



## **CVA & EA Partnership – what does this mean for you?**

Ecotourism Australia has entered into a partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) to bring benefit to both our memberships. One of the key outcomes of the partnership will be for CVA to undertake Ecotourism Australia's certification audit program (except SA). This is a vast improvement to our members with CVA offices located in every State and Territory of Australia, plus many regional centres, providing a local and connected service to our geographically diverse membership. We are two organisations with common ethics and vision with a long history of working together and we see a very positive future for benefits to our members.

### **Who is CVA?**

Conservation Volunteers Australia is a like-minded organisation working towards a common goal.

Their vision: We believe in a healthy and sustainable environment, and for everyone to be involved in managing and protecting that environment.

See more at: <http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/>

### **What does this mean for me as an ECO certified operator?**

CVA will be acting on EA's behalf to undertake onsite audits. All auditing reports and corrective actions requirements/ responses will be managed centrally from the Ecotourism Australia national office.

### **How has this changed Ecotourism Australia's program?**

The standards of Ecotourism Australia's certification programs are staying the same. We will still have independent auditors. However, by working closely with CVA we will have more of an in-state presence. This process is about business improvement, coaching support and mentoring of operators who are doing the right thing by the environment and their local communities.

### **What qualifications do the auditors have?**

All CVA auditors must have a background in tourism/environmental management as well as having completed an Auditor's course.

CVA's Lead Auditor, Dr Alice Crabtree will provide overall program guidance. She has gained relevant auditor and sustainable tourism experience and qualifications. Alice, in combination with 2 sub-contracted auditors, have significant experience with the ECO Certification program. These Ecotourism Australia appointed Lead Auditors will provide training /mentoring to CVA Audit Team Members.

All CVA auditors must complete the nationally accredited course "Participate in a Quality Audit" (BSBAUD402B), which is a unit from a lead auditor's course. CVA auditors must also undergo workshop training with one of the EA Lead Auditors to be familiarised with the ECO certification standard. All CVA Audit team members must also demonstrate relevant tourism/sustainable tourism experience.

Initial audits must be conducted in tandem with an EA Lead Auditor until they are satisfied that they are competent in the audit process and familiar with the ECO Certification Standard.

The standard EA declaration of interest and confidentiality agreement must be signed to ensure that there is a commitment to impartiality and any potential conflicts are declared.

### **How does CVA contribute to park conservation?**

CVA believe that parks are special places that should be enjoyed by everyone, which is why they work in partnership with parks and sanctuaries across Australia to help protect these precious natural places, and their inhabitants.

Projects may include track construction and maintenance, interpretive signage, fencing, weed and pest control, revegetation activities and other practical actions in line with park management plans. The teams also carry out wildlife surveys and support specialised species programs such as captive breeding programs, radio tracking and species release activities.

### **How will the Audit process work?**

You will receive a phone call from your state-based CVA auditor when they are planning to conduct audits within your region. You will be notified of an audit at least 21 days prior to the audit. It will be at this time that the auditor will work out the best time with you to undergo the audit. The auditor will then visit onsite to your property or head office to ensure compliance with all aspects of your certification at the date and time arranged.

### **Do I have to do anything different?**

You do not need to do anything differently then you are doing now – keep maintaining the standards of your certification.

### **What is involved in an audit with CVA?**

You will need to have a copy of your ECO certification application as well as access to all supporting documentation indicated through your application. You will also need to have available some key staff members to answer the auditor's questions.

The aim of the audits is to assist operators in introducing new initiatives, provide valuable feedback on what is already carried out and work together in further raising the standards of the ecotourism industry within Australia.

### **How do I benefit from EA's partnership with CVA?**

CVA will be able to provide you region specific knowledge and assistance. They can also help you become more involved in the conservation initiatives in your local region.

### **What if I don't want CVA to audit me?**

We do have external auditors. You would simply need to contact EA.