

7 December 2011

Mr Peter Poulet
State Architect
Department of Justice
GPO Box 825
HOBART TAS 7000

Via email: rds@justice.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Poulet,

RE: GBCA SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on Tasmania's draft Residential Development Strategy. The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) commends the Tasmanian Government on the development of this strategy that aims to create a housing system that focuses on affordability and good design, and that is integrated with sustainable, socially inclusive and connected communities.

About the Green Building Council of Australia

As you know, the GBCA is Australia's leading authority on green buildings and communities, established in 2002 to develop a sustainable property industry in Australia and drive the adoption of green building practices. The GBCA promotes green building programs, technologies; design practices and processes, and operates Australia's only national voluntary comprehensive environmental rating system for buildings - Green Star.

The GBCA has more than 900 member organisations, including government departments, which work together to support the Council and its activities. The GBCA is also a founding member of the World Green Building Council, 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 89 such councils worldwide.

The Green Star rating tools

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

There are currently nine Green Star rating tools which address a range of building types and more than 380 buildings have achieved Green Star ratings, with a further 540 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, Transport, Water, Materials, Land Use and Ecology, Emissions and Innovation.

Green Star – Communities

In 2009, in consultation with industry and all levels of government, the GBCA commenced work on the development of a rating tool for sustainable development projects on a community scale.

The first step in developing the Green Star – Communities rating tool was to develop a national framework consisting of five best practice 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

The GBCA is now working on Stage 2 of the Green Star – Communities project; establishing best practice benchmarks and developing credits. A set of draft credits has been developed and these are currently being tested on a number of projects across Australia. A summary of the draft credits is enclosed.

How the GBCA can assist

The four key dimensions (social, economic, environmental and physical) identified in the draft Residential Development Strategy closely align with the principles of the Green Star – Communities framework and this highlights the opportunities for government and industry to take a coordinated approach in creating more sustainable communities.

We believe that Green Star – Communities would be a valuable tool that can assist the Tasmanian Government in refining and implementing strategies and measuring progress. There are several other key areas in which the GBCA can assist the Tasmanian Government in achieving its vision.

Greener multi-unit residential buildings

The Draft Residential Development Strategy identifies that a mix of housing types and densities will be a key element of a housing system that is more liveable, more sustainable and which limits urban sprawl. We believe that the Green Star – Multi-Unit Residential v1 rating tool can help the Tasmanian Government to achieve these objectives and in particular, develop residential buildings with greater energy and water efficiency, lower greenhouse gas emissions and more attractive and healthy buildings that contribute to lower utility bills for residents. The Tasmanian Government has already committed to achieving a Green Star rating for the 75-77 Hopkins Street housing development project in Hobart which will be an outstanding achievement and a significant step towards a more sustainable housing system for Tasmania.

We have two strong examples of how the Green Star – Multi-Unit Residential v1 rating tool can be used in a social housing project with successful outcomes, both delivered through Housing NSW on cost-neutral budgets. Please find a copy of the case studies for the Lilyfield Housing Redevelopment and the Redfern Housing Development enclosed.

Green Star as a metric

The GBCA commends the Tasmanian Government for the vision and strategies outlined in the draft strategic plan. We are interested to learn whether a set of metrics has been developed to measure progress and if so, how these will be communicated to ensure ongoing community engagement.

Using straightforward and robust benchmarks makes communication of goals and progress clear and effective. Green Star is an internationally and locally recognised standard that can be a useful metric for a range of projects. Green Star rating tools evaluate the environmental design and construction of buildings and provide clear benchmarks for best practice, Australian excellence and world leadership.

Measures of success

The GBCA has undertaken a significant consultation process in the development of the Green Star – Communities rating tool credits to better understand the elements that make a sustainable community. GBCA staff and members are often sought after to participate in panels and workshops that examine the issues facing the built environment. We would welcome the opportunity to use what we have learnt to assist the Tasmanian Government in developing indicators to measure the success of the proposed strategies and we would also be happy to assist in the review of strategies and progress as the strategic plan is implemented in the coming years.

Leadership in sustainability

The GBCA's objective is to drive the transition of the property industry towards greater sustainability. We do not aim to rate every single building or community, but we do believe that pursuing a Green Star rating and referencing Green Star in policies helps to achieve outcomes that are more sustainable. We congratulate the Tasmanian Government's strong leadership with its commitment in *Tasmania's Action Plan to Reduce Emissions*, released earlier this year, to meeting 5 Star Green Star benchmarks for every new school, hospital and healthcare centre in the state.

As discussed above, the GBCA can provide assistance to the Tasmanian Government in a number of ways. We strongly encourage the Office of the State Architect or the Department of Health and Human Services to consider membership of the GBCA so that we can provide an even greater level of support, such as working with the Council to promote their leadership on issues surrounding sustainability in the built environment and assisting with media communications around Green Star projects.

The GBCA looks forward to working with the Tasmanian Government to help realise its vision for a sustainable housing system that meets the needs of Tasmanians. We will be in touch with your office in early 2012 to further discuss how the GBCA can assist in delivering the desired outcomes. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any further information that you require.

Yours sincerely,



Robin Mellon

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