

# GECA



## Annual Review FY 2023 - 2024



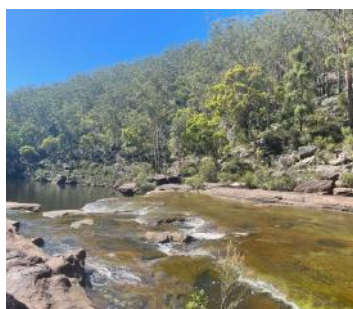
# Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, GECA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Australia's lands, waters, skies, plants, and animals. We recognise their deep and abiding connection to Country and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

While our headquarters are in Sydney, GECA's dedicated and hardworking team operates remotely. We therefore acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Countries on which our staff work and live:

Awabakal People  
Bidjigal People  
Boon Wurrung People  
Cadigal People  
Cammeraygal People  
Darug People  
D'harawal People  
Gadigal People

Guringai People  
Gweagal People  
Muru-ora-dial People  
Wallumedegal People  
Wangal People  
Whadjuk People  
Woi-wurrung People  
Wurundjeri Willam People



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# Message from the Chair



**Angus Kell**

GECA Chair

Completing my first year as Chair of the GECA Board provides an opportune time to reflect on the past year and, more importantly, refocus on the valuable opportunities that lie ahead.

With the departure of our longstanding Directors in FY23, the Board took the opportunity to review and find the best candidates to drive GECA into its 25th year. We were delighted to welcome new Board Members **Dr Maria Burwood, Rob Coombs, Tina Perry, and Richard Griffiths** and are grateful for their commitment to the GECA Board. I want to thank Vice Chair **Suzie Hollott** for her support throughout the year and Company Secretary **Emma Bull**.

FY24 has been a busy year for GECA. In particular, we have developed a new Strategic Plan that will enable growth from our existing solid foundations and ensure our team can deliver upon **our ultimate mission of positively impacting the planet**. FY24 saw a minor loss, partly due to broader business conditions and investments made in GECA to achieve our long-term objectives. Our Strategic Plan has identified ambitious growth targets over the next three years, which have been enabled by our strong balance sheet.

Our CEO, **Josh Begbie**, has led the required organisational change, which gives the Board great confidence, knowing the team is 'match ready' to deliver on the Strategic Plan. As part of our business review, I have spoken to licensees who provide consistent feedback—that our team goes out of its way to support our licensees on their sustainability journey. We believe this is a significant reason our licensees choose GECA. I also want to thank the entire GECA team for their tireless efforts throughout FY24.

Finally, I want to pay special tribute to the past Board Director and Chair, **Patrick Walker**, who departed and relocated overseas after more than a decade of service to GECA. We thank Patrick for his leadership and contribution and wish him and his family all the best for the future.

# Message from the CEO

The 2023-24 year was a special one for me. As my first full year as CEO, it was a chance to get out and have conversations to **better understand our licensees, industry sectors, and the opportunities ahead**. Those conversations highlighted the incredible importance of our work and the dedicated and innovative ways many of our partners seek to make a difference.

This year, we've also seen a growing body of empirical evidence highlighting the **clear business benefits of holistic sustainability**. Businesses that embed sustainability in their DNA clearly outperform their peers in sales, reputation, and staff engagement, all pointing to better long-term outcomes.



**Joshua Begbie**

GECA CEO

As one of the few ecolabels that require certified products and services to be environmentally and socially sustainable across their entire lifecycle, these findings validate our approach, and we love working with partners who build on that same foundation. The data showing how long our licensees have been with us (nearly 50% have been licensees for more than 9 years) demonstrates that alignment works both ways! We are **grateful to everyone who works with us to continually push the boundaries of what holistic sustainability looks like**.

