

# Green Star Certification Process Review

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## Background

In response to industry feedback and as part of our ongoing commitment to improve our processes, the GBCA embarked on a review of the certification process. Feedback indicated that there was room for process improvements, including the time and costs required to certify, consistency of assessment results, and the way in which assessment results are communicated. The aim of the review was to evaluate our current processes and recommend changes to the existing certification model in order to address industry feedback.

Four alternative certification models were considered:

- Certification models under review:
  1. Independent assessment
  2. Private certifier
  3. In-house assessment
  4. Amended model

## Key activities undertaken

As part of the review process, the following activities were undertaken:

- A review of other certification schemes including “in-house” assessment models and “private certification/assessor” models. This review included detailed internal analysis and insight from the respective schemes such as, LEED (US), BREEAM (UK), NABERS (Aus), NatHERS (Aus), and Green Mark (Singapore).
- A review of relevant standards, including ISO17065: Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services, and standards set by the ISEAL alliance.
- Industry workshops and interviews were held with key stakeholders to explore the four alternative certification models and analyse their potential performance against the key objectives identified as part of industry feedback. Over 100 active Green Star users, supporters, and critics, representative of our membership composition, were interviewed or attended sessions Australia-wide.

The industry was divided on which alternative model was preferred as a replacement to the current certification model. In addition, industry had the view that introducing an entirely new certification model would be too much change at once for marginal benefit. As a result, the pathway identified as the most beneficial moving forward was to implement changes that could help improve the current certification model.

## Improvements to the certification model

The certification review identified a number of elements in the current certification model that could be improved by learning from other certification systems and industry feedback. A number of recommendations were put forth to the GBCA Board and approved, including three specific recommendations for improvement to the current process which project teams will notice. These improvements will be implemented in stages, including thorough testing, with full

implementation being reached by July 2015. All of these improvements will be applied to new Green Star rating tools.

### 1. Assessment Comment Structure

*Improved assessment comments to ensure points are being awarded, or not, based on the project meeting the aim and intent of the credit.*

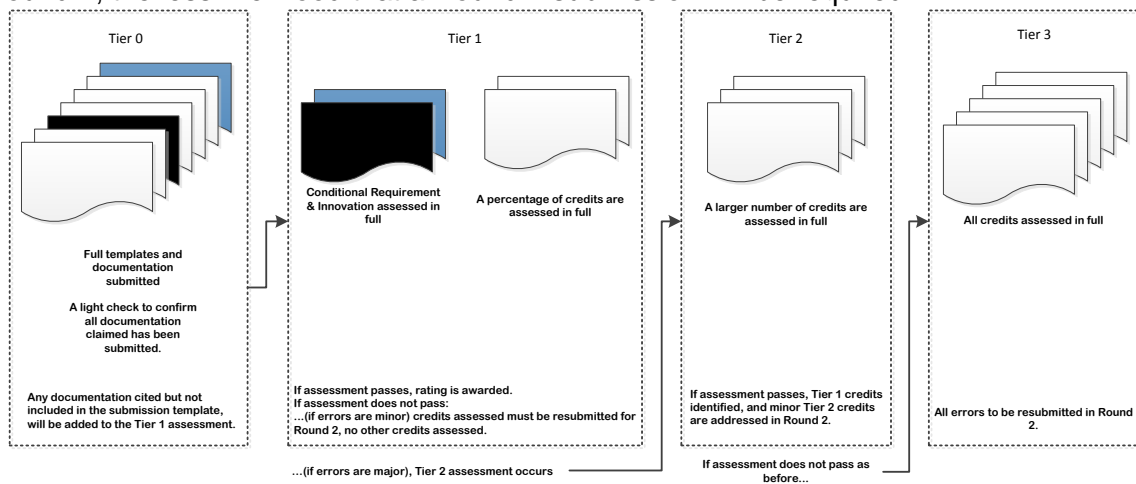
The GBCA will implement a new assessment comment structure which includes three levels of compliance that will make it clear when credits are awarded, awarded despite minor errors, and when credits cannot be awarded due to major errors. The rules for the three levels of compliance will be applied to all new rating tools and published on the GBCA website. This change will ensure project teams are being requested to make upgrades to their submission based on outcomes that have a marked sustainability impact.

### 2. Tiered Assessment

*Move to a tiered assessment in line with certification best practice and other national and international certification schemes.*

The current certification process assesses 100% of Green Star credits and all supporting documentation. Moving forward projects will still be required to submit full documentation; however, credits will be assessed with procedure outlined in the diagram below.

The templates and supporting documentation for the Conditional Requirements and any Innovation claims will always be fully assessed for all projects. The more errors identified in Round 1 will result in the progression through the assessment tiers, and therefore require additional time and resources for the Round 2 submission. This initiative aims to incentivise projects to submit high quality submissions in Round 1. The better the submission is at Round 1, the less likelihood that a Round 2 submission will be required.



### 3. Project Team and Assessment Panel Interaction

*Allow greater interaction between the project team and nominated assessor(s).*

While the assessment occurs independently from the project team there will be opportunities for the project team to interact with the assessment panel once certain milestones are met.

This may involve a post-assessment clarifications meeting. By allowing a degree of direct interaction among the project contact, GBCA and assessor, the aim is to clarify issues, facilitate clearer communication, and to reduce any frustration or uncertainty in a more efficient manner.

## Implementation

Whilst each of the initiatives are at different stages of development, all are planned to be completed and implemented between Q4 2014 – Q2 2015. GBCA will continue to engage with industry on the mechanics of the improvements including trialling before broad implementation. If you are managing a Green Star project and would like to participate, we encourage you to contact your Case Manager for further detail on how you can be involved.

| Improvement  | Status   | Expected Implementation Date         |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Assessment comment structure</b>                  | Guidelines under development; trialling to commence Q4 2014  | Q1-Q2 2015 for all new rating tools. |
| <b>Tiered assessment</b>                             | Guidelines under development; trialling to commence Q4 2014. | Q1-Q2 2015 for all new rating tools. |
| <b>Project Team and Assessment Panel Interaction</b> | Draft guidelines developed; trialling underway               | Q1-Q2 2015 for all rating tools.     |

## Next Steps

In line with continual improvement, GBCA will review progress of the improvements that have been implemented on a quarterly basis to gauge feedback on their effectiveness, and make amendments where appropriate. If you are interested in becoming involved and trialling your project against any of the initiatives, please feel free to contact your Case Manager to discuss this further.

The GBCA appreciates feedback on how we can best deliver and implement improvements to support the systems we have in place. We encourage your feedback! Feel free to [email the GBCA](#), or speak with [Jeff Oatman](#) for more information.