
Green Building Council of Australia

Stakeholder Feedback Report – Public Building PILOT

Introduction

The Green Star – Public Building v1 rating tool was developed by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA), in conjunction with its Technical Working Group (TWG). The tool development process includes a PILOT period which allows for public review and comment and assessment of a number of PILOT projects.

The public review process ends with the publication of a Stakeholder Feedback Report. This document provides all feedback on the tool that was received in writing from stakeholders and PILOT projects and outcomes from workshops with the PILOT projects.

The feedback has been organised in a general section and according to the Green Star categories and credits. Only credits where feedback was received are listed. The feedback and the responses are provided on the following format:

Comment: *It is suggested that...*

GBCA Response:...

General Comments

Overview

The following comments provide a good overview of the general feedback received with regards to the rating tool and the PILOT process. No response is provided for these comments.

Comment: *We undertook the Industrial pilot in 2010 and we believe the early development of a technical manual for the Public Building pilot is a vast improvement on the system. It provides direction and clarification which was missing in the past.*

Previously, the lack of explanation via additional guidance meant that the majority of questions raised by the team would result in CIRs requesting a change in benchmark, which we GBCA will not approve. Having the additional guidance provides context to the credits, in particular new ones, so that meaningful CIRs/TCs can be established and raised.

Comment: *It is a good tool. More of the same.*

Comment: *Worked well, we would like to use it in another project when released as version 1.*

Comment: *No big issues with the rating tool. It feels slightly harder with respect to Office v3, but overall it is better rating tool.*

On the subject of developing a rating tool for the Public Sector

Comment: There is a portion of users of the rating tool, particularly at the client level, that can't clearly see the benefits brought over by this rating tool. This is both due to the tightness of public sector budgets, and to the difference between where the commercial sector is, and where the public building sector is. The drivers for adopting the rating tool are also different to other sectors and need to be defined better.

GBCA Response: The GBCA understands that there are differences in how the sectors approach the rating tool. The feedback has been adopted and a strategy is now being put in place to provide additional information on the benefits that securing a Green Star rating has for the public sector.

Eligibility

Comment: *This rating tool covers a lot of different spaces. This is different to other rating tools, where there is similarity across different buildings as to what is being assessed. In the case of public buildings, there are spaces as diverse as auditoriums and performance spaces, to galleries and libraries. The complexity and risk of misapplying the rating tool is significant for larger projects. Assistance from the GBCA would be appreciated.*

GBCA Response: The GBCA recognises this problem, particularly for large projects. As such, the GBCA has introduced a free Credit Interpretation Request to reduce the risk carried by projects who have a large number of spaces. This approach has delivered good results in Green Star – Education and Green Star – Healthcare. We can expect the same benefits to be present to Green Star – Public Building registered projects.

Documentation

Comment: *The GBCA should consider alternative methods for accepting specifications in Green Star, including accepting specifications through an annex to each trade specification.*

GBCA Response: The GBCA notes this applicant's proposed approach to preparing ESD specifications. However, this is not an appropriate subject for a ruling by GBCA. Each Green Star project is assessed on its own merits. The GBCA requires that the specification extracts submitted show compliance with the credit criteria in Green Star credits and are the specifications which the project is contractually obliged to follow. The manner in which ESD specifications are included in contractual requirements is a matter for individual projects.

Management

Man-3 'Building Tuning'

Comment: *We understand the Management 3 Credit has been revised to include a full 24 months of tuning within the main building contract.*

To engage the main building contractor to be involved following the traditional 12 months defect liability period would add significant mobilization and prelim costs which will not be representative of the actual value of works. The alternative proposed is engaging the main building contractor for the first 12 months then obtaining written commitment from the building owner for the following 12 months of tuning and recommissioning as part of the ongoing building management.

The final outcome achieved is equivalent while reducing unnecessary capital costs in involving the main building contractor being present for the second year of tuning.

GBCA Response: We agree with this suggestion. The credit will be amended to accommodate this solution as an alternative.

Indoor Environment Quality

IEQ-2 'Air Change Effectiveness'

Comment: *Achieving two points in this credit is difficult for projects, particularly where there is a large number of enclosed or small spaces.*

GBCA Response: This credit is currently undergoing review for all Green Star rating tools as part of the Green Star Revolution. As such, no changes are immediately planned for Green Star – Public Building v1. When the review is finished, the option to take up the new version of the credit will be offered to all registered projects. In the meantime, the GBCA encourages a credit interpretation request from Green Star project teams demonstrating how 95% of all spaces in the project comply with the 'Aim of Credit'.

IEQ-7 'Internal Noise Levels'

Comment: *Reverberation times are difficult to achieve with large open spaces typical of a public building.*

GBCA Response: The Technical Manual contained an error in the credit criteria. It stated that the reverberation level in the project must be below the minimum. It should state that the reverberation level in the project must be between the minimum and maximum level. This should address the problems in this credit.

