

# TECHNICAL ASSURANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

## DECEMBER 2010 MEETING

Date Issued: June 2011

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the continual evolution of the Green Star rating system, the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) actively seeks feedback on the Green Star assessment and certification process and rating tools. Meetings of the Technical Assurance Committee (TAC) of the GBCA Board are part of the feedback process. The TAC met twice in December 2010. The TAC considered feedback provided by stakeholders directly to the TAC and through market research conducted independently between August and September 2010. The outcome of these meetings was the development of eighteen proposals which the TAC recommended to the Board of the GBCA. These proposals, outlined in detail below, can be grouped into four categories: tool design and methodology; the assessment process; assessors; and communication. All but one of the recommendations were endorsed by the Board at its February 2011 meeting.

## 1. Tool design and methodology

- 1.1 Expiry of ratings and ongoing assessment for Performance
- 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Star rating
- 1.3 Review environmental weightings
- 1.4 Creation of a single Green Star tool for all buildings
- 1.5 Alignment of Green Star and NABERS
- 1.6 Common Carbon Metrics

## 2. Assessment process

- 2.1 Submission templates and examples
- 2.2 Credits updated with CIRs and TCs more accessible
- 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements
- 2.4 Free CIR for Area Definitions
- 2.5 Pre-assessment review and access to expertise for project teams
- 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits
- 2.7 Innovation assessed in Round 1
- 2.8 Online submission process

## 3. Assessors

- 3.1 Revise and improve assessor training
- 3.2 Consider introducing regular audits of assessors

## 4. Communication

- 4.1 Ongoing monitoring of satisfaction with Green Star
- 4.2 Let members know we are listening and communicate the resulting evolution of Green Star

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
ISSUES RAISED	6
18 EVOLUTIONARY PROJECTS	9
1.    TOOL DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	9
1.1 Expiry of ratings and ongoing assessment for Performance	9
1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating	10
1.3 Review environmental weightings	10
1.4 Creation of a single Green Star tool for all buildings	10
1.5 Alignment of Green Star and NABERS	10
1.6 Common Carbon Metrics	11
2.    THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS	11
2.1 Submission templates and examples	11
2.2 Credits updated with CIRs and TCs more accessible	11
2.3 Simplify documentation requirements	12
2.4 Free CIR for Area Definitions	12
2.5 Pre-assessment review and access to expertise for project teams	12
2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits	12
2.7 Innovation assessed in Round 1	12
2.8 Online submission process	13
3.    ASSESSORS	13
3.1 Revise and improve assessor training	13
3.2 Consider introducing regular audits of assessors	13
4.    COMMUNICATION	13
4.1 Ongoing monitoring of satisfaction with Green Star	13
4.2 Let members know we are listening and communicate the resulting evolution of Green Star	13
FEEDBACK	14
APPENDIX A	15
DETAILS OF ISSUES RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS	15

# INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the proposals developed to address the feedback received and considered by the TAC at its December 2010 meeting.

As part of the continual evolution of Green Star, in 2010 the GBCA actively sought feedback from stakeholders. The two avenues of feedback were direct submissions to the TAC and independent market research conducted among members of the GBCA.

The TAC is an extension of the regular stakeholder feedback process. The TAC considers and responds to stakeholder concerns regarding the development or operation of the Green Star rating system. The TAC meets from time to time to consider matters raised by stakeholders and the GBCA's response. The TAC provides recommendations which are made public on the GBCA's website. The TAC reports to and makes recommendations to the GBCA Board. In the last quarter of 2010 the TAC invited stakeholders to provide submissions on Green Star. Two written submissions were received.

The Green Star market research, conducted between August and September 2010, was designed to identify areas where the Green Star assessment process could be improved and streamlined. The research was conducted by an independent research specialist. A survey of industry members (n=554) during August was complimented with a series of (13) in depth interviews among selected members with experience using the Green Star tools. The results were presented to the GBCA Board in November 2010. There was considerable overlap between the TAC submissions and the market research.

