



Annual Review
FY 2022 - 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, GECA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, water, culture, and community.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging. And we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

While our headquarters are in Sydney, GECA's dedicated and hardworking team operates remotely. Therefore, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Countries from which our staff work:

The Awabakal People

The Cammeraygal People

The Darug People

The D'harawal People

The Gadigal People of the Eora Nation

The Gweagal, Bidjigal and Cadigal clans

The Wallumedegal People

The Wurundjeri Willam and Woi-wurrung People

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Patrick Walker
GECA Chair


This is the concluding year of my seven-year term as Chair of the GECA Board, as I will hand over the reins to fellow Director **Angus Kell** at our Annual General Meeting in November. It has been enormously rewarding to contribute in some small way to improving sustainability during this tenure and my 11+ years on the Board.

Sustainability is an area that has been a passion and a focus for almost the whole of my life. My father was a designer and inventor in what was then called "the alternative energy sector" and developed solar and wind products in the 1970s and 80s. From the age of nine or ten, I was helping him in the workshop, and then, with my brother, established our own business to manufacture the wind and solar systems he designed - which was reasonably cutting edge back in rural West Wales back then!

So, it has been hugely rewarding decades later to be able to contribute to GECA's journey and, above all, it has been an immense privilege to be associated with such a passionate and committed team of people - the GECA Directors and staff.

This review will show some of the fantastic impact the GECA team has achieved in FY23. For example, we're particularly proud of developing and releasing Australia's first sustainable Infant Mattress standard. Any parent will say that their child's safety is paramount, but there is no reason why this should come at the expense of sustainability. Infant mattresses certified under our standard will, of course, meet the Australian standards for performance and safety. Still, they will also ensure that consumers know that their child's mattress was produced using sustainably harvested materials, is designed with reuse and recycling in mind, and avoids harmful products. So both the baby and the parents can rest easy!

Financially, GECA achieved a solid break-even result in FY23, which is our aim over the long term as a not-for-profit. However, we have ambitious plans to generate revenue growth in FY24-26 that we can then use to invest in achieving even more positive social impact for the community.




FY23 saw the departure of CEO **Michelle Thomas**. Michelle stepped up at a turbulent time in 2020 when the Covid pandemic caused immense disruption to our way of life and society everywhere. To her immense credit, she steered the GECA team through this period, and she was able to hand over an organisation with a solid balance sheet and a talented and dedicated team to incoming CEO **Josh Begbie**. We are delighted to have Josh on board to lead GECA through our next growth phase; he has already shown the necessary qualities to take GECA to new heights.

In my final notes as Chair, I want to pay tribute to departing Directors **Lorraine Stephenson** and **Steve Humphries**. Both joined the GECA Board around the same time as me and have served GECA with dedication and distinction during their tenure. Lorraine has Chaired our Standards Committee for many years and has brought a technical rigour and scientific mindset that has been invaluable. I and my colleagues on the Board have leaned heavily on Lorraine's technical expertise, and she leaves having made a huge contribution to GECA and the sector – something that she will no doubt continue to do in her other Board and consulting roles.

Steve has also carried a heavy burden as Chair of our Finance and Risk Committee. As a former audit Partner and current CFO, Steve has brought his immense accounting and technical knowledge to the role but always allied to a shrewd, practical and no-nonsense business sense that has meant he has been a considerable support to the GECA CEO and Team and a rock on which the Board can rely. GECA's strong balance sheet and solid cash position are legacies of which Steve can be proud.

So, my deep thanks as departing Chair go to Steve and Lorraine, who, like all our Directors, fulfil these roles in a volunteer capacity and should be proud of their contribution. My thanks also go to incoming Chair **Angus Kell** and fellow Directors **Emma Bull** and **Suzie Hollott**. Each brings invaluable technical skills, business insights and a passion for sustainability to the Board, and I will continue to enjoy working with them as a fellow Director to help Team GECA grow its positive impact.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As the new CEO of GECA, I joined the organisation in May, and therefore, I'm writing this note looking back on the excellent work done by **Michelle Thomas**, my predecessor, and the dedicated GECA team of the 2022-23 Financial Year. I extend my gratitude to Michelle for the steady hand she used to keep GECA growing and leading in the sustainability space. She handed me an organisation with great people and immaculate credentials, and I am excited to be building on the legacy of her work.