Comment: *Can GBCA please confirm the time periods where the credit criteria must be met? We interpret the credit requirement to be as follows:*

Achieve the internal sound levels and reverberation times in the credit criteria for 95% of the nominated area, during the buildings standard hours of occupancy.

The applicable standard hours of occupancy are as per the Technical Manual glossary for each space type as defined in the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculator Guide.

GBCA Response: The Compliance Requirements in the credit will now include a statement clarifying both the time of measurement and the extent of measurement required.

IEQ-23 'Small Occupied Spaces'

Comment: *The small occupied spaces credit confuses the requirements in the rating tool. While relevant for Green Star – Industrial, the impact that it tries to address is not so pronounced in public buildings.*

GBCA Response: This credit will be removed from the tool for the reasons outlined in the comment. This feedback was also received through other channels, and matches the expectation of the development team.

Energy

Energy Conditional Requirement / Ene-1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Comment: *The greenhouse gas emissions guide does not include a clear method for calculating the energy use of a swimming pool. Please provide preferred methodology for assessment of the pool heating mechanism.*

GBCA Response: The Greenhouse Gas Emissions calculator and guide were updated to include a method for calculating the energy use of swimming pool water. This is only applicable if your project contains a swimming pool.

Comment: Ene CR/1. The use of NCC Part J DTS to determine the benchmark for this credit is appropriate, however as the NCC Part J compliance standards improve with future updates the ability to achieve improvement over the 10% will become increasingly more difficult and will burden the cost of projects to a point where Green Star accreditation is no longer viable.

GBCA Response: Green Star rewards best practice. The aim of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions credit is to reward projects that exceed the minimum legal requirement in the BCA. As such, constant improvement is the intended result of this methodology. The GBCA will reassess in future tools both the number of points

awarded in this credit, and the percentage improvements required, as the BCA continues to improve on energy efficiency. However, no change is proposed at the moment. It should also be noted that all projects are assessed on the BCA that is relevant to their building permit, not to the one relevant at the time of submission.

Comment: *This credit obscures the benefits of each solution, by combining them into a single score. This makes it hard to justify to clients specific solutions over others.*

GBCA Response: The credit now tracks the improvements that each solution has in reducing the modelled greenhouse gas emissions more accurately. The credit rewards good design, and good practice, over rewarding a single solution that may not result in the described outcome. For example, this rewards good lighting design instead of rewarding the inclusion of only lighting sensors without due regard to the rest of the system.

Transport

Tra-3 'Cyclist Facilities'

Comment: *There's been some issues identifying what a public building is, where it is part of a larger development and it shares the cyclist facilities with, for example, a public plaza.*

GBCA Response: The GBCA recognises that certain public building projects may face difficulties to determine the location of visitors biking in relation to their project. This is not a situation unique to public buildings, but it may be more pronounced in this rating tool. In this case, the GBCA recommends that the project team submit a credit interpretation request to confirm what an appropriate location might be.

Materials

Mat-9 'Dematerialisation'

Comment: *Regarding the dematerialisation credit, the benchmarks are set too high. For example, in our project, the calculated percentage of internal concrete walls and ceilings which are exposed are at around 60%. In the case of this project, when compared against a fully fitted out project, the savings of dematerialisation of 60% of all walls and ceilings is significant. However, the project cannot achieve the benchmark to claim the only two points in the credit.*

GBCA Response: The credit will be revised to allow a project to claim as an initiative 50% of dematerialisation of all surface finishes instead of just 95%. This will allow project teams to claim this initiative alongside another to claim one point.

Emissions

Emi-5 'Stormwater'

Comment: *The EMI-5 Stormwater credit requires all stormwater leaving the site to be treated in accordance with the pollution reduction targets stipulated with TABLE EMI-5.1. The design team would like to confirm that if all storm water in a 1.5year ARI is retained and infiltrated on site, that active treatment systems are not required to be installed given no pollution is allowed to leave the site.*

GBCA Response: This is correct. Information will be included in the credit to clarify this issue.

Comment: *Emi. 5 The 1.5 year ARI are not available in Qld. 1 and 2 year are available and 1.5 must be extrapolated. Recommend 1 or 2.*

GBCA Response: While this may be the case, currently there are plans to change in the credit. Projects are encouraged to submit a credit interpretation request if they are unable to extrapolate the data for a 1.5year ARI.

Comment: *Also recognition should be given to sites located on master planned estates that have already been designed to accommodate the new building in which case no surcharge on the stormwater infrastructure will be experienced.*

GBCA Response: The credit accounts for site wide solutions. Where projects require assistance, it is recommended that they submit a credit interpretation request.