The TAC met on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of December to consider the combined feedback on Green Star. The TAC meetings comprised:

TAC:

Peter Verwer, Chair (*both meetings*)

Molly Harriss-Olson (*both meetings*)

Chris Wheeler (*both meetings*)

Observer:

Peter Waterhouse, Property Council of Australia (*initial meeting*)

Stakeholders presenting:

Hannah Morton, Cundall (*part of the initial meeting*)

David Collins, Cundall (*part of the initial meeting*)

The GBCA Representatives:

Romilly Madew, CEO (*initial meeting*)

Frank Romano, Chief Operating Officer (*second meeting*)

Andrew Aitken, Director, Green Star (*both meetings*)

Lynne Harman, Corporate Counsel/Company Secretary (*both meetings*)

Helen Bell, Research and Development Manger (*both meetings*)

Stakeholders making submissions to the TAC were invited to present at the first meeting. Two stakeholder representatives from Cundall took up this opportunity.

To facilitate the TAC process the submissions were categorised into a document which was then discussed by the TAC members, GBCA representatives and where relevant, Cundall representatives.

Eighteen proposals were developed in response to the Green Star feedback. The proposals, outlined in detail in this report, were considered by the GBCA Board at its February 2011 meeting. The Board endorsed all but one of the proposals. It was recommended that the proposal not endorsed be subjected to additional research.

# ISSUES RAISED

The issues raised in the submissions to the TAC and the Green Star Stakeholder Research can be grouped into four categories: tool design and methodology, the assessment process, assessors and communication. The table below outlines the issues raised by stakeholders and the actions the GBCA is taking to address them. Details of each TAC proposal are outlined in the next section.

## 1. Tool design and methodology

Issue	TAC Proposal
Design ratings are being misused Confusion over ratings	1.1 Expiry of ratings and ongoing assessment for Performance  <i>At the request of the Board, this is to be subjected to further research before a decision is made.</i>
Clarity of the difference between ratings and versions  "Box ticking" may not lead to the best environmental outcomes	1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating
Regional projects are sometimes disadvantaged	1.3 Review environmental weightings
Eligibility criteria Consistency across tools	1.4 Creation of a single Green Star tool for all buildings
Need for consistency between Green Star and NABERS terminology and metrics	1.5 Alignment of Green Star and NABERS
Need for a global Common Carbon Metric with some Australian input	1.6 Common Carbon Metrics

## 2. Assessment process

Issue	TAC Proposal
<p>Time taken to compile submissions (Round 1 &amp; 2)</p> <p>Volume of documentation</p> <p>Need for guidance for compilation of submissions</p> <p>Simplification of assessment</p> <p>Consistency of assessment</p> <p>Transparency of assessment</p>	2.1 Submission templates and examples
<p>Manuals not flexible</p> <p>Credits can be complex and keeping track of changes can be difficult</p> <p>Credits should be improved as feedback is received</p> <p>Credits should be adaptable</p> <p>Cost and accessibility of manuals</p>	2.2 Credits updated with CIRs and TCs more accessible
<p>Cost of Green Star is prohibitive for smaller projects</p> <p>Volume of documentation</p>	2.3 Simplify documentation requirements
<p>Cost of CIRs including area definitions</p>	2.4 Free CIR for Area Definitions
<p>Support for stakeholders</p> <p>Communication with the GBCA and assessors</p>	2.5 Pre-assessment review and access to expertise for project teams
<p>Time taken for assessment</p> <p>Consistency of assessment</p> <p>Uncertainty of assessment results</p>	2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits
<p>Risk associated with innovation credits and the associated cost</p>	2.7 Innovation assessed in Round 1
<p>Time taken to compile submissions</p> <p>Keeping track of contractors and documentation</p>	2.8 Online submission process

## 3. Assessment process

Issue	TAC Proposal
<p>Training for assessors</p>	3.1 Revise and improve assessor training
<p>Perceptions of conflicts of interest</p> <p>Consistency in assessment</p>	3.2 Consider introducing regular audits of assessors

#### 4. Communication

Issue	TAC Proposal
The GBCA needs to listen and respond to members Value for money the GBCA offers	4.1 Ongoing monitoring of stakeholder satisfaction with Green Star
Communicate the evolution of Green Star	4.2 Let members know we are listening and communicate the resulting evolution of Green Star

# 18 EVOLUTIONARY PROJECTS

As outlined in the previous section, the TAC proposals in response to the Green Star feedback fall into four categories:

1. Tool design and methodology
2. Assessment process
3. Assessors
4. Communication

The details of the eighteen proposals are outlined below.