As recent work by the ACCC, Australia's consumer law champion, and ASIC, Australia's corporate, markets and financial services regulator, have shown, **sustainability is increasingly vital to corporate and individual purchasers, and it's critical that they can accurately choose products that genuinely make a difference.** The plethora of sustainability labels and self-declared claims that have flooded the market in recent years have made it increasingly difficult to find products that truly take a holistic approach to looking after the planet and its people.

In this context, there has never been a more important time for GECA to stand out in the marketplace, delivering independent, third-party certifications of products and services with complete transparency.

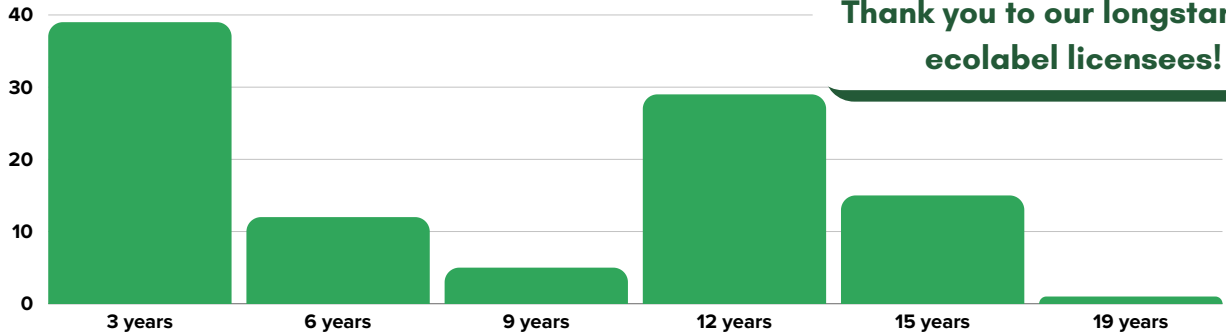
This annual review will show some of the key highlights GECA has delivered over the financial year—well done to the team for delivering more groundbreaking work. However, the job is not done! In the year ahead, we are developing a range of innovations that will make it easier for our stakeholders to use our tools: delivering a new look and feel of our standards, streamlining our processes and working even more closely with our assurance providers to deliver excellent outcomes.

We would also love to hear from you as we innovate and grow! Whether you are a licensee, a customer or an individual interested in the space, if you have an idea for a new way GECA can help drive sustainable production or would like to partner with us in some way, please get in touch with us. We look forward to working together to keep transparent, holistic sustainability as the gold standard for driving change in our world.

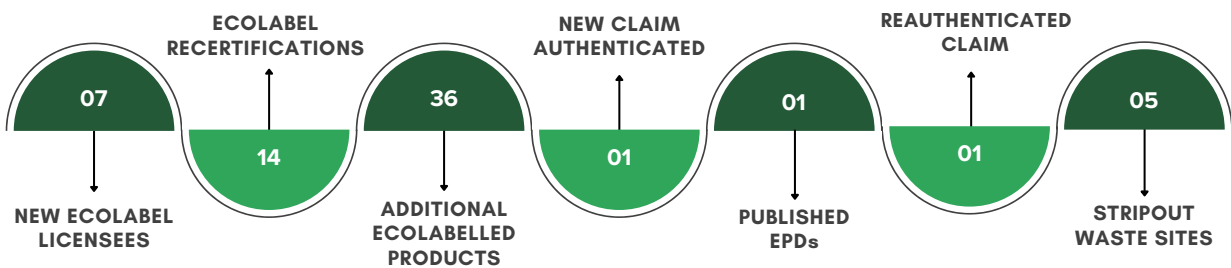


Joshua Begbie
GECA CEO

GECA'S STANDARDS & TECHNICAL SERVICES



Growing our clients



Stripout Waste Program

In our ongoing efforts to promote sustainable practices, our **Stripout Waste Verification Program** has achieved a significant milestone with the successful participation of the **GPT Group**. We congratulate GPT Group and **JLL** for their support as the project managing team during the pilot phase.

