

GREEN STAR - OFFICE DESIGN v3 & GREEN STAR - OFFICE AS BUILT v3: THE NEXT GENERATION

The release of Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3 represents a milestone in the assessment of the environmental attributes of buildings. It reflects world leadership in rating tool development and is expected to help the progress of sustainable building practices in Australia. During the course of the year, the GBCA will be releasing rating tools for other building sectors and the next version of the Green Star tool for fitouts, Green Star - Office Interiors v1.2.

Updating Green Star

The building and construction industry has made significant progress since the introduction of Green Star – Office Design v2 and Green Star – Office As Built v2. Since that time, innovation and new best practice standards have emerged, new research into the impacts of buildings and the changing conditions of the Australian environment has surfaced, and feedback from stakeholders and assessments has shown that what was once considered ‘best practice’ has now become accepted throughout much of the marketplace. Such progress means that, to keep awarding industry leadership in sustainability, updates to the Green Star tools are essential.

One Technical Manual, two Green Star ratings

The new spreadsheet and technical manual combine the two rating tools Green Star – Office Design and Green Star – Office As Built into one single application. The new version of the spreadsheet and technical manual enables projects to assess the environmental impacts of one building at both the design or construction phase.

The Aim of Credit, Credit Criteria and Compliance Requirements are identical for Green Star - Design and Green Star - As Built ratings in each rating tool. The evidence requirements are tailored to be relevant to the character of the two types of Certified Ratings. Both Certified Ratings can be achieved by using the same Technical Manual and Excel tool.

‘Best Practice’ Redefined

Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3 has been revised to award industry leadership through raised benchmarks, new credits and updated references to standards as well as more relevant and clearer Compliance Requirements.

For example, Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3 requires that projects reuse water where possible to obtain a higher score in the water category. The benchmarks for greenhouse gas reductions have also been raised: greater reductions are necessary for a high Energy Category Score. New credits in Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3 have been introduced to reflect emerging trends in smart sustainable design.

A more effective assessment tool

The Technical Manual has been redesigned to provide greater clarity and make it easier to use. The Green Star – Office Design and Green Star – Office As Built Technical Manuals have been merged into one, resulting in streamlined compliance requirements for projects undertaking both stages. As the documentation needs for both stages of the project will differ, a Submission Checklist with Evidence Guidelines has been introduced to assist project teams in collecting required information prior to submission.

Accommodating a wider range of projects

Green Star has become equally accommodating for new and refurbished buildings. An additional number of credits have separate criteria for refurbishment projects to accommodate their unique circumstances and reward leadership, without imposing criteria appropriate to new construction only.

Additionally, the Eligibility Criteria have been expanded to reflect the growing uptake of Green Star within the building sector. Clear guidelines have been developed that will allow interdependent projects to be rated under Green Star.

More intuitive for industry professionals

Green Star is more flexible and user-friendly in assessing a buildings' environmental attributes. For example, guidelines have been updated to reflect industry practice, desk height references have been brought into line with industry standards and WELS ratings are now used throughout the Water category.

Additional options for demonstrating compliance have been introduced, such as alternative modelling routes for daylight and thermal comfort, and additional clarity has been provided to technically intensive credits in the form of reference points and standard values for Carbon Dioxide Monitoring and Control and Daylight, for example.

Decreased Submission Cost

The clear relationship between the documentation requirements for Green Star - Design and Green Star - As Built submissions will ease the documentation collection process for projects applying for both ratings.

The introduction of Deemed to Satisfy criteria is another way of decreasing submission cost. One example is automatic compliance for CBD locations in the 'Tra-4 Commuting Mass Transport' credit.

Green Star Energy Calculator PILOT

In order to bring the Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3 tool into alignment with the Green Star tools for other sectors where there is no relevant ABGR/NABERS tool, the GBCA has developed an Energy Calculator. It is currently in PILOT phase to incorporate industry feedback. It is not intended to replace ABGR but merely to supplement it. Once finalised, it can be used as alternative modelling for the 'Ene-1 Energy Improvement' credit.

Updated State Category Weightings

Category weightings have been updated to reflect the relative priority of environmental issues within the current Australian context. For example, weightings for the Water category have been increased for QLD and WA to reflect this issue's change in priority on the state and national agendas.

Further information

A number of documents accompany the release of the rating tool and the Technical Manual for Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3. These documents provide additional information for interested parties but are not intended to be used as replacement for the Technical Manual. Project Teams are advised to purchase the Technical Manual prior to registering for a Green Star rating.

- Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3 - Top Changes: Provides quick reference to the major changes between the two different versions of the tool.
- Green Star - Office Design v3 and Green Star - Office As Built v3 – Matrix of Changes: Provides a credit-by-credit breakdown of the major changes from the previous version of each rating tool. This document provides an additional level of detail that can assist projects wishing to upgrade from one version of the tool to the next.

Fact sheets on Green Star rating tool Eligibility, as well as information on the Green Star – Energy Calculator Pilot will also be available from the GBCA website from March 2008.