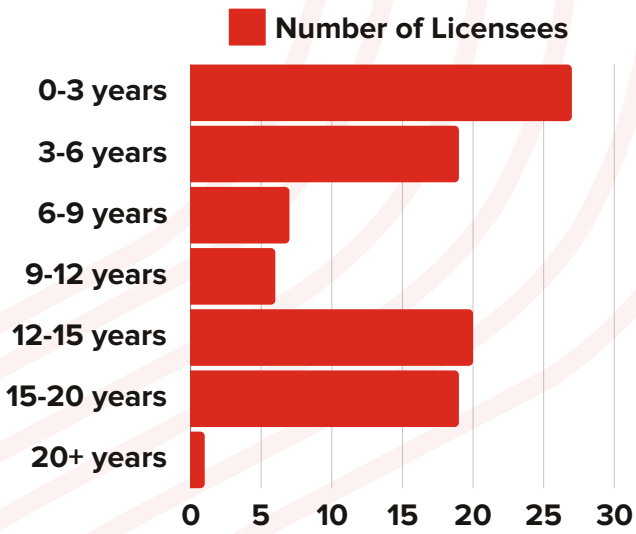
June 2024 also saw GECA's Board approve a new strategic plan for the next three years, where we will double down on our ability to offer best-in-country certification approaches while exploring new ways to leverage that strength. That will require an upfront investment in more resources, probably resulting in a short-term financial loss. Still, we unanimously agree that **such an investment is necessary to grow our impact** on Australia, the planet and its people.

If you are interested in joining us as part of the vanguard of sustainability, please contact me or our team. We are always keen to explore ways of working together!

# The GECA ecolabel

## Our licensees

We want to take this opportunity to celebrate the enduring commitment of our licensees to sustainable excellence through their GECA certification. GECA's lifecycle ecolabel program fosters strong, enduring relationships with licensees.



Our data shows that loyalty increases over time, with **licensees consistently doubling their commitment at critical milestones.** Starting at three years, we see this dedication grow to six, nine, twelve, and beyond, illustrating that the longer our licensees remain certified, the more likely they are to continue with GECA for the long term.

This trend highlights both the value of our program and the deep trust that licensees place in GECA's certification.



27 standards



99 licensees



11 recertifications



2-month decrease in average time to complete new certification



33 new products and services certified



2,023 products and services certified in total

# The GECA ecolabel

## Our licensees

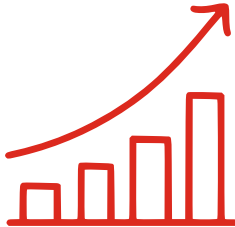


73%

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of GECA's ecolabel licensees have been certified for over three years, showing a long-term commitment to independent certification and underscoring the value and credibility of our lifecycle ecolabelling program



40% of licensees have been certified for over 12 years, showcasing an impressive milestone where nearly half of all licensees have sustained their commitment to GECA's ecolabel program for over a decade



The steady number of licensees in the 12–15-year (20%) and 15–20-year (19%) categories illustrate a strong trend toward extended certification, with businesses consistently finding greater purpose in staying certified with GECA as time goes on



27%

27% of licensees are in their first three years of certification, showing a foundation of new growth and highlighting the GECA ecolabel's continued relevance and appeal to businesses looking to begin their sustainability journey



Our Furniture standards had the highest number of licensees, with 33 furniture manufacturers and retailers choosing to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable leadership in their industry. Close behind, our Cleaning Products standard holds strong appeal, with 20 licensees certified under this rigorous benchmark

# The GECA ecolabel

## Our licensees

**PREMIX**<sup>®</sup>  
CONCRETE SA



trans-  
mu-  
ta-  
tion



**earthwise**<sup>®</sup>  
Effective Naturally since 1967

**ARC**<sup>®</sup>  
THE AUSTRALIAN  
REINFORCING  
COMPANY



During this financial year, we **proudly welcomed five new companies** committed to sustainable excellence through GECA certification.

These companies join GECA's mission to drive positive change across industries and create a meaningful impact, and **we congratulate them!**

## Listening, learning, & leading together

At GECA, **collaboration and continuous improvement** are the foundations of everything we do to achieve our vision for a sustainable future for people and planet. As part of this focus, our CEO has proactively organised one-on-one visits with licensees throughout the past year to gather valuable insights. That shared knowledge is essential to achieving our mission of **empowering everyone to make better choices** when creating and purchasing products and services and strengthening our relationships.

Licensees consistently shared **positive feedback about their interactions with the GECA team**, highlighting our commitment to supporting them with expertise and enthusiasm.

Our conversations also highlighted that few of our licensees consider themselves sustainability experts—running a successful business takes up most of their focus—and therefore, **they value GECA's role as a trusted guide on their sustainability journey**. It's clear that while meeting the rigorous criteria within GECA's ecolabel standards isn't easy, our licensees recognise and appreciate the role that undergoing certification plays in pushing them to assess their impact holistically, ultimately positioning them as industry leaders.