Our Standards



Launch of the Infant Mattresses (IMv10-2022) standard



Revision of the Cleaning Products (CPv3.0-2022) standard

This program, supported by the **Better Buildings Partnership** (BBP) and funded by the **City of Sydney**, focuses on improving the accuracy and transparency of stripout waste data. Through this initiative, we have developed a streamlined yet robust data reporting process that can be utilised by building owners, BBP members, and the broader industry. Increased transparency in data reporting will facilitate improvements in contracts, tenders, and targets, contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious industry.

MEET GECA'S NEW INFANT MATTRESSES STANDARD

We all want the best options for our children, including their bedding. Infant mattress safety is a sensitive topic, and research shows that a wide range of physical, chemical and quality requirements play a critical role in creating a good product for people and planet. So GECA is delighted to have released a brand-new [Infant Mattresses \(IMv1.0-2022\)](#) lifecycle ecolabel standard!

The standard's scope applies to infant mattress products, including cot and crib mattresses, household cot mattresses, mattresses for bassinets and other flat sleeping surfaces.

The manufacture, use, and disposal of infant mattress products can negatively impact our environment and health, depending on the choice of raw materials, padding materials, coatings, textiles, and adhesives. Some manufacturers may also use hazardous treatments or poorly manage their energy and water use during production.

The [firmness of an infant mattress is an essential factor](#) when it comes to safety. If the mattress is soft, an infant's head can compress into the surface and potentially block the baby's airway; however, this is unlikely to happen if the mattress is firm.

Recent research suggests that soft crib mattresses have been linked to high risks of sudden infant death syndrome ([SIDS](#)). Although there are no mandatory safety requirements for infant mattresses in Australia, this standard recognises voluntary firmness requirements to mitigate potential risks.

When a product is certified against GECA's Infant Mattresses standard, you know it has been assessed to meet environmental, human health and social impact criteria while proving that it performs as promised.

Core SDGs addressed by our standard:



The standard sets requirements that aim to provide a benefit by:



demonstrating performance and safety for the Australian market



avoiding the illegal harvest of natural materials and fibre for raw materials



reducing the use and subsequent release of environmentally harmful substances to the environment at all stages of the product's lifecycle



encouraging recovery, reuse, recycling and responsible disposal of unwanted product and packaging



reducing the presence and release of substances harmful to human health



ensuring workers and suppliers through the supply chain can expect fair pay, equal opportunity, and a safe working environment



GRASSHOPPER LEADS THE WAY WITH C&D WASTE CERTIFICATION

Established in 1978, **Grasshopper Environmental** has provided professional, tailored, and responsive waste management services for over four decades across two critical sectors in Sydney - building, demolition & infrastructure, and commercial & industrial. In 2021, they were certified under GECA's Waste Collection Services standard, which included Laing O'Rourke's Central Station Metro Project. In 2022, Grasshopper Environmental again demonstrated its leadership by being **the first** to certify under GECA's **Construction & Demolition Waste Services** standard.

Australia's construction and demolition (C&D) waste has more than doubled over the past 15 years. It's **our fastest-growing waste stream**, generating 27 million tonnes of waste in 2018-2019, 44% of Australia's total! By 2025, it is expected that 2.2 billion tonnes of C&D waste will be generated worldwide. So, at GECA, we have developed a robust lifecycle ecolabel standard to reduce the impact of this growing waste stream and **recognise best practice waste minimisation and management** for services delivering substantial environmental benefits.

"We congratulate the entire team at Grasshopper Environmental for this significant achievement! By undergoing third-party certification, **Grasshopper Environmental is demonstrating its commitment to transparency, quality of service, and accurate data** for reporting. We also congratulate their clients, HPAC Nepean Private Hospital Project, JHCPB JV Rozelle Interchange Project and Lendlease Martin Place Project, for specifying an ecolabelled service," says GECA CEO Josh Begbie.

