

**Ecotourism  
Australia  
Limited**



*Annual Report*

*2011/2012*



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## Vision

*To inspire environmentally sustainable  
and culturally responsible tourism*

### 2012 Board of Directors



**Cameron Kerr**  
Chair



**Lisha Mulqueeny**  
Deputy Chair



**Tony Charters**



**Michael Collins**



**Andrew Daff**



**Prof. Ross Dowling**



**Dr. Claire Ellis**



**Angela Kemp**



**Shelley Lavender**



**Duncan MacKenzie**



**Rick Murray**

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## Chair's Report 2011/12



**Cameron Kerr**  
Chair, Ecotourism  
Australia

It is with great pleasure that I present my first report as Chair of Ecotourism Australia.

When I was elected as Chair by the Ecotourism Australia Board in November last year, I was extremely aware of the ongoing hardship facing the tourism industry, particularly those operating in remote and regional Australia. The Board of Ecotourism Australia discussed the potential impacts of this hardship on our operators and Ecotourism Australia whose support base is largely from remote and regional tourism operators. Ecotourism Australia has continued to work hard to support operators by introducing payment options to assist with cash flow, and improved communication and mentoring through the certification process.

Despite the difficult operating conditions, we have seen continued growth in our core certification product, ECO Certification and an improved financial position for Ecotourism Australia. This is a clear indication that the ecotourism industry is maturing and recognition that our long term growth and sustainability will be built on delivering quality products with internationally recognised accreditation.

### Key Achievements

Over the past year, there have been a number of significant achievements:

- Global Sustainable Tourism Council recognition: Ecotourism Australia is one of only 10 organisations world wide (and the only one in Australia) to be recognised by the UN supported Global Sustainable Tourism Council in December 2011. This brought tangible benefits initially to accommodation carrying Ecotourism and Advanced Ecotourism Certification being added to the Travelocity and Sabre Eco-Certified Hotel Program giving them global distribution to travel agents worldwide.
- National Wildlife Corridors Advisory Group: Ecotourism Australia was proud to be invited to participate in the development of the National Wildlife Corridors Plan. This significant national policy initiative is essential in the important development of large scale, cross border landscape conservation connectivity planning to support biodiversity in the face of all manner of changes to ecosystems including climate change.





- **ECO IV Upgrade:** The importance of standing out in an increasingly crowded market has never been more evident. To ensure our accreditation system retains its status in the market, Ecotourism Australia has released the ECOIV upgrade and all ECO Certified operators are currently going through the upgrade process. While this requires some additional time upfront, it ensures that the ECO standard is at best practice and all operators carrying the symbol are operating at the highest standards possible.
- **Corporate Governance:** Over the past 18 months, the Directors of Ecotourism Australia under the guidance of a Corporate Governance Committee have been working several levels of Board evaluation and review. This is an ongoing process of continuous improvement, but we hope for our members it will give you the faith that your Board are operating effectively and efficiently on your behalf.
- **Advocacy:** Over this last year our CEO, Kym Cheatham has been tirelessly representing our sector at a wide range of government and industry forums to ensure that policy planning and decisions take into account our operator's needs.

YEAR	ECO/ROC		EcoGuide	
	Products	% Change	Guides	% Change
1-Jan-08	574		44	
1-Jan-09	710	24%	53	20%
1-Jan-10	843	19%	59	11%
1-Jan-11	988	17%	75	27%
1-Jan-12	1124	14%	98	31%
1-July-12	1171 products + 425 operators	4%	100 guides	2%
YEAR	Climate Action		Membership	
	Operators	% Change	Members	% Change
1-Jan-08	NIL		198	
1-Jan-09	17		225	14%
1-Jan-10	27	59%	248	10%
1-Jan-11	49	81%	228	-8%
1-Jan-12	56	14%	481	111%
1-July-12	54 operators	-4%	496	3%



## Management

Over the past 12 months, committees of the Ecotourism Australia Board developed work plans that have resulted in a number of substantial strategic outcomes for the organisation.

The committees are:

- **Awards Committee** chaired by Ross Dowling
- **Certification, Membership and Marketing Committee** chaired by Michael Collins
- **Conference Committee** chaired by Ross Dowling
- **Corporate Governance Committee** chaired by Shelley Lavender
- **Executive and Finance Committee** chaired by Lisha Mulqueeny
- **Policy and Advocacy Committee** chaired by Rick Murray
- **ROC Working Group** chaired by Rick Murray
- **Strategic Planning Working Group** chaired by Andrew Daff

As happens over this year we have had some changes within the Ecotourism Australia team. Particular thanks must go to Kristie Gray whose contribution over 4 years cannot be overstated. However we have been very lucky to welcome Leonie Bowles and Loretta Stellino to the team. Many of you would have had the pleasure in dealing with them and I am sure you join me in thanking them for their hard work.

Over the last year, the small permanent team have been admirably assisted by a number of volunteers and interns, who give their time and bring amazing skills to the organisation. Our thanks to them all.

At last year's Annual General Meeting, two Directors elected not to stand for re-election and it is with gratitude, I wish to publicly thank Vivienne Clare and Andy Ralph for their contribution to our organisation. Being a volunteer Director for a Not For Profit organisation can be a huge impost on time and knowledge, but both Vivienne and Andy brought great skills and passion to their roles and we thank them for that.

As a consequence, we welcomed two new Directors, Dr Claire Ellis and Andrew Daff to the Board. Both Claire and Andrew have already provided substantial contribution and I look forward to continuing to work with them.

I wish to sincerely thank all the members of the Board, who are, without exception a dedicated and engaged team of passionate professionals with the best interests of our industry at heart.

During the year, the EA Board have risen to the challenges thrust at us and have emerged as a strong and viable Board ready to face the challenges of the next 12 months.



I encourage all members (particularly our new members) to continue to be actively involved in Ecotourism Australia – it's your organisation and we rely on and very much appreciate your input and suggestions.

We have achieved a great deal this year under trying conditions and we very much look forward to new and exciting challenges in the future. Your commitment to quality by being involved with Ecotourism Australia along with our dedication to being sustainable tourism world leaders will provide long term benefits for the future growth of our sector.



**Cameron Kerr**  
Chair

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## Key Achievements 2011/12



Global Sustainable Tourism Council recognition



National Wildlife Corridors Advisory Group



ECO IV Upgrade – Operators committing to Best Practice



Corporate Governance – commitment to continuous improvement



Advocacy on behalf of members and sectors interests



20 years of Ecotourism Australia Conferences

