

Building
a sustainable
future



A three-point plan for better buildings and communities: Our call to government

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The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) is focusing on three priorities aimed at creating better buildings, communities and cities.



Barangaroo South
Registered for a Green Star - Communities PILOT rating

Priority One:

Certify new and existing buildings with Green Star

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Strong leadership is required if we are to have a more prosperous, sustainable and resilient Australia. Visionary government leadership requires a commitment to better outcomes and the nationally accepted method of measurement for sustainable buildings and communities - Green Star.

Government leadership and a commitment to best practice helps to accelerate market transformation and encourages industry to continuously improve, innovate and build skills and capacity.

The GBCA calls on all levels of government to achieve Green Star ratings for all of the buildings that they own, occupy or develop to demonstrate that they are efficient, cost-effective and sustainable and to help drive the shift towards better building practices.



Federal government

We seek

- A commitment to achieving Green Star certification for all government accommodation
- A commitment to providing financial and non-financial support to encourage more healthy and efficient schools and healthcare facilities
- A commitment to embed green skills across all industry training by requiring a more holistic approach to sustainability in education and training in all government-funded initiatives.

What we will do

- Provide support for Green Star projects throughout the certification process
- Act as a conduit between government and industry and share lessons learnt
- Provide information resources and opportunities for education and training
- Promote and celebrate government leadership.

Why we are asking

- Government leadership and commitment to best practice helps to accelerate market transformation and encourages industry to build capacity and innovate
- The energy consumption of government office buildings and other government facilities, including Defence establishments, accounts for almost 1.8 million tonnes of carbon - more than half of the Australian Government's total emissions. If Australia is to meet its emissions reduction targets, government must lead by example
- Green Star-rated buildings emit 62% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than average buildings
- Achieving Green Star-certification will ensure that government accommodation meets best practice benchmarks for energy and water use, as well as indoor environment quality, materials and waste.



State government

We seek

- A commitment to achieving Green Star certification for all government accommodation
- A commitment to referencing Green Star in state-significant projects
- A commitment to achieving Green Star certification for education and healthcare facilities.

What we will do

- Provide support for Green Star projects throughout the certification process
- Act as a conduit between government and industry and share lessons learnt
- Provide information resources and opportunities for education and training
- Promote and celebrate government leadership.

Why we are asking

- More productive, efficient and healthy government accommodation, education and healthcare facilities deliver cost savings and far-reaching, long-term benefits to the community
- Green Star-certified education facilities use 70% less energy and produce 59% less greenhouse gas emissions than standard buildings.



Local government

We seek

- A commitment to achieving Green Star certification for all council facilities
- A commitment to reference Green Star benchmarks in council policies
- Financial and non-financial incentives for industry to achieve Green Star certification.

What we will do

- Provide support for Green Star projects throughout the certification process
- Be an advocate for local government solutions for reducing barriers and creating opportunities for green building and sustainable communities initiatives and policies
- Promote and celebrate local government leadership.

Why we are asking

- A commitment to Green Star can help councils to achieve their own sustainability objectives and targets
- Local governments have a strong influence on the standard of buildings in their local government area; referencing Green Star and encouraging its use will lead to higher quality buildings.



Community

We seek

- People who choose schools, healthcare facilities, work places and homes that are healthier and more efficient.

What we will do

- Work with government and industry to deliver better buildings and communities.

Why we are asking

- Green buildings are more cost-effective to run, healthier for people and better for the environment.



Builders, developers and owners

We seek

- A commitment to using Green Star certification for new buildings and major refurbishments
- A commitment to train staff, build capacity and share knowledge to increase green skills and expertise across industry.

What we will do

- Advocate for government leadership and government commitment to Green Star to drive demand for industry skills and capabilities
- Advocate for governments to remove barriers and 'get out of the way' so that industry can deliver high-quality buildings and communities
- Showcase and promote Green Star projects and the leadership of our members.

Why we are asking

- Green Star buildings deliver a 12% 'green premium' in value, a 5% premium in rent and substantially lower operational costs when compared to non-rated buildings
- A commitment to innovation, green building principles, green skills and Green Star certification demonstrates leadership and provides a market advantage.



Industry associations

We seek

- Opportunities to work collaboratively to advocate for green buildings and communities
- Partnerships for offering professional development opportunities for members and industry
- Opportunities for joint research and development initiatives
- A commitment to referencing Green Star when setting sustainability benchmarks in relevant policies.

What we will do

- Cross-promote and celebrate the leadership of industry associations and mutual members
- Provide information and resources regarding green building and Green Star.

Why we are asking

- The property and construction industry contributes \$148 million to our economy. Industry associations represent thousands of stakeholders in this sector and are a powerful force for change.



