

1 July 2011

Mr Stan Krpan  
Reviewer  
Sustainability Victoria  
Level 28, 50 Lonsdale Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Copy by email to: [svreview@sustainability.vic.gov.au](mailto:svreview@sustainability.vic.gov.au)

Dear Mr Krpan,

**RE: SUBMISSION TO THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY VICTORIA**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the review of Sustainability Victoria's strategic direction. The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) has been working with Sustainability Victoria (SV) for a number of years – since the days of the Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria – and we value the strong working relationship that we have established.

The GBCA is Australia's leading authority on green building, 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.

**Green buildings – a solution to climate change**

The built environment offers significant opportunities for reducing carbon emissions. While buildings are responsible for almost a quarter of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions, the building sector also has the greatest potential to deliver emissions cuts, at the least cost, using technology available now.

One of the most cost-effective abatement opportunities remains the retrofitting and refurbishment of commercial buildings. The GBCA believes a strong focus on improving energy efficiency in the built environment can support any government efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting jobs growth.

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### **The GBCA's partnership with SV**

SV (then operating as Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria) has been a strong supporter of the GBCA since its inception, contributing funding for the Council's establishment as well as funding, IP and technical help for the first Green Star rating tool, Green Star – Office Design v1. Green Star – Office Design has since been updated a number of times and was released as version 3 in February 2008. It is Australia's most popular holistic rating tool. Since the release of the first Green Star tool in 2003, more than 330 projects have been certified (93 in Victoria), and there are over 480 projects currently registered or being processed (123 in Victoria).

The GBCA has had significant success in encouraging the property industry to build greener buildings. However, there are areas of the property industry where the GBCA is only just beginning to have an impact, such as public buildings, retail, housing, existing buildings, and looking beyond individual buildings to creating more sustainable communities and precincts. The GBCA relies on strategic partnerships with key organisations to show leadership, provide sponsorship and to raise awareness in these areas. More recently, SV has provided sponsorship for the development of the Green Star – Public Building PILOT (\$10,000), Green Star – Communities (\$35,000) and the Green Star – Performance (\$25,000) tools.

As well as financial support, SV provides valuable advice, data and in-kind support based on its work in promoting zero emissions buildings and neighbourhoods and developing industry capacity to improve building performance. SV has helped the GBCA, especially with the development of the Green Star Communities rating tool, with understanding current and emerging social, economic and environmental challenges and the needs of current and future generations. SV plays a unique role in working together with business, the Victorian Government and the community to deliver tangible outcomes in the areas of carbon pollution reduction and the smarter use of resources, specifically energy, materials and water.

SV's purpose – to effect positive change in the areas of waste recovery, energy efficiency and renewable energy supply together with its key stakeholders (community, business and government) – aligns closely with some of the Green Star categories and credits which have been present in every rating tool since the launch of Green Star – Office Design v1 in 2003. The Energy category, IEQ category, Management category and Materials category within the Green Star rating tools have particularly benefitted from the input, contributions and information provided by different staff members of SV over the past eight years.

Different members of SV have worked collaboratively with the GBCA to design, establish and review robust, relevant and easy-to-use best practice benchmarks for Green Star and for the state-based weightings found within the rating tools. In addition, members of SV staff and members of GBCA staff have identified activities of interest and tried to provide communication and briefings on international updates, data and gap analysis, corporate communications and newsletters, commercial office buildings and tenancies, retail and residential projects, communities projects, and local government buildings, where relevant.

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For example, SV's productivity and pre- and post-occupancy studies assist the GBCA to quantify the benefits of green buildings. The global headquarters of the National Australia Bank (NAB) at 500 Bourke Street, for example, has a 5 Star Green Star – Office Design v2 rating and is registered for a Green Star – Office As Built v2 rating. SV is working with NAB on a pre- and post-occupancy study that will examine issues such as indoor environment quality (IEQ) and its impacts on the health and productivity of the occupants and this will be a valuable resource for the GBCA.

Members of SV have, at different times over the last few years, identified opportunities to engage in the communication and support of relevant GBCA activities through SV networks. In addition, members of SV have identified and communicated opportunities and developments to the GBCA which have helped advance the implementation of the GBCA's Strategic Plan.

**Integrating sustainability into the built environment**

GBCA supports the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) Call to Action (released in March 2011, copy enclosed) which calls for a Federal Minister for Cities and Urban Development to deliver integrated building, precinct and city policy and programs. Integrated policy is vital at every level of government and the GBCA views SV, with its broad involvement across a range of initiatives and its goal to integrate sustainability into all aspects of everyday life, as the best agency to play a coordinating role across the various government departments, policies and programs that affect the built environment in Victoria.

The GBCA believes that SV demonstrates strong leadership through the partnerships it has established and has positioned itself as a driver of change in Victoria. We would encourage SV to continue to look for opportunities to partner with industry and government to influence change strategically, as well as continuing to deliver a wide range of programs at community and individual level.

We look forward to continuing to work with SV on a range of initiatives, including the development of Green Star tools.

Yours sincerely,



Romilly Madew  
Chief Executive