## 1. TOOL DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 1.1 Expiry of ratings and ongoing assessment for Performance

**Proposal: Introduce expiry of Design ratings. Once the Green Star – Performance rating tool is available, introduce the expiry of As Built ratings. The Performance ratings are to have a limited life without re-assessment.**

The Design rating plays a key role in motivating getting people thinking about Green Star from the initial stages of the project development, providing a framework and influencing the decision to adopt green principles. However, buildings are being promoted with Design ratings long after they have been built, without any certification that the Design was reflected in the construction or in the performance of the building. This creates confusion in the market and could disadvantage buildings that have achieved an As Built rating and even more, buildings that achieve the future Performance rating.

It is proposed the Design rating expire one year after the practical completion of the building OR after the As Built certification has been achieved (whichever is the sooner). The expiry of the As Built rating will be introduced once the Performance rating is operational. It is proposed that the As Built rating should expire 18 months after the building has achieved 75% occupancy (75% occupancy is the point that the data for the Performance rating can start to be collected).

This proposal is to be subjected to additional research before a decision is made regarding its implementation.

## 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating

**Proposal: The GBCA investigate requiring a minimum level of achievement in some categories, such as energy and water for each star band (i.e. 4, 5 and 6 star ratings)**

Mandating a minimum score for each category would mean that all Green Star rated buildings have a certain level of efficiency (in areas such as water and greenhouse gas emissions) which could be clearly articulated. This would also facilitate comparisons of different building types that have Green Star ratings. Mandating a minimum score for the central categories (water and energy) will ensure there is a measurable improvement in the environmental impact of buildings as the Green Star rating increases.

## 1.3 Review environmental weightings

**Proposal: The GBCA prepare a position paper on the use of environmental weightings in Green Star**

Stakeholders often suggest that Green Star certification is difficult to achieve outside of metropolitan areas. The use of state based environmental weightings is highlighted as a problem. This approach means that water efficiency is given the same impact in Alice Springs as Darwin which does not reflect the climatic variance in the state. Similarly, water efficiency is more highly weighted in Tasmania than Victoria despite supply being much more abundant in Tasmania.

## 1.4 Creation of a single Green Star tool for all buildings

**Proposal: The GBCA develop an online tool that provides a Green Star rating of all buildings regardless of the mix of spaces within the building**

Currently, at least 80% of a building must be of a certain space type (retail, office, residential etc) to be able to use the relevant tool. As an example, currently, a ten story office building that includes two floors of retail would be rated using the Office tool. A single Green Star tool would provide an integrated approach, enabling each space type to be rated using the tool for that space.

This functionality is currently being provided through the Green Star – Custom tool development service. This will provide the basis for a Single Tool, removing any inconsistencies between the current Green Star tools.

## 1.5 Alignment of Green Star and NABERS

**Proposal: The GBCA update members on the ongoing work being done to align Green Star and NABERS**

GBCA is working with the NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water (DECCW) to develop a set of common metrics and standard terms for use in the NABERS and Green Star tools. The GBCA and DECCW have established a working group to achieve this. The GBCA could update members on the ongoing work being done with DECCW to define common metrics and other issues identified in the work plan developed in response to the MOU with GBCA, DECCW and the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE).

## 1.6 Common Carbon Metrics

**Proposal: The GBCA continues to work towards defining common carbon metrics to work alongside the existing measurement**

The GBCA is participating in an international working group to develop common carbon metrics. It is likely that this system will work alongside the existing carbon metrics used within Green Star. Buildings will have two ratings; a common carbon metrics rating and a local rating, enabling comparisons between and within countries.

# 2. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

## 2.1 Submission templates and examples

**Proposal: The introduction of templates for submissions and the provision of examples of successful submissions for credits**

The introduction of templates will provide a common format for submissions. The provision of examples of submissions for credits will further illustrate the information being sought. Together, the templates and examples will assist in the compilation of submissions, providing clear guidance as to the format required for each credit submission. This may decrease the time taken to compile submissions, potentially decreasing the overall cost by reducing consultancy fees.

The templates will enable the assessors to have easy access to the information they require, presented in a standard format. This should decrease the time required for assessment and thus reduce the cost as well as increasing the consistency of assessment.