According to the team at Grasshopper Environmental, "Many of our customers require their own GECA certification for their projects, so it made sense for us to get ours too. This has made it easier for our customers to know their waste contractor is reliable and committed to helping them achieve their waste diversion targets. It's a win-win."

"GECA certification shows our customers we are committed to responsible waste management. It signifies to the industry that we are accountable for environmental compliance, aiming to maximise recycling and resource recovery."



INFRABUILD ACHIEVES GECA CERTIFIED STEEL

InfraBuild, Australia's largest vertically integrated, electric arc furnace-based steel manufacturer, has gone through the rigour of a third-party assessment to show that their [reinforcing bar](#) and [reinforcing mesh](#) products are better for people and the planet. In May 2023, they became the first to certify under GECA's Steel & Steel Products (SSPv1.0i-2019) lifecycle ecolabel standard.



InfraBuild

Building futures through sustainable steel

InfraBuild has demonstrated leadership by independently assessing these products against **44 critical science-based environmental, health, social and quality impact criteria**. For example, GECA's world-class *Steel & Steel Products* standard addresses multiple environmental attributes such as:

- toxicity
- air quality
- energy use
- recyclability
- hazardous substances
- water consumption
- use of sustainable materials
- waste minimisation



It also encompasses social impacts, including fair pay, equal opportunity, and a safe working environment for employees and people across the supply chain.

"InfraBuild's certification is a momentous occasion as they are the first organisation under our Steel & Steel Products standard. This is an incredible achievement, as the assessment looks at impacts across a product's entire lifecycle, from the extraction of raw materials to the end of its life!" says GECA's CEO, Josh Begbie.

Steel manufacturing is a significant contributor to national and global carbon emissions. In 2020, the total direct emissions from the sector represented **between 7% and 9% of global carbon emissions**. GECA's ecolabel standard places clear restrictions on carbon emissions, helping the industry to reduce its impact.

"Steel is a critical material for Australian buildings and infrastructure. It is also highly intensive in terms of impacts, including carbon. InfraBuild has taken a substantial step that has the potential to drive the entire sector toward best practice that will benefit people and planet. We congratulate them on their leadership," says Begbie.

In addition, InfraBuild's GECA certified products are recognised as Best Practice under the Green Building Council of Australia's new Green Star Buildings ratings tool - **Responsible Product Framework (v1.1)**.



These certified products can contribute to a Responsible Product Value of 15, the **highest level of recognition achievable** for:

- Responsible Structure
- Responsible Envelope
- Responsible Systems
- Responsible Finishes



"We are incredibly excited to be leading the industry as the first to obtain GECA certification under their Steel & Steel Products standard. The GECA certification means a select range of our reinforcing bar and mesh products, which are manufactured in Australia using our lower embodied carbon steelmaking techniques, are now able to support Green Star Buildings' rated projects and contribute to meeting the ratings tool's 'Best Practice products' criteria," says David Bell, InfraBuild's Manager Sustainability and Insight.

Together, GECA and InfraBuild are providing Australia's building industry with an independent, reliable and credible way to source reinforcing bar and reinforcing mesh products for their Green Star projects.

PROJECTS, CONSULTANCY & TRAINING

GECA has engaged in diverse and impactful projects alongside various stakeholders during this financial year. Our commitment to providing consultancy and advisory services has led us to collaborate with leading retailers in the office and furniture sector while partnering with organisations dedicated to advancing sustainability initiatives.

One noteworthy project involved GECA undertaking a **comprehensive review and enhancement of a prominent Australian retailer's sustainability program**. Working closely with the retailer's sustainability team, we identified two key themes, transparency and credibility, which became the focal points of transformative recommendations. These recommendations encompassed adopting a holistic sustainability approach, repositioning the program as an educational campaign, and implementing rigorous verification processes. Our ultimate goal was to enhance the program's effectiveness, credibility, and educational impact.

Additionally, GECA played a pivotal role in **consolidating information from five retailers regarding their actions on modern slavery within their operations and supply chains**, as mandated by the Australian Modern Slavery Act 2018. Collaborating closely with these retailers, we formulated a comprehensive statement successfully submitted to the Australian Government as compliant with the Act.

