

Dr Claire Ellis Chair of Ecotourism Australia



2019/20 Tough years

- Droughts, fires and then COVID
- Used the time to be reflective



Image credit: KI Odysseys Sealink

EA's direction and work

- Long history of certification
- 45% of our eco certified products been certified for 10 years + with us, that is 244 Green Travel leaders...another 31 this year



HALL OF FAME
2019/20's New entrants to EA's

<p>SAILAWAY (QLD)</p> 	<p>DAINTREE RIVER CRUISE CENTRE (QLD)</p> 	<p>TREAD LIGHTLY ECO TOURS (NSW)</p> 
<p>ARAUCARIA ECOTOURS (QLD)</p> 	<p>IMAGINE CRUISES - PORT STEPHENS (NSW)</p> 	<p>MOONSHADOW CRUISES - TQC (NSW)</p> 
<p>CRUISE MAROOCHY ECO TOURS (QLD)</p> 	<p>CAPRICORN CAVES (QLD)</p> 	<p>BROKEN RIVER MOUNTAIN RESORT (QLD)</p> 
<p>KINGFISHER CRUISES (VIC)</p> 	<div> <p>Celebrating</p> <p>20</p> <p>years with us</p> </div>	

Advocacy



ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA'S COVID-19 RECOVERY POSITION STATEMENT

The adverse impacts of COVID-19 added to the significant challenges already faced by Australia's tourism sector due to recent bushfires, floods and drought. A successful recovery should see tourism re-emerge as a stronger, more resilient and more sustainable sector that is better positioned for the future. We now have a unique and unmissable opportunity to improve, rather than return to 'business as usual'.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR RECOVERY:

- As tourism recommences, the sector will **need fundamental change** to provide for social distancing requirements and visitors' needs for confidence and safety.
- The recovery period is an **opportunity to reset and transform tourism** with sustainability at its core.
- Nature-based experiences improve mental and physical health and increase community wellbeing. **Well managed and resourced parks, cultural sites and reserves** will be increasingly important in a post COVID-19 world.
- **Building sustainable ecotourism destinations and communities** where operators deliver experiences which protect the environment and enrich communities will be critical.
- **Building and strengthening partnerships will be more important than ever.** This is a time to create a strategically connected sector that works alongside other industries to re-establish a thriving visitor economy. Communities will need to work together to achieve goals and avoid the issues of the past.
- Australia will be seen as a **safe and desirable destination** by the international market due to the way it has managed the crisis and tourism promotion should reflect and leverage this position.

ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA'S ROLE AND COMMITMENT:

As the peak national body for eco and nature-based tourism, we will utilise our connections, resources and expertise to support tourism businesses and regions during the recovery and lead the development of an increasingly resilient, certified and sustainable sector. We will:

- Add value to our ecotourism sector through improved programs, advocacy, standard setting, policy development, networking and marketing opportunities.
- Continue to develop and deliver [certification and product development programs](#) that represent global best practice and provide credibility, authenticity and trust for businesses and their guests.
- Establish a collection of internationally recognised [certified ECO Destinations](#) that will complement the efforts of regional tourism organisations, local governments and state/national tourism agencies.
- Build on our relationships with Australia's protected area management agencies to encourage reward and recognition programs for high standard licensed tour operators in Australia's parks.
- Reinforce and cultivate our international partnerships and agreements to enrich and extend the depth, breadth and quality of Australia's ecotourism businesses and destinations.

ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA'S BUSHFIRE RECOVERY POSITION STATEMENT

The significant impacts on Australia's natural assets from the 2019/20 bushfires have disproportionately affected the eco and nature-based tourism sector, as this industry is completely dependent on our well regarded and respected natural and cultural environment. Ten percent of our ECO certified members are in declared bushfire emergency areas and 100% of our members across Australia have been impacted by loss of bookings and revenue, or reputational damage.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR RECOVERY:

- **Scale.** While natural disaster recovery is not new to us or our sector, the scale, intensity and international impact of this catastrophe requires a significant national response for, and by, our industry.
- **Timeframe.** Natural disaster recovery requires both a quick response and a long-term view.
- **Opportunity.** Recovery should build back better to benefit communities, conservation and businesses.
- **Business survival.** Operators need support to survive until demand returns.
- **Partnerships.** Working together will produce more positive outcomes.

ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA ADVOCATES FOR RECOVERY ACTIONS THAT:

- **Provide emergency financial relief measures** to eco and nature-based tourism operators, as regional Australia needs the industry to survive.
- **Offer flexibility in protected area licensing conditions** for affected commercial tour operators.
- **Build demand for nature-based regions and reassure the market** - e.g. by funding localised campaigns and offering tax deductions for domestic travel.
- **Develop bushfire recovery tourism products** - e.g. interpretation toolkits, guiding, citizen science and volunteering.
- **Rebuild communities as vibrant, resilient and sustainable tourism destinations** e.g. by using ECO Destination certification.
- **Repair and replace public and private infrastructure** using best practice techniques, designs and materials.
- **Hold national/regional bushfire recovery forum(s)** to share learnings, successes and plans for the future.
- **Provide significant long-term support for protected area agencies** to comprehensively manage the land, wildlife and cultural values.
- **Establish natural disaster plans and responses** to be better prepared for future significant events so that funds, support, and relief measures can be implemented immediately.

ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA'S ROLE AND COMMITMENT

As the peak national body for eco and nature-based tourism, we will utilise our connections, resources and expertise to support tourism businesses and regions during the hardships and recovery, and lead development towards building an increasingly resilient and sustainable sector.

Internally upgrading – online

- Global software system so best practice and up to date
- All new applicants starting online
- Working with our existing members to shift over
- Huge advantages once occurred...online auditing and support

Image Credit: Exceptional Kangaroo Island, Kangaroo Island, SA
(Advanced Ecotourism & Climate Action Business)



Celebrate success

- Awardsnot ours but yours
- But we hear that the focus our processes and systems help create across all areas lets you shine
- And we are proud of all our member's achievements, and these are many.

Ecotourism Australia
certified winners – Qantas
Australian Tourism Awards
2019



Wolgan Valley Eco Tours
win Ecotourism Gold
Award



Douglas Shire win
Communities and Culture
Award at Sustainable
Destination Awards



Fun Over Fifty Banksia
Sustainability Awards



Order of Australia
Medals



Busselton Jetty awarded
Best Grey Nomad
Attraction



Our Future

- Marketing and website improvements
- Introduced EcoDestinations and working to help your places shine – not just your product or business
- NBT needs to be higher profile politically



Plenty of areas
we need to
improve on



Image credit: Kingfisher Tours Bungle Bungles

Why? What outcomes are we after?

- Despite the need to rebuild, it isn't about growth for growth's sake
- Tourism and NBT are tools to help make our place a better place to live
- Listen to our communities – create differences



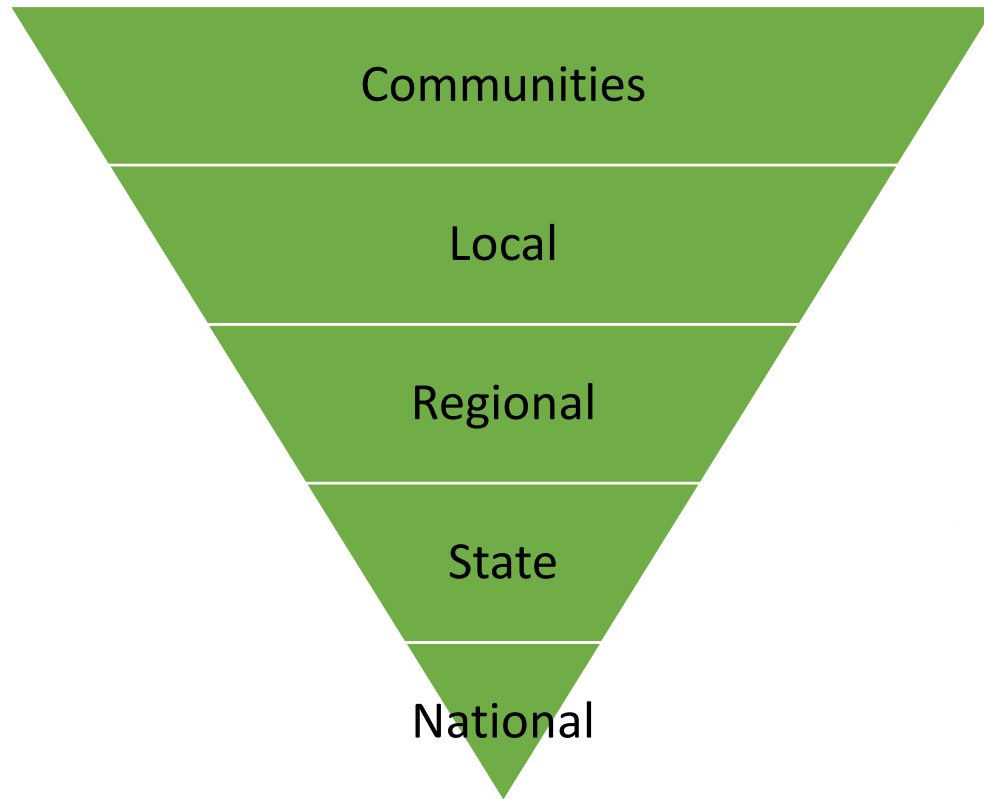
Working internationally

- Learn from others, global trends and world's best practice
- Our nature and the life we interpret is not confined to our shores, we need to make a difference globally

Image Credit: Ningaloo Discovery



Re-set the balance



might be at risk of





Please connect with our
staff and Board as we
continue to re-shape your
organisation