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EPA Victoria Office Fitout
6 Star Green Star - Office Interiors v1.1
Photograph by Paul Ebbage

Priority Two:

Encourage industry to go beyond standard practice for new and retrofit projects and improve existing building performance



The commercial and residential building sector is responsible for over 20 per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Australian and international research shows that improving existing buildings remains one of the most cost-effective opportunities for reducing carbon, while buildings built to best practice benchmarks can deliver significant savings in energy, water and waste as well as delivering improved outcomes for the health, well being and productivity of occupants.

The GBCA challenges all governments to develop policies and initiatives that encourage and support industry to go beyond minimum standards to deliver more efficient, productive, resilient and sustainable new buildings and retrofits, as well as encouraging the improvement of operational performance in existing buildings.



Federal government

We seek

- A commitment to using Green Star – Performance for all government owned and operated buildings, and government tenancies where possible
- A commitment to provide financial support, finance mechanisms and capacity building and training initiatives that will accelerate the retrofit of existing buildings
- A commitment to review existing codes and regulations to ensure that minimum standards are periodically lifted and strengthened
- A commitment to develop policies and initiatives that will encourage industry to go beyond minimum standards.

What we will do

- Provide support for Green Star projects throughout the certification process
- Act as a conduit between government and industry and share lessons learnt
- Provide information resources and opportunities for education and training
- Promote and celebrate government leadership.

Why we are asking

- Retrofitting buildings is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce carbon and save energy
- A 10% improvement in energy efficiency across government buildings could save over 620,000 gigajoules of electricity and over \$35 million per year in energy bills¹
- Green Star-rated buildings use 66% less energy than average buildings and emit 62% fewer greenhouse gas emissions
- Many Green Star-rated projects report a 10-15% improvement in worker productivity. In 2011-12, the Australian Government spent \$18.9 billion on wages and salaries; a 10% improvement in productivity would provide a boost worth almost \$2 billion.



State government

We seek

- A commitment to using Green Star – Performance for all government owned and operated buildings, and government tenancies where possible
- A commitment to provide financial and non-financial incentives, finance mechanisms and capacity building and training initiatives to accelerate the retrofit of existing buildings
- A commitment to develop policies and initiatives that will encourage industry to go beyond minimum standards.

What we will do

- Provide support for Green Star projects throughout the certification process
- Act as a conduit between government and industry and share lessons learnt
- Provide information resources and opportunities for education and training
- Promote and celebrate government leadership.

Why we are asking

- State government can make significant savings through reduced operational costs and improved productivity by upgrading and improving existing government accommodation.



Local government

We seek

- A commitment to using Green Star – Performance for all council buildings
- Green Star benchmarks referenced in council policies regarding building redevelopments and upgrades
- Financial and non-financial incentives for industry to achieve Green Star certification for building upgrades.

What we will do

- Provide support for Green Star projects throughout the certification process
- Advocate for local government solutions that reduce barriers and create opportunities for green building and sustainable communities initiatives and policies.

Why we are asking

- Local governments play a key role in transforming the built environment in their local government area both through encouraging higher benchmarks for new and existing buildings and providing incentives and financial mechanisms for building upgrades.



Community

We seek

- People who understand the benefits of buying, leasing, living in or working in buildings that perform better against a range of environmental benchmarks
- Tenants who demand that the buildings they lease are healthier, more attractive and more cost-effective places to work, with better indoor environment quality and improved energy, water and waste efficiencies.

What we will do

- Raise awareness about how a good building should perform and the benefits, and work with building owners, government and industry to accelerate upgrades and improvements to existing buildings.

Why we are asking

- Building better new buildings and improving existing buildings will lead to reductions in energy and water use, less waste, better occupant health and greater productivity
- If the community demands healthier, more resource-efficient and more productive places to live, work, play, heal and learn, this will accelerate the transformation of the market.



Builders, developers and owners

We seek

- A commitment to using Green Star rating tools for new buildings and retrofits and Green Star – Performance for all existing buildings.

What we will do

- Advocate for government leadership and government commitment to Green Star to drive demand for industry skills and capabilities
- Advocate for governments to remove barriers to upgrading existing buildings
- Showcase and promote Green Star projects and the leadership of our members.

Why we are asking

- Most of Australia's 333 million square metres of non-residential property stock is over 25 years old. Upgrading our existing buildings will improve the value of these assets, reduce operational costs, reduce emissions and boost the economy
- Green Star buildings deliver a 12% 'green premium' in value, a 5% premium in rent, and substantially lower operational costs when compared to non-rated buildings.



Industry associations

We seek

- Joint initiatives that encourage industry to go beyond minimum standards and to address the existing building challenge
- New stakeholders within the financial sector with whom we can work together to deliver new finance mechanisms for building retrofits.

What we will do

- Strengthen existing relationships and build new partnerships that will provide industry with new ways to tackle the existing building challenge.

Why we are asking

- A coordinated approach to unlocking the opportunities offered by going beyond minimum standards for new and retrofit projects and improving existing buildings will boost jobs, the property and construction sector and the economy.



