

07 June 05

Ms Maria Atkinson
Executive Director
Green Building Council
PO Box Q78
QVB NSW 1230

Dear Maria,

There were a few issues with which we have previously raised with the Green Building Council (GBC) which has not been adequately addressed in the Green Building Council's Response to Stakeholder Feedback Green Stars – Office Interiors (GS-OI).

These issues include:

1. The decision to **include** recycled content and certified organic content and **exclude** sustainable rapidly renewable content and locally produced materials ie. sustainable Australian wool textiles in the GS- OI.
2. The ramifications of such a decision as these criteria, in the case of textiles, preferences recycled PET (polyethyleneterephthalate) textiles. This overlooks the content and potential hazards of recycled PET textiles (such as acetaldehy (sic), antimony, arsenic, chromium (111), cobalt, formaldehyde, VOC's, trichloroethane and zinc) and their potential to have a negative effect on indoor air quality. As we have pointed out on a number of occasions the available recycled PET textiles are manufactured overseas using the waste from the producing country which will ultimately end up in landfill.

This decision is more perplexing when there are superior textiles available utilising Australian grown eco wool manufactured by local textile manufacturers.

3. The conflict of interest with regards to one of the largest recycled PET textile (and carpet) manufacturers having representation as a Board Member, member of the Technical Committee and the Marketing Committee (and the sole representative of the textile industry) particularly as they are one of the few companies that will achieve full credit points in the resultant GS-OI Rating Tool.

The GBC's response to our initial feedback is as follows -

"The GBCA acknowledges that fitout items with reused/recycled content are not the only sustainable solution. The results of the Californian Governments Building 'Materials Emissions Study' (November 2003) indicates that "recycled content products should no longer be subject to scrutiny. Both alternative and standard products have the potential to emit chemicals of concern".

During the development of Green Star – Office Interiors the GBCA sought expert advice regarding the environmental impact of fitout items. It was advised that the environmental impact of fitout items should be representative of the items whole of life impact.

This does not explain the reasoning/evidence as to why sustainable rapidly renewable content ie. sustainable wool textiles and local production has been excluded. Particularly when:

- The Centre for Design (who consulted with the GBCA) recommends either renewable or recycled content in their Sustainable Product Development Guidelines for **Furniture and Building Products** and **Textiles** and,
- Ecospecifier recognises both renewable or recycled content
- US Green Building Council LEED rating tool (which Green Star was based upon) recognises renewable content, recycled content and locally manufactured materials

As a whole, the process for setting the Materials Content criteria in the GSOI rating tool has not been “open and transparent” and the decisions of the GBC have not been properly explained nor justified.

The decision to exclude sustainable rapidly renewable content and locally produced materials is an oversight which will eliminate better sustainable options and will have serious consequences for the Australian wool growing and Australian textile manufacturing industries.

Therefore, I request an immediate response to the three issues raised above and would once again seek a meeting with you to discuss this further.

Maria, I along with many other concerned parties await your response.

Kind Regards

Michael Fitzsimons
Managing Director

cc.

GBC Board Members:

Peter Verwer, Che Wall, Ken Maher, Chris O'Donnell, Brendan Crotty, Daniel Grollo, Warren Lear, Craig Heaton, Michael Barnes, Daniel Labbad, Dennis O'Regan, Chris Johnson, Tony Arnel

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NSW Premier
VIC Premier
Shadow Minister for Primary Industries:
VIC Minister for Environment
NSW Minister for Environment
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