Our conversations have also emphasised critical ways to improve and grow within our ecolabel program and beyond. Licensees openly shared suggestions for enhancing GECA's services, which we take to heart as we work to elevate how we operate. These conversations are a two-way exchange; **we learn as much from our licensees as they do from us**, building a collaborative foundation that fuels our shared commitment to sustainability. We are excited to continue these visits and dialogues, strengthening our partnerships and shared impact.



# The GECA ecolabel

## Restructuring our standards for greater impact

This year, GECA undertook a comprehensive restructuring of our lifecycle ecolabel standards to **align with industry best practices** and ensure our certification process reflects the latest environmental and social responsibility advancements. Drawing on insights from international ecolabelling leaders, including our peers in the **Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN)**, we have enhanced the layout of our standards to future-proof them as we continue to shape them for even greater rigour and clarity.

Our **new structure emphasises standardisation across product and service categories**, harmonising criteria to ensure consistency and fairness in certification across diverse industries. Additionally, we have introduced clearer, **more user-friendly** criteria and guidance for applicants and third-party assessors, making the certification journey more transparent and accessible.

These improvements underscore our commitment to supporting businesses in meeting high sustainability standards while promoting ease and transparency in the certification process. With the internal restructuring now complete, we look forward to rolling out these new-look standards in the coming financial year, setting an elevated benchmark for certification in sustainability.

## Strengthening Green Star recognition for GECA standards

GECA has achieved an exciting milestone with enhanced Green Star recognition across our standards. The **Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA)** re-assessed fourteen of our standards under the new Responsible Product Framework for [Green Star Buildings VI](#), reinforcing the value of GECA certification in green building projects.

With [updated scores](#) across Responsible Structure, Envelope, Systems, and Finishes categories, many GECA certified products—such as adhesives, insulation, and carpets—have **advanced from "Good" to "Best Practice" levels**, showcasing their holistic environmental leadership. This recognition aligns with national sustainability goals and strengthens market trust in GECA certified products, making them even more attractive to developers pursuing higher Green Star ratings.

As our standards continue to evolve and innovate in **critical areas such as emissions reductions and circularity**, we will submit them for reassessment to ensure they gain the best possible recognition.

# The GECA ecolabel

## Technical Advisory Groups

Our transparent and comprehensive standard development process is highly collaborative, involving consultation with stakeholders and relevant industry experts as part of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). This group of expert stakeholders **voluntarily assist us in setting high sustainability benchmarks that are still achievable** within the Australian marketplace.

To produce high-quality standards, each TAG represents a diversity of stakeholders relevant to the specific product or service category: manufacturers, consumers, government agencies, academics, special interest groups and relevant industry bodies and associations. **A special thanks to all our TAG members, past and present!** Anyone interested in joining a future TAG for one of GECA's product and service standards is encouraged to [contact us](#) for more information.

## Standards Committee

Once a new or revised GECA standard has been through an expert TAG, we present the draft for review by our Standards Committee members. These members provide oversight and recommendations to ensure GECA's standards' continued effectiveness and alignment with [ISO 14024](#). Thank you so much to **Libby Staggs, Dr Maria Burwood, Rob Coombs,** and **Stephen Reardon** for their invaluable support in ensuring GECA continues to provide robust and impactful standards.

## Independent Assurance Providers

To become GECA certified, products and services undergo independent assessment by our third-party assurance providers against all criteria in our standards. An Assurance Provider is a person or organisation appointed by GECA's [Independent Appointment Panel](#) (IAP). Our three Assurance Providers, **Bureau Veritas, For Future Generations** and **Tonkin + Taylor**, are committed to delivering outstanding service to our licensees.



# GECA Claims Authentication

## Armstrong Flooring first to achieve VinylCycle verification

In July 2023, Armstrong Flooring achieved authentication of an 85% recycled content claim from GECA for their Cove Fillet product as part of the **Vinyl Council of Australia's (VCA) VinylCycle Label**.

**Armstrong Flooring's [Cove Fillet](#)** – which creates a solid foundation for coved vinyl flooring installations – including within vital healthcare settings – is the first PVC flooring product to achieve a VinylCycle recycled content claim.