## 2.2 Credits updated with CIRs and TCs more accessible

**Proposal: The GBCA make credits that have been updated to include the knowledge gained from TCs and CIRs available across existing tools**

The complexity of some credits means they are open to interpretation, while others can be applied in a different way by project teams. In both cases, Technical Clarifications (TCs) and Credit Interpretation Requests (CIRs) are used to confirm a particular project team's approach. As new rating tools are developed, the information contained within TCs and CIRs is integrated into the credits and the new credits are released with the new rating tool. It is proposed that the GBCA make credits that have been updated to include the knowledge gained from the TCs and CIRs available for use with existing rating tools. These updates would not alter the intent of the credit or change the benchmarks it aims to achieve.

Moving the information in the technical manuals online will enable the GBCA to centrally update the information, incorporating the TCs and CIRs within each credit, as outlined above. It would also help project managers to compile current credit information requirements for their contractors.

### 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements

**Proposal: The GBCA develop additional deemed to satisfy criteria and review the documentation requirements.**

The cost of preparing a Green Star submission is relatively independent of the size of the project. This can make it cost prohibitive for smaller projects to seek certification. These smaller projects are often office interiors fit outs. The GBCA could make Green Star more accessible to smaller projects by developing "deemed to satisfy" criteria for a number of the credits that currently require extensive documentation. This would reduce the time and cost expended on the certification process for all projects regardless of size.

### 2.4 Free CIR for Area Definitions

**Proposal: The GBCA provide an additional free CIR for area definitions**

Project teams often implement a CIR to determine the area of different space types within their project. While this is not mandatory, it provides certainty over which spaces are relevant for each credit. The GBCA could change the service offered by providing an area definition CIR for free at the start of each project.

### 2.5 Pre-assessment review and access to expertise for project teams

**Proposal: The GBCA to consider inviting project teams to attend the pre-assessment review and arranging access to expertise.**

The GBCA currently conducts a high level pre-assessment review of submissions and offers feedback to project teams. The GBCA could consider including the project teams in these reviews by providing a meeting with GBCA personnel prior to the lodgement of submissions.

In addition to the approach above, the GBCA could also consider arranging access to expertise for project teams in relation to critical credits. This would provide project teams with a store of expertise enabling meaningful technical advice to be provided. This would be an external peer review. A small panel of experts focusing on critical credits such as Water, Energy and other key areas could be drawn upon for these reviews.

### 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits

**Proposal: The certification process is modified to allow pre-assessment of critical credits prior to the official assessment process.**

Allowing project teams to have critical credits pre-assessed and conditionally awarded would remove a lot of risk and help assist with the reduction of expensive buffer credits. Pre-assessment of credits would also enable the GBCA to allocate the assessment of some credits to specialists in each field. This would improve assessment consistency.

### 2.7 Innovation assessed in Round 1

**Proposal: Innovation credits be assessed in Round 1**

Feedback has indicated a number of concerns with the Innovation credits. One concern relates to the lack of certainty in Round 2 on whether innovation will be awarded and the lack of opportunities to improve submissions to provide additional information to substantiate innovation claims. This adds significant costs to the project as the points targeted are generally such high risk, project teams are reluctant to count on them. Consequently, project teams include buffer credits in projects, adding to the

cost of certification. The GBCA proposes moving the assessment of innovation claims to Round 1, providing the opportunity for innovation points to be awarded in Round 1 and enabling project teams to provide additional information in Round 2 if necessary.

## 2.8 Online submission process

**Proposal: The submission process to be moved online.**

Moving the submission process online will make it easier and faster for project teams to upload and submit their Green Star documentation. It will provide the project team with the ability to review the submission, including the credits that are being submitted and the progress towards their achievement.

# 3. ASSESSORS

## 3.1 Revise and improve assessor training

**Proposal: The GBCA consider improving training for Assessors.**

The GBCA could revise and improve the formal Assessor training programs which have been developed.

## 3.2 Consider introducing regular audits of assessors

**Proposal: The GBCA consider introducing regular audits of Green Star assessors**

Assessors' work is currently audited on an ad hoc basis. The GBCA could consider conducting a minimum number of audits on each assessor.

# 4. COMMUNICATION

## 4.1 Ongoing monitoring of satisfaction with Green Star

**Proposal: The GBCA regularly monitor satisfaction with Green Star**

The satisfaction with Green Star and the assessment process will be measured in January 2011, prior to the adoption of the recommendations above and again annually, to quantify the impact of the changes. The GBCA will also track the time taken to respond to Green Star inquiries to determine if this is a problem.

