

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.