Furthermore, we are proud to announce the completion of our role as the Stakeholder Engagement Lead in the development of the **Fit for Office (FFO)** product stewardship scheme. This initiative, addressing the significant issue of office furniture waste, aims to establish a nationally accessible, voluntary product stewardship scheme for commercial office furniture in Australia. Developed in collaboration with sustainability experts from **Edge Impact**, **Planet Ark**, and GECA, FFO is now guided by an expert reference group of founding member organisations (see right) committed to sustainable practices (many of which have already been leading the way with their GECA certified products). Congratulations to these businesses!

We are enthusiastic about the positive changes these initiatives bring to our community and look forward to witnessing further advancements that benefit both people and the planet.

FFO Expert Reference Group

- **Klaro Industrial Design** - Alona Klaro
- **Aspect Furniture** - Andy McCulloch
- **Maxton Fox** - Belinda Hall
- **Sturdy Framac** - Brad Denny
- **Living Edge** - Guy Walsh (FFO Expert Reference Group Chair)
- **Planex** - Karina Clarke
- **Koskela** - Sasha Titchkosky



ENGAGEMENT & STORYTELLING

34

BLOG ARTICLES AND
PRINT FEATURES
PUBLISHED

1

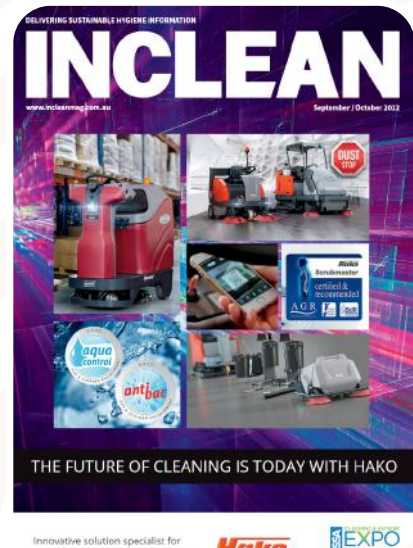
PODCAST INTERVIEW

7

LICENSEE CASE
STUDIES DEVELOPED +
SHOWCASED

5

EXTERNAL EVENTS
ATTENDED AS PRESENTERS
AND EXHIBITORS



GECA NAMED BEST FOR THE WORLD IN GOVERNANCE 2022

We're thrilled to share that, **for the second year in a row**, GECA is one of the Best For The World™ B Corps of 2022! B Corps must have scored in the top 5% of one or more of the five impact areas assessed for certification to be Best For The World. At GECA, **we've excelled in the area of Governance**. We're incredibly proud of the governance structures we have put in place, as they ensure we are continually adhering to our values of **integrity, independence** and **impact**.





OUR LICENSEES

GECA's desire for impact is realised through an exceptional group of businesses—the companies who operate as our licensees. GECA works very hard to craft standards that push the boundaries of what is possible across the entire lifecycle of products and services. Still, our licensees are the ones to turn that theory into effective change by continually improving their products and processes. **We salute you all for your ongoing efforts to be leaders in the sustainability space and are grateful to have you as partners.**

THE GECA FAMILY



GECA BOARD

As a not-for-profit organisation, GECA relies on its volunteer Board of Directors to support our work and help drive strategy. We are fortunate to have a very talented, dedicated and passionate Board! **GECA is hugely grateful for their time, guidance, advice and encouragement that keeps us growing and maturing to ever greater effectiveness.**



Patrick Walker
GECA Chair



Stephen Humphries
Chair of GECA's
Finance & Risk
Committee



Angus Kell
Director



Lorraine Stephenson
Chair of GECA's
Standards Committee



Emma Bull
Director



Suzie Hollott
Director

"We choose GECA certification because it's the best framework that aligns with our cultural values of looking after Country. We are interested in doing business with like-minded people whose purpose and intent are clear. Hence why we chose GECA because we sing the same song. A song sung out of tune is horrible to listen to, but when it's in harmony, you have unity, connection, oneness and, ultimately, sustainability" - **Chemrose**

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Our lifecycle ecolabel standards lay at the heart of what we do. We want to give special thanks to our Standards Committee members who provide oversight and recommendations to ensure the continued effectiveness of GECA's standards and their alignment with ISO 14024. Thank you so much to Angus Kell, Stephen Reardon, Libby Staggs, and Lorraine Stephenson for their invaluable support in ensuring GECA continues to provide robust and impactful standards.



TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUPS

The development of GECA's standards is supported by the integral assistance of its Technical Advisory Groups. Each group comprises volunteers who provide expertise and passion to ensure GECA standards find the right balance between aspirational and achievable. A special thanks to all our technical advisory group members--we look forward to continued collaboration in the years ahead as we continue to create the best solutions for sustainable consumption and production across all of our standards.

ASSURANCE PROVIDERS

Thank you to our Assurance Providers, **Bureau Veritas**, **For Future Generations** and (very recently) **Tonkin + Taylor** for providing independent confidence to producers and consumers that GECA's ideals are being achieved in practice. Our Assurance Providers are committed to providing outstanding service to our licensees, and we value how they liaise regularly with us to improve those processes continually.

TEAM GECA



Josh Begbie
CEO



Jessica Mutton
Head of Business & Strategy



Kendall Benton-Collins
Strategic
Communications Manager



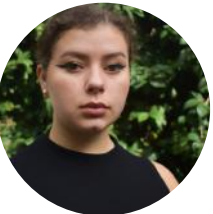
Ina Peukes
Standards & Technical
Manager



Dr Shadia Moazzem
Standards & Technical
Officer



Jacqui Wagar
Client Engagement
Manager



Raven Mason-Uyeda
Operations Officer



Amanda Orme
Client Engagement
Officer

GECA's team is the passionate core of the organisation. Each team member brings their best to work each day, delivering for the organisation and our many partners. They are also flexible and resilient, adapting to the changes in our work and approach as we continually strive to deliver the best possible outcomes for Australia, its people, and all our partners.

Since our last annual review, we have farewelled some team members as they continue pursuing their passions in new areas. To **Michelle Thomas, Karina Schlieper, Shelby Kerr, Shahin Chandriyakat, Yuan Gao** and **Jasmin Lewis**, we offer our gratitude to you all for your lasting contributions to our work and future and wish you all the best as you continue driving meaningful change in this world.

At the same time, we are so grateful to welcome some new but equally passionate faces to the team: **Ina Peukes, Amanda Orme, and Josh Begbie**. Thank you for the contributions you are all making to strengthen this work each day. Please feel free to contact any of our team if you would like to ask a question or are interested in partnering with GECA in some way.

"In the increasingly cost-competitive and deregulated markets, consumers constantly seek assurance of environmental claims, performance and quality of products and services. The GECA ecolabel on your product and service indicates a good environmental choice and can create new opportunities for your business" -
Geosentinel Australia

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

GECA has finished the year on a financial even keel. While GECA is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to protect the planet and its people, we must have the funds to drive those outcomes, and all of those funds come from our activities.

While we operate like a business, being a not-for-profit, we have the benefit of being able to reinvest all of our revenue into driving impact, so the goal is always to finish the year by breaking even or running a slight profit that can be reinvested the following year. This past financial year was another example of that.

For the 2022-23 Financial Year, we finished with total revenue of \$1,072,207 and total expenses of \$1,072,364, for an annual loss of \$157. Compared with the year before, our revenue was essentially unchanged, but our expenses were higher due to rising costs of living and the extra costs of bringing on a new CEO.

Most of our revenue comes from our ecolabelling work, with some additional income from other related activities such as Claims Authentication, Advisory Services and Environmental Product Declarations. All of these services work to push forward our goal of helping our partners achieve good commercial, environmental and social outcomes for their businesses. Thank you to each of our partners in the year for partnering with us to reduce our collective impact on the world.

If you want to see our full financials, [please visit our page](#) at the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.



27 STANDARDS



111 LICENSEES



2,060 PRODUCTS

At GECA, we firmly believe collaboration is essential for creating a better future for people and the planet. Contact us today if you are interested in learning more and collaborating with us.



ANNUAL REVIEW
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