## 4.2 Let members know we are listening and communicate the resulting evolution of Green Star

**Proposal: The GBCA let members know we are listening to their feedback and that Green Star is evolving as a result**

The work the GBCA is undertaking addressing stakeholder feedback provides an opportunity for the GBCA to communicate what is being done and thank stakeholders for their feedback. The TAC report and outcomes could be made available to members and the public.

# FEEDBACK

Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the GBCA to provide feedback on this report.

Helen Bell  
Research and Development Manager  
Green Building Council of Australia  
Phone: 0400 001 040  
Email: [Helen.bell@gbca.org.au](mailto:Helen.bell@gbca.org.au)

# APPENDIX A

## DETAILS OF ISSUES RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
Some members felt that the Green Building Council occasionally seems unwilling to accept constructive criticism and respond appropriately.	1.1. demonstrate strong leadership and direction, by listening to the concerns of stakeholders and setting out a clear plan for resolving them;	Introduction and entire document
There is a perception that GBC staff do not understand the needs of property companies, but focus almost solely on environmental issues, rather than triple bottom-line sustainability.	1.2. be more accountable by clearly highlighting any rulings or policy decisions it has made and the reasons for them;	Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
More environmental change can be achieved when there is greater freedom for projects and professionals to make decisions appropriate to their sites and circumstances.	1.3. provide more timely responses to stakeholder problems – time limits should be set both for acknowledging receipt of a query and for providing a response;	Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
	1.4. deliver support to stakeholders within their project and finance deadlines; and	Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise
	1.5. develop clear, documented processes for dealing quickly and appropriately with everyday issues and concerns.	Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits
The Green Star tools are cumbersome and inflexible – assessment is proving too detailed and complicated.		Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
They do not provide the flexibility required for different project delivery methods, such as design and construct.		Proposal 2.1 Templates and Examples

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
there is no process to avoid a rating refusal based on different eligibility interpretations;		Proposal 2.4 Free CIR for area definitions
obtaining a rating can take a long time – members have reported that in some circumstances it takes longer to get accreditation than to design and document a 50,000m <sup>2</sup> development;		Proposal 2.1 Templates and Examples
the tools don't offer rewards for staged infrastructure at the as-built stage, despite this potentially being more efficient and cost effective than building by building infrastructure;		Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings
it is often difficult for a client to approve funding for a potential innovation when those funds might better be allocated to delivering a low risk Green Star point with precedent;		Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1
without a strong client moral and financial support small projects don't often seek certified ratings – it's hard to justify the cost of obtaining a rating for small projects;		Proposal 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements
without a specific target, and considering the possible liability associated with a certified rating, a project team and client can find that their Green Star ideal 'dies a death of 1,000 cuts' and the final project is delivered as a shadow of its potential; and		Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits
there is still significant inconsistency in the assessment results between projects.  This is becoming more important as contracts contain tight Green Star clauses with the risk of associated damages claims.		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors  Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
The risk of a Green Star assessment should sit within the project team – based on the specific design characteristics and associated documentary evidence - not within the assessment process.		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
	2.1. simplify the Green Star suite of tools by clarifying how much must be done, compared with how much information would be ideal;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
	2.2. mandate an assessment process which ensures that like for like outcomes between each project can be awarded consistently and fairly;	Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors  Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits
	2.3 make ratings more adaptable, to allow project teams to apply them appropriately to their developments;	Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
	2.4. review eligibility criteria against the negligible real risk to Green Star's brand and reputation;	Proposal 1.4 Creation of a single Green Star tool for all buildings
	2.5. publish technical clarifications (TCs)/ credit interpretation requests (CIRs) more rapidly, and allow retrospectivity; and	Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
	2.6. make a CIR-type option available for projects to seek pre-approval of classification as an innovation and approval of a documentation methodology.	Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
<p>Despite improvements to the system, the cost of putting together a submission for Green Star is still very expensive, regardless of the tool used.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples</p> <p>Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1</p>
<p>Significantly increased registration fees in particular have become a greater barrier to the use of the tools.</p>		<p>Proposal 4.1 Satisfaction monitor</p>
<p>While we recognise that the need for a better level of service may increase some of the costs to the Green Building Council, these could be minimised by adopting a cheaper, more streamlined approach.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples</p> <p>Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits</p> <p>Proposal 2.8 Online submissions</p> <p>Proposal 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements</p>
<p>Large sums of money are involved in obtaining a certified rating, with a consequent liability associated with failure to deliver a rating – this is dissuading owners from taking that risk.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.6 Disaggregation of credits</p> <p>Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1</p>
<p>Prescriptive requirements increase compliance costs for teams, and also the costs for the Green Building Council to conduct a review.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible</p>

