotour guide
- Examples of how you incorporate minimal impact principles into your work
- Your ability to communicate with visitors and colleagues within a range of workplace situations and from a variety of cultural backgrounds
- Your ability to provide high quality customer service
- How you respond in difficult situations e.g. customer complaints, conflict or emergencies
- Their relationship as a referee (employer, supervisor, fellow guide, colleague)

POSSIBLE SCRIPT FOR USE WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR REFEREE

I am applying for certification through the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program. This will allow me to be identified and recognised as a guide who can provide quality nature and ecotourism experiences in a safe, culturally sensitive and environmentally sustainable manner. It would also assist recognise my competence against the national qualifications framework.

To become certified I need to go through a progressive assessment process. Part of this process involves Ecotourism Australia contacting a referee to discuss and assess my performance as an EcoGuide.

I am asking you to be a referee as I believe you have direct experience and knowledge of my work and in a position to provide comments on my performance. As part of the assessment process I will be required to demonstrate my skills, knowledge, attitudes and actions through a negotiable portfolio of evidence that does include a compulsory on-site verification in a latter step of the program.

Self-Assessment process

Additional notes on this process have been included in the main body of the application form.

This self-assessment process section of your application form will be assessed by an EcoGuide Australia Assessor.

Your EcoGuide Australia Assessors have been specially trained in collecting and assessing required evidence for nature and ecotour guide competencies. All our assessors meet the national standards for Assessors (i.e. have a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, ACCESS and/or equivalent) and are Certified EcoGuides (that is, they have been through this Assessment process themselves).

Assessors are required to have:

- Extensive tourism industry experience, especially in the role of guiding in a natural area over a variety of client types and locations
- High levels of skill in the units they are assessing (or co-opt expertise)
- Supervisory experience
- A training and assessment qualification
- Three written references from people involved in the tourism industry (preferably with at least one reference from an existing EcoGuide Australia Assessor)
- Attended and participated in an EcoGuide Australia assessment workshop
- A commitment to the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program.

The EcoGuide Program is committed to developing more effective and comprehensive State and Territory representation. Persons who can fulfil the majority of the criteria required of Assessors are encouraged to apply. Further details on how to become an Assessor and location of assessment workshops and Assessor induction courses are available from Ecotourism Australia.

Current Curriculum Vitae

You will need to attach a current curriculum vitae which as a minimum will need to include the following information:

EDUCATION

- Highlighting relevant tourism or guiding qualifications

WORK HISTORY

- For each position held you should include information regarding:
 - Name of Company:
 - Dates of service:
 - Address and contact details:
 - Position Held:
 - Main Duties (*list major duties- i.e. driver, meets and greets, campsite preparation, safety officer*)

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Supporting documentation that you could submit as part of your portfolio of evidence should be listed. You are welcome to submit additional information that you feel is relevant to your application for EcoGuide Australia Certification.

LOG BOOKS AND WORK RECORDS

We encourage Guides to record at least basic elements of their work experience and history in order to be able to prove currency and experience in the industry. The exact details of the logbook at the specific layout are very much up to the individual candidate. However, we suggest you include:

- Operation/Employer- name of operator plus contact details
- Location - e.g. actual location and type/s of environment you are working in (e.g. Wet Tropics rainforest, Mulga scrub)
- Guiding activities undertaken – driver/guide, A.V. shows, snorkelling tours etc. with brief description of tour and your audience type.
- Duties/ Role – list your major duties (this will help you with your resume at later dates)
- Dates – duration of tour and/or employment

We suggest you also get your employer or immediate supervisor to sign the relevant entries. For example:

- Operation/employer contact details
- Location Guiding activities undertaken
- Duties/Role Dates Employers
- Signature

Commitment to a Code of Practice

The code of practice requires you to commit to a set of agreed behaviours and standards that demonstrate 'best practice'.

Provisional Certification

Once you have been successfully assessed within both the generic guiding competencies and specific EcoGuide competencies you will receive provisional Certification.

You can hold a provisional certification for a maximum period of 12 months, during which time you will need to complete an on-site verification to gain full certification.

On-Site Verification

Once you have received Provisional Certification you will be required to complete an on-site verification. This can be undertaken in a variety of ways and can include:

- Part of an organised Ecotourism event such as a conference or workshop
- Organising with Ecotourism Australia to organise an individual on-site verification
- Organising with Ecotourism Australia to organise an assessment for yourself and a group of industry colleagues

Full EcoGuide Australia Certification

Once you have successfully completed your on-site verification you will receive your full EcoGuide Australia Certification.

APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

During the self assessment section of your application form you are asked to provide information that would support your competency in certain units.

Several examples of evidence are included with the application form and these are expanded on below.