Priority Three:

Create better communities and cities across the country

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In mid-2012, the GBCA launched the Green Star – Communities rating tool to provide best practice benchmarks for delivering adaptable, liveable, prosperous and sustainable cities, communities and precincts across Australia.

The benchmarks within this rating tool, and the ratings to be achieved, should be embedded within federal, state and local policies and strategies to encourage better outcomes – especially as the cost of living is increasing.

The GBCA calls on all political parties to commit to the creation of better Australian neighbourhoods, communities and cities, and to outline the pathways, benchmarks, indicators and methods of measurement they will use to achieve this vision.



Federal government

We seek

- An ongoing commitment to Green Star – Communities including referencing the rating tool and national framework in policies and reports
- To establish a Minister for Cities
- A commitment to work collaboratively across governments and the private sector to ensure best practice infrastructure planning and new investment
- A commitment to addressing community resilience at a federal level and through the Council of Australian Governments.

What we will do

- Act as a conduit between government and industry to share information, contribute to policy development, assist with setting benchmarks and targets, and take action to create better cities and communities
- Provide information resources and opportunities for education and training.

Why we are asking

- Cities generate 80% of Australia's GDP and are home to three quarters of our citizens. The Australian Government's *Sustainable Australia Report 2013* highlighted the need for our cities to respond to a range of challenges such as an ageing population, population growth in the outer suburbs, population health and the effects of a changing climate
- More productive, liveable and sustainable cities and communities will deliver a stronger economy and an enhanced lifestyle for all Australians.



State government

We seek

- An ongoing commitment to Green Star – Communities including referencing the rating tool and national framework in policies and planning strategies
- Green Star – Communities benchmarks referenced for every development controlled by state government and a commitment to Green Star – Communities and buildings certification, wherever possible.

What we will do

- Act as a conduit between government and industry to share information, contribute to policy development and take action to create better cities and communities
- Provide information resources and opportunities for education and training.

Why we are asking

- State governments play a vital role in planning and delivering great cities. All levels of government must work together to develop and implement urban policy that will deliver more productive, liveable resilient and sustainable cities
- The Green Star – Communities rating tool was developed in consultation with hundreds of experts from industry and government, including every government land organisation. State governments must capitalise on the contribution they have made to Green Star – Communities and use it wherever possible.



Local government

We seek

- Reference to Green Star – Communities benchmarks in planning strategies and policies
- Participation in local government-specific training for Green Star – Communities
- A commitment to work collaboratively with developers that want to deliver developments that go beyond minimum requirements.

What we will do

- Develop local government-specific resources and training to help local governments understand how the Green Star – Communities rating tool can be used to achieve more sustainable development
- Act as a conduit between government and industry to share information and be an advocate for local government initiatives that encourage more sustainable development.

Why we are asking

- Local governments play the biggest role in shaping our communities. The Green Star – Communities rating tool provides an opportunity to apply a set of principles and benchmarks that have been developed and agreed by government and industry.



Community

We seek

- People to demand that their communities and cities become more productive, liveable and sustainable
- People to call for all levels of government to be more accountable for setting targets for communities and cities and reporting on progress.

What we will do

- Encourage government and industry to set high benchmarks for better communities and encourage them to measure progress in ways that are meaningful, independent and transparent.

Why we are asking

- By 2050, it is estimated that 85% of our 35 million-plus population will live in cities. To ensure that our cities that are more productive, liveable and sustainable, we must work together to set targets for how we want them to grow and to perform, and use robust methods of measurement so that we can track progress and drive improvement.



Builders, developers and owners

We seek

- A commitment to using Green Star – Communities benchmarks for all projects and achieving Green Star – Communities certification wherever possible.

What we will do

- Provide support for Green Star – Communities projects throughout the certification process
- Act as a conduit between industry and government to ensure that all parties have the information and support that they need to achieve the best outcomes for development projects.

Why we are asking

- Developing Green Star – Communities expertise and experience will provide significant opportunities and market advantage as government, industry and the community seek better ways to plan and develop our communities and cities.



Industry associations

We seek

- To work together on initiatives that will lead to more productive, liveable, sustainable and resilient communities and cities.

What we will do

- Provide resources and information to support joint initiatives.

Why we are asking

- A coordinated approach from a wide range of stakeholders will be required if Australia's cities and communities are to reach their potential in the coming decades. Industry associations are well-placed to bring together the right people, knowledge and resources.

1. This price is based on the Average Retail Electricity Price projections according to Climate Change Authority modelling. It is acknowledged that Australian Government agencies may negotiate lower prices.

Katy Dean

Director - Advocacy
E katy.dean@gbca.org.au
T 02 8239 6200

Luke Farr

Advocacy Coordinator - Local Government
E luke.farr@gbca.org.au
T 02 8239 6200

Sydney

Level 15,
179 Elizabeth St
Sydney NSW 2000
T 02 8239 6200
F 02 8252 8223

Postal Address

PO Box Q78
QVB NSW 1230

www.gbca.org.au