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
Green Star design, documentation, and modeling costs (separate from the Green Building Council administration fee) are often similar for both large and small projects, making the latter less affordable.		Proposal 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements
The costs associated with obtaining credit interpretation requests (CIRs) are becoming untenable – any shadow of a doubt by the Green Building Council requires an applicant to pay a significant fee to determine whether further documentation is needed. There is no refund if the assessor gets it wrong.		Proposal 2.4 Free CIR for area definitions Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
Efficiencies and cost-reductions should be sought in relation to registration fees, consultant fees, the collection of evidence, modeling processes, and the cost of applying new initiatives on site.		Proposal 4.1 Ongoing monitoring of satisfaction with Green Star
Organisations have expressed frustration at the “cost of doing good”, at being penalised in assessment despite the many millions of dollars spent pursuing sustainability in their developments.		Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1
If the expense of getting a “certificate” continues to be as high as it is, there is a risk that practitioners will opt out and pursue their own course, based on other rating tools.		Proposal 4.1 Ongoing monitoring of satisfaction with Green Star
	3.1 limit the documentation requirements for assessments and provide standardised forms for use by project teams;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and Examples

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
	3.2. allow Green Star accredited professionals or certified assessors within project teams  to provide certification for buildings receiving a 4 or 5-star rating;	Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise  Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits  Proposal 2.8 Online submissions
	3.3. conduct regular or random audits of the work of assessors;	Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
	3.4. reduce certification fees in line with efficiencies gained in assessment and approval;  and	Proposal 4.1 Ongoing monitoring of satisfaction with Green Star
	3.5. undertake a review of the costs incurred by a project at each stage of Green Star  assessment to identify where efficiencies could be made.	Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits  Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1
Green Star credits are often overly complex and poorly targeted.		Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
The Green Star accredited professional's role can easily degrade to box ticking and risk management – a 'chase for points', where the best sustainable solutions are not being pursued because they may not deliver enough points towards a better rating.		Proposal 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating
It can be difficult for a client to approve funding for a potential innovation when those funds might be allocated to delivering a low risk Green Star point with precedent. This is particularly the case with projects targeting multiple innovation points.		Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
<p>For example, recently a building in Melbourne was to be naturally ventilated, but because it didn't produce enough points the developers decided to install air conditioning instead.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits</p> <p>Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1</p>
<p>The Green Building Council can be reluctant at times to engage with project teams who have specific site-related issues. This forces those teams to apply solutions that aren't particularly relevant or appropriate to their projects.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise</p> <p>Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible</p>
<p>Each project varies in scope and context – it is important that an assessment panel is familiar with the drivers of the project's design credentials and the project is fairly rewarded for sustainable design initiatives within the bounds of the site context and Green Star system.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits</p>
<p>Consultants often advise developers to target more points than necessarily required, due to uncertainty about what a project may qualify for.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits</p> <p>Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1</p>
<p>Those extra points can be significantly more expensive to obtain, but there are no refunds for achieving more points than required.</p>		<p>Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits</p> <p>Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1</p>
<p>there needs to be better integration between the NABERS and Green Star tools, to improve consistency by adopting common language and metrics;</p>		<p>Proposal 1.5 Alignment with NABERS</p>