Armstrong Flooring's  
Cove Fillet product  
contains a minimum of  
85% recycled PVC  
content

GECA ✓  
CLAIM AUTHENTICATED

vinyl cycle

The *VinylCycle Trade Mark License* and *GECA Claims Authentication* process represent a collaborative partnership between the VCA and GECA to develop a program to authenticate the claims of manufacturers and distributors of PVC products containing recycled PVC in Australia.

The [VinylCycle Specifications](#) outline the criteria for verifying products claimed to be made wholly or partially from recycled PVC and enable a claim to be made and authenticated that is clear, not misleading and communicates an environmental benefit.

GECA follows internationally recognised [ISO 14021 principles](#) to verify a VinylCycle claim, which includes a GECA technical specialist checking all documentation to ensure credibility. VinylCycle authentication aids specifiers, procurers, and individuals in **identifying products with genuine recycled content to support informed purchasing decisions.**



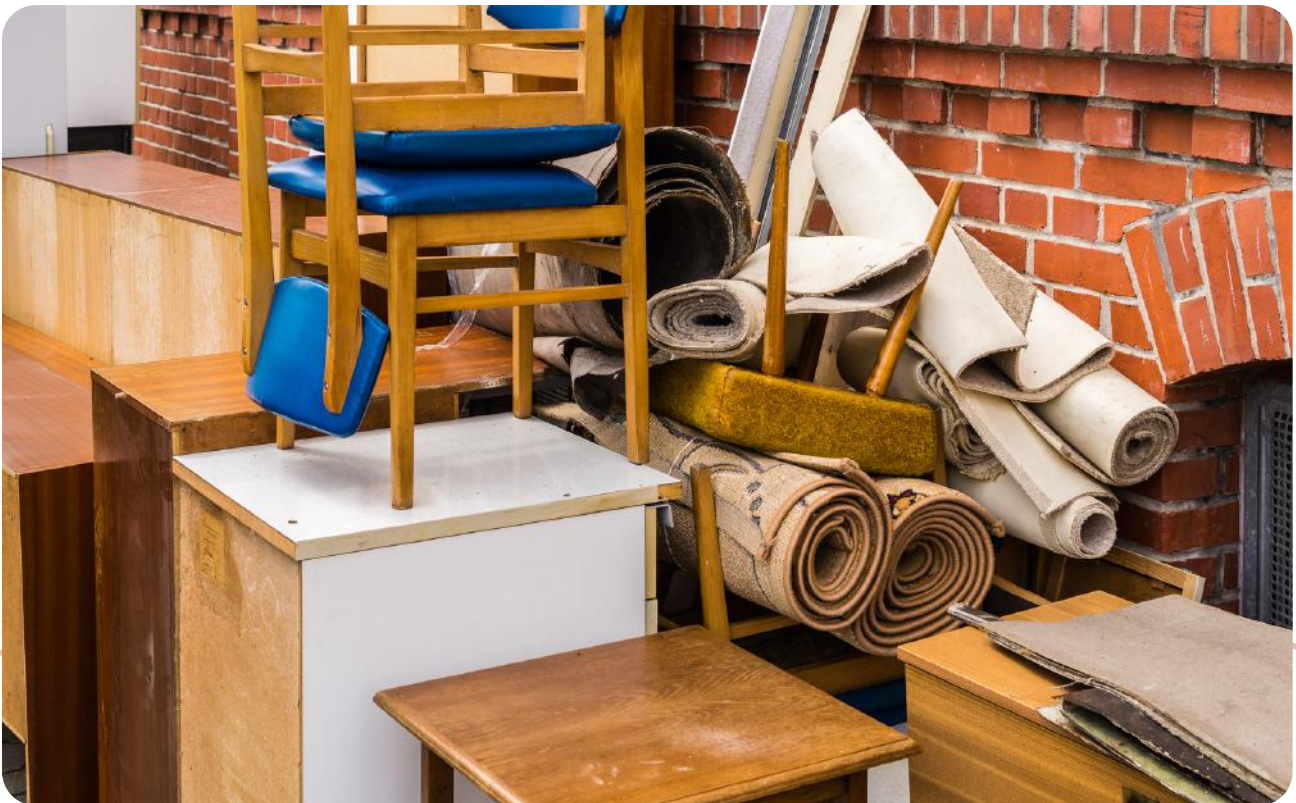
# Stripout Waste Program

GECA, with support from the **Better Buildings Partnership (BBP)**, was awarded a grant from the **City of Sydney** to develop a program to improve the accuracy and transparency of stripout waste data.

