

10 April 2013

Integrated Planning and Reporting
Shellharbour City Council
Locked Bag 155
Shellharbour City Centre NSW 2529

Via email: integrated.planning@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: THE SHELLHARBOUR COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan. The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) commends Council's 2030 vision for a dynamic Shellharbour City that values diversity, provides opportunity and is well-connected, safe and sustainable.

The GBCA encourages Shellharbour City Council to consider how the Green Star – Communities rating tool can be used to inform the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) objectives, strategies and the 'community indicators' underpinning the ten objectives to achieve measurable success.

About the GBCA

The GBCA is the nation's authority on sustainable buildings, communities and cities. Our mission is to accelerate the transformation of Australia's built environment into one that is healthy, liveable, productive, resilient and sustainable. We work together with industry and government to encourage policies and programs that support our mission. We educate thousands of people each year on how to design and deliver sustainable outcomes for our buildings, communities and cities. And we operate Australia's only national, voluntary, holistic rating system for sustainable buildings and communities - Green Star.

The GBCA is also a founding member of the World Green Building Council (WorldGBC), which was established to provide a federated 'union' of national green building councils with a common goal to support the sustainable transformation of the global property industry; there are now 96 such councils worldwide.

The Green Star rating tools

Green Star is a national, voluntary rating system that encourages, recognises and rewards best practice and innovation in the property industry. The first Green Star rating tool was released in 2003 in response to market demand for a rating tool that would evaluate the design and construction of buildings as well as establish a common language for best practice buildings.

There are currently nine Green Star rating tools which address a range of building types and over 560 projects have now achieved Green Star certification across Australia, with a further 500 projects registered. The Green Star rating system is designed to take an holistic approach within each class and building sector, addressing nine categories in total; Management, Indoor Environment Quality (IEQ), Energy, Water, Materials, Land Use and Ecology, Emissions, Innovation and Transport; and defining 'best practice' in each.

Green Star - Communities

Green Star – Communities is a rating tool for community-scale developments. In developing the rating tool, the GBCA conducted extensive consultation with industry and all levels of government to establish a framework for more productive, liveable and sustainable communities. The national framework, sponsored by industry and all levels of government, including Landcom and the City of Sydney, consists of five principles:

1. Enhance liveability
2. Create opportunities for economic prosperity
3. Foster environmental responsibility
4. Embrace design excellence
5. Demonstrate visionary leadership and strong governance.

In the second stage of the rating tool development, 38 credits were developed to support the five principles. The credits were identified in consultation with the 38 rating tool sponsors and supporters and 135 technical working group members. These credits include a range of benchmarks against which communities can be measured, assessed and certified as demonstrating Best Practice (4 Star), Australian Excellence (5 Star) or World Leadership (6 Star). The Green Star – Communities Framework, a pocket guide to the rating tool credits and the rating tool scorecard are attached. Further information about the Green Star – Communities rating tool can be found at www.greenstarcommunities.org.au, or on the GBCA's website at www.gbca.org.au.

The 10 objectives identified in the Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan (CSP) closely align with the Green Star – Communities framework principles. With this in mind, the GBCA encourages Shellharbour City Council to consider how the 38 Green Star – Communities credits could be referenced or adopted as guidelines, benchmarks or community indicators against which the CSP objectives and related programs and initiatives can be measured.

For example, CSP objective 2.3 states that Shellharbour City Council aims to create “a liveable City that is connected through places and spaces”. The Green Star – Communities credit *Liv-1 Access to Amenities* can act as a metric or ‘visionary’ community indicator for this objective as it establishes 500 metres as the benchmark for the ideal maximum distance between amenities and residential, workplace and/or educational facilities and uses.

CSP objective 3.2 states Shellharbour City Council intends to provide for “...a strong local economy with business and employment opportunities”. The credits within the Green Star – Communities Economic Prosperity category can inform council strategies and community indicators to ensure this objective is achieved. For example, *Econ-1 Employment and Economic Resilience* states that new community-scale development projects need to demonstrate a net percentage increase in the number of jobs generated in the local area.

The credit *Econ-7 Digital Economy* states large community-scale development projects must provide infrastructure that can support 100mbps download, and 20mbps upload internet connection speeds in order to support work-from-home policies and online enterprise.

The Green Star building rating tools, such as Green Star – Public Building and Green Star – Performance, can also be used by Shellharbour City Council to set measureable community indicators. For example, CSP strategy 2.3.6 states that Shellharbour will “deliver sustainable management of the community’s assets for current and future generations”. In this instance, the GBCA encourages Shellharbour City Council to cite achieving a 4 Star Green Star – Public Building rating (Best Practice) as the benchmark for new iconic buildings such as libraries and civic centres, or for major refurbishments of existing iconic buildings.

Many councils across Australia have committed to achieving Green Star certification for the buildings they build, lease or manage. A great example is the City of Greater Geelong which recently implemented a *Sustainable Buildings Policy* to manage the social, environmental and financial aspects of council buildings. The policy states that all new-build large buildings will meet a 5 Star Green Star design rating and small buildings will meet an ‘Excellent’ rating on the Sustainable Design Scorecard. Another example is Brisbane City Council which has four Green Star rated buildings including a bus depot and the council civic offices. Two case studies further demonstrating the financial, social and environmental benefits councils can achieve through attaining Green Star ratings are attached.

The Green Star - Performance rating tool is designed to assess the operational performance of existing buildings, whether already Green Star-certified or not. This rating tool enables councils such as Shellharbour to measure municipal building performance, identify opportunities to cut operational costs, improve staff productivity and to make suitable long-term capital investments. Buildings that already have a NABERS Energy or Water rating will be able to use this data in the Green Star – Performance certification process. We encourage Shellharbour City Council to consider how the Green Star – Performance rating tool could be applied to existing council and public buildings as a community indicator for strategy 2.3.6 as well as a tool for identifying opportunities to reduce operational expenses. The Green Star – Performance rating tool is currently under development and is expected to be available as a PILOT in late 2013. Further information on all Green Star rating tools can be found on the GBCA’s website at www.gbca.org.au.

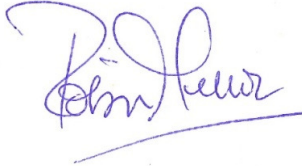
Taking practical action

It is clear that Shellharbour City Council is committed to ensuring the local community is a great place to live, work and play now and into the future. Given this, the GBCA encourages Shellharbour City Council to join the GBCA and the 36 other local governments that are GBCA members, including Wollongong City Council, in taking practical action to create resilient, liveable and economically prosperous Australian communities. By becoming a member of the GBCA, Shellharbour City Council can publicly demonstrate its commitment to achieving the CSP vision, gain recognition for delivering on the CSP strategies and access support, knowledge and resources from the GBCA and our network of members.

The GBCA applauds Shellharbour City Council on its draft CSP and encourages Council to consider how the Green Star rating tools, particularly Green Star – Communities, can provide a set of nationally-agreed benchmarks that can provide a method for measuring success.

For further information on the points discussed in this letter and for information on how to become a member of the GBCA please contact Emma Kelly, Advocacy Coordinator – Local Government, by phone on 02 8239 6288 or via email at emma.kelly@gbca.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



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