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
the eligibility criteria on the BCA classification percentage is unnecessarily tight;		Proposal 2.4 Free CIR for area definitions  Proposal 1.4 Creation of a single tool
the definition of "included rating area" is not working and needs clarification; and		Proposal 2.4 Free CIR for area definitions
there are ongoing issues with the cross-over of some rating tools (for example, Office and Office Interiors).		Proposal 1.4 Creation of a single tool
	4.1. open up a communication path between individual project teams and with the Green Building Council assessors;	Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise
	4.2. make all credit award criteria, including Innovation, transparent and predictable;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples  Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
	4.3. discourage 'points buying', but encourage flexibility and judgment, for example, with less 'spreadsheet accounting';	Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits
	4.4. remove inconsistencies in the same credits between tools (eg. Mat-4 in Office V3 and Education v1, IEQ-4 in Office V3 and Healthcare v1, etc);	Proposal 1.4 Creation of a single tool
	4.5. improve guidance notes on many credits:- for example, with energy reports;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
	4.6. balance credit documentation with credit value;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
	4.7. expand credit cover sheets into a standard Green Star report form template; and	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
	4.8. in conjunction with DECCW, develop a set of common metrics and standard terms for use in both the NABERS and Green Star suites of tools.	Proposal 1.5 Alignment with NABERS
The volume of documentation required for a rating is too great to be collected in the time allowed for assessments.		Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
It also tends to be disproportionate to credit value, and adds significantly to the effort and cost of obtaining a rating.		Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
	5.1. simplify the Green Star assessment process, by reducing and rationalising the amount of documentation required to obtain a rating;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
	5.2. put the onus on assessors to be satisfied with the evidence provided in an assessment. Detailed documentation could then only be required for an audit, as occurs with the tax system;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples  Proposal 2.8 Online submissions
	5.3. remove the duplication of documentation by providing standard forms (eg cover sheets and short reports);	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
	5.4. provide guidance documents/examples for all reports and specification clauses;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
	5.5. provide evidence schedules that can be included with reports;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
	5.6. consider introducing a 'low document' Green Star rating, specifically intended for small projects, that provides 'deemed-to-satisfy' standardised solutions or point allocations for common credits; and	Proposal 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements
	5.7. improve communication to the industry in general, and project teams in particular, about areas where documentation requirements have already been reduced.	Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
The Green Star manuals are often unclear or inconsistent, leading to confusion amongst practitioners.  Printed manuals prevent flexibility and rapid change, including the opportunity to make corrections such as development changes and credit interpretation requests (CIRs) or technical clarification (TC) responses as required.		Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
The cost of the manuals is currently prohibitive for subcontractors or suppliers, who may only need to know one aspect of a Green Star tool.		Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
	6.1. The Green Building Council should make manuals freely available online in pdf format and update them frequently to include development changes and CIR/TC responses.	Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
results from individual assessors are generally inconsistent across assessments / projects;		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
different assessors will deliver varied results, depending on whether they consider the content of an application or take a position on a technicality; and		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
assessors "outside" an organisation face conflicts of interest with peers assessing the projects of competitors.		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
These variations often occur because of unhealthy and unbalanced assessment loads, errors, and a poor understanding of what is required.		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors  Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise  Proposal 2.6 Disaggregation of credits
Final assessments very much depend upon which assessor at the Green Building Council is assigned to the project.		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
	7.1. develop a standard assessment process and guidelines to ensure more accuracy and consistency in ratings;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples  Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
	7.2. drop the independent assessment process in favour of putting responsibility on certified project assessors within project teams;	Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits
	7.3. strengthen legal enforcement of project and assessor agreements through the use of penalties or a "name and shame" process for poor performers;	Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
	7.4. increase the responsibility given to properly trained assessors and Green Star accredited professionals (GSAPs), allowing them to interpret credits, without 'dumbing down' the tools;	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples  Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
	7.5. introduce an effective Code of Conduct and Green Building Council audits, to ensure that assessors and GSAPs practise a high standard of professional ethics; and	Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
	7.6. allow project teams the opportunity to appeal an adverse decision to a "second opinion" assessor.	Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors  Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise
Assessors are often very inexperienced, particularly concerning the commerciality of a development.		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
Training should be more robust, with trainee assessors required to serve out a probation period before being accredited.		Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
CPD programs should be designed to ensure that relevant training is recognised, freely available, and inexpensive.		Already addressed*
The requirement for CDP training to come exclusively from the Green Building Council is considered to be a barrier to improving the performance of assessors.		Already addressed*