This year, GECA's *Stripout Waste Program*, in collaboration with **JLL**, played a vital role in advancing sustainable building practices by providing independent verification reports for several prominent projects, including **530 Collins Street, 181 William Street, 550 Bourke Street, and 8 Exhibition Street**.

Through detailed waste assessments, the program ensured accurate tracking and reporting of key sustainability metrics, such as waste diversion rates and the use of recycled and reused materials.

These assessments not only supported each project's sustainability goals but also contributed to their Green Star submissions, helping these sites meet ambitious environmental performance targets. This collaboration demonstrates GECA's commitment to enhancing transparency and accountability in waste management, ultimately supporting a circular economy in the built environment.



# Communications & engagement

This year, GECA amplified its reach and influence through various impactful engagement and storytelling efforts, underscoring the value of authentic communication. Authenticity in sustainability is not just about transparency; it's a strategic advantage that drives stronger connections with stakeholders.

By embracing genuine storytelling, GECA showcases its commitment to high standards and builds trust and credibility across industries. Our authentic communication helps licensees and stakeholders understand the full impact of sustainability, positioning GECA as a reliable guide on their journey toward responsible and impactful choices.

28

**Blog articles, podcasts and editorial features published**

5

**Webinars and training sessions delivered**

3

**Licensee case studies developed and showcased**

13

**Events attended as presenters and exhibitors**

## Licensee case studies

This section displays three case study highlights. On the left, there are two images: the top one shows a large industrial building with a gravel lot, and the bottom one shows an aerial view of a parking lot with yellow dashed lines. In the center, a woman in an orange safety vest and glasses smiles, with a 'Case Study - Knauf' badge overlaid. On the right, there are two images: the top one shows a modern interior with wooden chairs, and the bottom one shows a lounge area with brown armchairs. Logos for TRUEGRID, Knauf, and DISTRICT are visible throughout the collage.

## Event partners



# Communications & engagement

## World Ecolabel Day 2023

To celebrate World Ecolabel Day on 12 October, GECA created a tailored campaign toolkit for licensees with key messages and social media assets.

This led to widespread engagement, with **licensee posts reaching an impressive 138,539 followers** on Instagram alone.



## Guidance for communicating recycled content claims

At GECA, we know it is essential to be clear and precise when making recycled content claims to ensure people can confidently make informed decisions. When businesses communicate their recycled content achievements vaguely or inaccurately, it harms brand value and can undermine the credibility of the whole industry, creating scepticism around environmental claims.

What you exclude from your communications can be just as meaningful (or misleading) as what you include—for example, claiming that your product is made from 100% recycled plastic yet failing to disclose that plastic only makes up a small portion of the product's total ingredients.

That's why we published a [new position statement](#) aligned with current best practices on making recycled content claims, ensuring people can confidently make informed decisions.



### Making recycled content claims

At GECA, we know it is essential to be clear and precise when making recycled content claims, including using simple language accessible to the public and supporting claims with verified data.

What you exclude can be just as meaningful (or misleading) as what you include—for example, claiming that your product is made from 100% recycled plastic yet failing to be upfront that plastic only makes up a portion of the product's ingredients.

Recycled content claims relate to items containing a specific amount (by mass percentage) of pre-consumer or post-consumer recycled material. This excludes rework, regrind or scrap produced in the manufacturing process, which could be reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

GECA requires all recycled content claims to include the following:

- ✓ A **precise percentage** of recycled content that **specifies the type of recycled material**, such as glass, plastic, rubber or timber. A product may have two types of recycled materials, for example, 90% recycled plastic and 95% recycled timber or only one, such as 100% recycled rubber.
- ✓ A statement on whether the recycled material is **pre-consumer** or **post-consumer** material. If there is a mix of both, the percentage of each shall be specified.

"Great guide from GECA on making recycled content claims! This is a very clear document, a quick read and helpful for those who are using recycled content or hoping to. Get your facts rights folks!

Make it clear on the label and ensure the details and supporting documentation are easily accessible to consumers!"

**Kiarne Treacy, CEO at Sustainable Choice Group**







# Shaping our future

In FY23-24, GECA introduced a new Strategic Plan to **expand our impact and reinforce our role as a leader** in sustainable certification. Guided by our purpose, this plan focuses on four key pillars to boost our impact: product mix, industry leadership, brand recognition, and customer excellence.