Records

- In-house training records
- Visitor book comments or letters of appreciation
- Interpretive activity plans
- Advertising brochures
- Supervisors reports/ progress reviews
- Critical incident reports
- Maintenance logs
- Logbook of hours
- Awards & Prizes
- Attendance at conferences, seminars, training courses
- Resume
- Other

Products

- Self-guide brochures
- Photos of interpretive displays
- Photos of touch table
- Video or other A.V. presentations
- Video or other evidence of theatrical performances
- Photos of interpretive signage

Qualifications / courses

- Formal qualifications in tour guiding or tourism/ ecotourism related courses
- Industry-based qualification such as: Commercial bus/boat/plane licence/accreditation; Radio license; Aussie host; Activity-related instructional tickets

Testimonials

- Letters of appreciation from clients, visitors
- Letters of support from stakeholders, colleagues
- Employers letter of reference
- Referee reports
- Peer or client reviews

- **Presentations/ Projects**
- Skits, slideshow or other A.V. presentation
- Specified projects (assessors discretion)

Other

When you are including evidence in support of your application for EcoGuide Australia Certification you can also include evidence from work and/or activities beyond the guiding industry.

For example, if you were involved in amateur theatre this would count as evidence within the unit “Prepare and Present Tour Commentaries and Activities” as you would have been involved in public speaking, in delivering presentations to a group of people and working to a ‘script’ (commentary).

Likewise if you coach a sporting team every week this would demonstrate competency in group management and leadership which could be included as evidence within the competency unit.

APPENDIX 3

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program has based its Guiding competencies on the competencies for the Certificate III and Certificate IV in Tourism (Guiding) qualifications. This is a nationally recognised qualification within what is called the National Qualification Framework. More information on this framework can be obtained by visiting www.ntis.gov.au. These qualifications are used as they are generic throughout Australia and form the career pathway for a significant number of people choosing a guiding career.

Most qualifications with this framework have a set of what are called competency units. To gain the qualification you have to complete a nominated set of competency units. This number of units is generally made up of both core and elective units. The core units are the compulsory units you have to complete to be eligible to gain the qualification whereas the electives units are those units that you can choose.

For example, the Certificate III in Tourism (Guiding) has 9 compulsory (or core) units and 4 elective units, the Certificate IV in Tourism (Guiding) has 10 core units with 7 electives and the Certificate IV in Tourism (Natural and Cultural Heritage) has 14 core with 4 electives.

The 9 core units (and their national codes) of the CERTIFICATE III IN TOURISM (GUIDING) qualification are:

THHCOR01B	Work with colleagues & customers
THHCOR02B	Work in a socially diverse environment
THHCOR03B	Follow health, safety and security procedures
THTTCO01B	Develop and update tourism industry knowledge
THTFTG01B	Work as a guide
THTFTG06B	Prepare and present tour commentaries or activities
THTFTG05B	Lead tour groups
THHGHS03B	Provide first aid
THTFTG03B	Develop and maintain the general knowledge required by Guides

It so happens that these same 9 core units are also core units for the other two qualifications mentioned above – i.e.

- Certificate IV in Tourism (Guiding)
- Certificate IV in Tourism (Natural and Cultural Heritage)

How is it related to the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program?

Within Step 3 of the Certification pathway you need to demonstrate your competency in two broad areas:

- Generic guiding competency sets
- EcoGuide Australia specific competency sets

The first of these (i.e. the generic guiding competency) is based on the 9 core units of the Certificate III and Certificate IV qualifications. If you hold either of these qualifications you are exempt from needing to complete the Generic Guiding competency set.

Qualifications from other tertiary education providers such as universities can also be credited toward the program. You will need to discuss this with either Ecotourism Australia and/or your Assessor who will need to sight your transcript to correlate your units of study within this program and the core competency units identified above.

Mapping of EcoGuide Australia assessment against the National Qualifications Framework competencies

(Competency units in italics are not core units for the Certificate III qualifications included above.)

GENERIC GUIDING COMPETENCY SETS

Competency set relating to EcoGuide Australia Application	Relates to and is based on following national competency standard
Knowledge of the Tourism Industry	THTTCO01B Develop and update tourism industry knowledge
Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of a Guide and in particular an EcoGuide	THTFTG01B Work as a guide THHCOR02B Work in a socially diverse environment
Communication Skills	THHCOR01B Work with colleagues and customers THTFTG06B Prepare and present tour commentaries or activities THTFTG01B Work as a guide THHCOR02B Work in a socially diverse environment
Customer Service	THHCOR01B Work with colleagues and customers THHCOR02B Work in a socially diverse environment
Safety, OHS and Risk Management	THHCOR03B Follow health, safety and security procedures THHGHS03B Provide first aid
Group Management	THTFTG05B Lead tour groups THHCOR01B Work with colleagues & customers
Develop and deliver tour activities	THTFTG05B Lead tour groups THHCOR01B Work with colleagues & customers THTFTG06B Prepare and present tour commentaries or activities <i>THHPPD05B Plan and develop interpretive activities</i> <i>THTFTG04B Co-ordinate and operate a tour</i>
Knowledge of subject matter relevant	THTFTG03B Develop and maintain the general knowledge



to tour activity	<p>required by Guides</p> <p>THTFTG12A Prepare specialised interpretive content (flora, fauna and landscape)</p> <p>THTFTG13A Prepare specialised interpretive content (marine environments)</p> <p>THTFTG14A Prepare specialised interpretive content (cultural and heritage environments)</p>
Prepare and present tour commentaries	<p>THTFTG06B Prepare and present tour commentaries or activities</p> <p>THTFTG12A Prepare specialised interpretive content (flora, fauna and landscape)</p> <p>THTFTG13A Prepare specialised interpretive content (marine environments)</p> <p>THTFTG14A Prepare specialised interpretive content (cultural and heritage environments)</p>

ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA SPECIFIC COMPETENCY SETS

Plan and Implement Minimal Impact Principles	<p><i>THTPPD04B Plan and implement minimal impact operations</i></p> <p><i>THTPPD06B Plan and develop ecologically sustainable tourism operations</i></p> <p><i>THTPPD07B Plan and develop culturally appropriate tourism operations</i></p>
Ensuring activities are sustainable and generate social and environmental benefits	<p><i>THTPPD06B Plan and develop ecologically sustainable tourism operations</i></p> <p><i>THTPPD07B Plan and develop culturally appropriate tourism operations</i></p>
Committed to ongoing professional development	THTFTG01B Work as a guide
Individual ethics and values	

APPENDIX 4

RELATIONSHIP OF ECOGUIDE AUSTRALIA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM TO OTHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program is for individuals, not businesses.

It has links to the following Certification and Qualifications Programs



ECO Certification Program (ECO III - 2003)

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program complements and supports the ECO Certification Program that certifies nature and ecotourism products. These two programs are working in tandem to provide standards for nature and ecotourism that ensure quality and continual improvement in the Australian industry.

The ECO Certification Program requires an ecotourism product to have their guides EcoGuide Australia Certified, or demonstrate they meet EcoGuide Australia Certification Program standards for any operation conducted in a protected area.

National Qualifications Framework

The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program can also provide a pathway to nationally recognised qualifications which is one of the benefits for candidates as discussed on pages 6 to 10. This would need to be undertaken in association and/or cooperation with a relevant registered training organisation, including relevant TAFE colleges. The EcoGuide Australia Certification Program is based on the Certificate III in Tourism (Guiding) qualification as discussed in Appendix 3.

For further details, contact Tourism Training Australia, the Australian National Training Authority, or Guiding Organisations Australia.

Guiding Organisations Australia

Guides of Australia was created to be a national tour guide accreditation suitable for all tour guides in all sectors of the tourism industry. It links related training and accreditation programs to provide the Australian tourism industry with a national standard for tour guides.

For further information visit their website at www.goa.org.au.

If you have received certification through the Guiding Organisations Australia program then will be eligible for exemption when applying for EcoGuide Australia Accreditation. This exemption applies to the Generic Guiding competencies.

Likewise if you receive certification through the EcoGuide Australia Certification Program you will be entitled to partial exemption when applying for Tour Guide Accreditation through the GOA Accreditation Framework.

Respecting Our Culture (ROC) Program

The Respecting our Culture (ROC) Tourism Development Program is an initiative of Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA) and endorses those tourism businesses that deliver Indigenous visitor experiences. The ROC Program encourages the tourism industry to operate in ways that respect and reinforce Indigenous cultural heritage and the living cultures of Indigenous communities. ROC businesses are committed to protecting cultural authenticity and integrity, developing sound business practices, having sustainable environmental management systems in place and acknowledge and support Indigenous peoples' spiritual connection to the land and water.

The ROC Program has been approved as a national tourism accreditation program by the Australian Tourism Accreditation Association (ATAA).

Accreditation through the 'Respecting Our Culture' program will provide evidence to assist you when applying for EcoGuide Australia Certification Accreditation. This will be discussed with your Assessor once you begin Step 2 of the application process.

For more information on Aboriginal Tourism Australia and the ROC Program, contact: PO Box 18315, Collins Street East, Melbourne, VIC, Australia, 8003. Telephone: (03) 9653 3811
email: ata@aboriginaltourism.com.au or admin@rocprogram.com
website: www.aboriginaltourism.com.au or www.rocprogram.com

ATAA Endorsed – Tourism Accreditation Program

There are a number of States and Territories that have an existing business-based Tourism Accreditation Program in place. These programs have been endorsed as either state or national tourism accreditation programs by the Australian Tourism Accreditation Association (ATAA).

ATAA endorsed programs include:

- Respecting Our Culture (ROC) Program
- Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (Vic)
- National Tourism Accreditation Program (WA, NT, SA, Tas, ACT)
- National Accreditation Program for Caravan Parks
- Camping with Confidence
- Museums Accreditation Program

Museums Accreditation Program

Whilst the Museums Accreditation Program focuses on an environment that is primarily outside that of an EcoGuide, there are several aspects which are complementary and which work toward the same practices and outcomes. For more information contact organisations such as Museums Australia and Museums Galleries NSW.