

02 September 05

«Title» «FirstName» «LastName»
«Company»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«City» «State» «PostalCode»

Dear «Title» «LastName»,

I, once again, wish to bring to your attention a situation created by the actions of the executive management of the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) that is totally unacceptable.

As you are aware I have been corresponding with Maria Atkinson, Executive Director of the GBCA for a considerable period over the issue of the Materials Content Criteria in the Green Stars – Office Interiors (GS-OI) rating tool.

After several unanswered requests to Maria Atkinson I was forced to write to each of the GBCA Board Members to direct Maria to publish the complete correspondence up until her last letter dated 15 August 05. As you are aware from my letter dated 25th August Maria's most recent letter did not address (or perhaps deliberately avoided) answering the issues we have continually raised and appeared to cut off any further dialogue.

On the 18th August, Maria advised me by email that the correspondence would be available on the website for two weeks. On the 25th August, I sent a response letter via express post. Again, this letter was not posted on the GBCA website even though I had asked Maria to do so in my letter and in an email on the 29th August.

The two week timeline Maria suggested in itself is an attempt to "bury" the issue(s). All correspondence including my letter of the 25th August, Maria's response letter (when available) and all subsequent correspondence should remain on the web site for a reasonable period of time so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to be fully informed of the issues and the GBCA justification for its decisions.

To our surprise on viewing the GBCA website Wednesday 31st August, it is noted the GBCA has removed all correspondence between the GBCA and INSTYLE (I am not sure what date this actually occurred). In doing so Maria has removed the correspondence prior to the end of the self imposed two week period. Also, in refusing to publish my letter of the 25th August, the GBCA appears to be no longer committed to a transparent public stakeholder engagement process and it appears the GBCA is again attempting to bury the issue from public view.

The manner in which the GBCA has handled the information flow or lack there of in the case of Instyle's correspondence casts further doubts over the management of the GBCA. Certainly in the credibility of its rating tools and its stature as an organisation that the building industry can trust to be independent and accountable. The continuation of this matter is surely an embarrassment to the GBCA, its members and all stakeholders.

All members and government agencies who have invested monies and supported the GBCA should now start questioning the behaviour of the GBCA management and demand as we have for Maria to finally answer the direct questions we have raised and supply all the information requested to support the GBCA decisions (including the incorrect claims regarding wool growing). We also recommend that no organisation use the GBCA GS – OI rating tool until this matter is redressed.

In the interest of transparency and public accountability I once again request that the GBCA immediately re-publish all our correspondence along with my most recent letter of the 25th August and to urge Maria to respond publicly in the request for information supporting the GBCA's decisions as outlined in my letter dated 25th August.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Fitzsimons
Managing Director

cc.

Green Building Council
Minister for Environment
VIC Premier
Shadow Minister for Primary Industries:
VIC Minister for Environment
NSW Minister for Environment
SA Minister for Administrative Services
SA Shadow Minister for Environment
Parliamentary Secretary
General Manager Woolmark
Aust Wool Growers Ltd
ACTU
TCFU
QLD Department of Public Works
AWI

Maria Atkinson
Senator the Hon Ian Campbell
The Hon Steve Bracks MP
The Hon Duncan Gay
The Hon John Thwaites MP
The Hon Bob Debus MP
The Hon Michael Wright MP
The Hon Iain Evans MP
The Hon Teresa Gambaro MP
Leah Paff
Charles Ollsen
Steven Mullins
Igor Nossar
Delwyn Jones
Ian McLaughlan