Product Mix	Industry Leadership
<p>GECA will drive consistent growth by expanding its product and service offerings to meet evolving industry needs. We aim to enhance our impact and support innovative activities across the sustainability landscape through increased revenues and reinvestment</p>	<p>Building on our 25 years of sustainability expertise, GECA is committed to positioning itself as a thought leader and innovator in sustainable certification. We aim to provide businesses with valuable insights and drive meaningful change in public spaces by showcasing and communicating our impact</p>
Brand Recognition	Customer Excellence
<p>A key goal of our strategy is to solidify GECA's position as the ecolabel of choice for businesses. We will increase awareness among product specifiers, procurement teams, and other industry decision-makers, ensuring GECA is widely known, understood, and respected within target industries</p>	<p>Our dedication to outstanding customer service is at the core of GECA's mission. By continually improving our processes and offerings, we aim to be the preferred ecolabel, delivering significant value and support to our licensees and their clients</p>

With these pillars guiding our strategy, GECA is well-positioned to drive transformative change, enhancing our reach, influence, and support for businesses committed to sustainable practices.

# Financial summary

While we operate like a business, as a not-for-profit, we have the benefit of being able to reinvest all 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. However, as we continue to invest in new areas of impact, that goal is not always achieved.

For the 2023-24 Financial Year, GECA finished with a loss of \$29,000. GECA's total revenue grew to \$1.12 million, while our total expenses were \$1.15 million.

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.

	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	1,096,312	1,068,729
Other income	5	27,709	3,478
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>1,124,021</b>	<b>1,072,207</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Administration and other operating costs		(169,287)	(171,671)
Depreciation and amortisation		-	(5,838)
Employee benefits		(976,484)	(892,223)
Finance costs		(203)	-
Lease payments for short-term/low-value leases		(7,460)	(2,632)
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>(1,153,434)</b>	<b>(1,072,364)</b>
<b>Net deficit for the year</b>		<b>(29,413)</b>	<b>(157)</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Deficit after income tax</b>		<b>(29,413)</b>	<b>(157)</b>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive loss</b>		<b>(29,413)</b>	<b>(157)</b>

# GECA family

## GECA Board of Directors

As a not-for-profit organisation, GECA relies on its volunteer Board of Directors to support our work and help drive strategy. During the year, **three directors retired after a long and dedicated period of service** with us, and four new directors of exceptional calibre have replaced them. This refreshed Board is **full of passion and talent**, and we are hugely grateful for their time, guidance, advice, and encouragement, which keeps us growing.



**Angus Kell**  
Chair



**Suzie Hollott**  
Vice-Chair



**Emma Bull**  
Director



**Dr Maria Burwood**  
Director



**Richard Griffiths**  
Director



**Tina Perry**  
Director



**Rob Coombs**  
Director

# GECA family

## Team GECA

Our **tiny yet mighty team** has delivered another excellent year of work, continuing to invest in improved processes and outcomes while spreading the word about our important work.



**Josh Begbie**  
CEO



**Dr Ina Peukes**  
Standards &  
Technical Manager



**Kendall Benton-Collins**  
Strategic  
Communications  
Manager



**Jacqui Wagar**  
Client Engagement  
Manager



**Jessica Mutton**  
Head of Business &  
Strategy



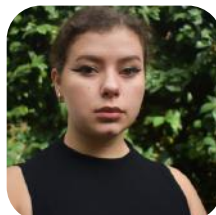
**Suzanne Lim**  
Executive Officer



**Dr Shadia Moazzem**  
Standards &  
Technical Officer



**Vikrant Gorasia**  
Standards &  
Technical Officer



**Raven Mason-Uyeda**  
Operations Officer



**Sarah Rhodes**  
Client Engagement  
Officer



**Amanda Orme**  
Client Engagement  
Officer

Our commitment to stakeholder engagement, trust, and transparency extends across all levels of the supply chain—across the entire lifecycle of products and services.

So, we're thrilled to be members of Sustainability Tracker, a platform that embraces and elevates transparency, which is core to the GECA Family. We invite you to [click here](#) to follow our progress!



**Now a Member**




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.

Certified



Corporation

This company meets high standards of social and environmental impact.



GECA



ANNUAL REVIEW  
FY 2023 - 2024

[www.geca.eco](http://www.geca.eco)