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
	8.1. conduct random audits of assessments to ensure that assessors are competent;	Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
	8.2. strengthen training and qualifications for certified assessors, to ensure more experienced people involved in assessment; and	Proposal 3.1 Improve training for assessors Proposal 3.2 Audits of assessors
	8.3. improve the Green Star CPD program, by:  8.3.1. identifying the core skills/competencies required by assessors and rewarding training that helps to improve those;  8.3.2. improving GBCA training courses to ensure that they cater to the needs of assessors and their clients; and  8.3.3. recognising the training available from other organisations.	Already addressed*
Owners/managers are not identifying the version of Green Star tool used to rate their buildings.		Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings
Buildings rated 6-star under Version 2 may only merit a 5-star rating under Version 3, but can still be promoted as a 6-star building.		Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings  Proposal 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
These ratings are being used to compare buildings without any recognition of the reasons for their differences.		Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings  Proposal 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating
Developers using the latest rating tool are disadvantaged, because they are competing with buildings rated under a previous tool.		Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings  Proposal 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating
Furthermore, owners/managers with buildings that achieve a high rating under Green Star Design continue to promote them as such long after they've been constructed.		Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings
	9.1. publish clearer guidelines for the marketing of results;	Already addressed*
	9.2. require all building ratings to identify prominently the version of Green Star tool used;	Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings
	9.3. provide a comparative table on the Green Building Council website to demonstrate how ratings under different versions compare;	Proposal 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating
	9.4. make it easier for owners and managers with a Green Star Design rating to obtain an As-Built rating; and	Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
	9.5. improve the verification of Green Star Design ratings to ensure that the design of the building is matched by its construction.	Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings
Innovations discovered in the course of obtaining Green Star ratings are often not widely shared with new developments.		Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1  Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples
While Green Star provides a strong reward for building-by-building systems, such as black water and cogeneration, the experience and cost-effectiveness of using such technologies is not sufficiently shared across the property sector.		Proposal 1.2 Minimum requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating
	10.1. The Green Building Council should publish the results of projects awarded innovation credits and give more advice to teams seeking to use similar technologies and techniques. This should include feedback about what worked and what didn't.	Proposal 2.1 Templates and examples  Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1
As time goes on, the Green Star suite of tools will expand and new and additional credits are likely to be added.		Proposal 1.4 Creation of a single Green Star tool for all buildings
Concerns have been raised that the Green Building Council appears not to be using successful innovative designs and concepts to determine what can become achievable and measurable credits.		Proposal 2.2 Updating credits and manuals
Innovation was awarded so that it could be shared amongst the industry, and so that these ideas and concepts could re-surface in the form of new measurable credits.		Proposal 2.7 Innovation credit assessment be moved to Round 1

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
Yet, tool development does not occur quickly, despite this information about innovation being made available from ratings.		Already addressed*
Nor is any 'tweaking' carried out to make minor improvements to credits, based on feedback received from project teams.		Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
While making the current credits bullet proof is important, the existing tools should expand and be improved.		Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible
For example, the Green Star interiors tool is outdated, but there is no apparent plan to update it in the near future.		Proposal 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements
	11.1. put more Green Building Council resources into tool development, quality assurance, and CIR/TC query response; and	The entire Proposals document is about the allocation of resources
	11.2. increase the frequency and regularity of tool upgrades.	Proposal 2.2 Make updated credits more accessible  Proposal 1.2 Minimuml requirements for some categories for each Green Star rating
Need for a common carbon metric	Point 1. Carbon Metrics  The GBCA work with international bodies to determine a common carbon metric while maintaining a local scale.	Proposal 1.6 Common carbon metric
Design ratings - Maintaining the reputation of Green Star	Point 2. Design ratings be abolished	Proposal 1.1 Introduce expiry of ratings
Errors in tools	Point 3. Errors in tools  One submission notified the GBCA of errors in the tools	Already addressed

Issue	Resolution proposed by stakeholder(s)	TAC proposals
Regional projects disadvantaged	Point 4. Regional, rural and remote category weightings	Proposal 1.3 Review weightings
Suitability for smaller projects	Point 5. Green Star Light	Proposal 2.3 Simplify documentation requirements
Manuals become outdated with constant TCs and CIRs	Point 6. Issue updated credit sheets every 6 months capturing all CIRs and TCs	Proposal 2.2 Make credits more accessible
There is not direct communication between project teams and assessors	Point 7. Access to Green Star Assessors	Proposal 2.6 Pre-assessment of critical credits  Proposal 2.5 Access to expertise

\* Where a concern has already been addressed by the GBCA's existing operations it has not been re-addressed in this document.