

Melbourne City Council
GPO Box 1603
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

9 June 2017

Dear Sir /Madam,

RE: DRAFT MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL PLAN 2017- 2021

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to Melbourne City Council (Council) on the *Draft Council Plan 2017-2021 (Plan)*. The GBCA commends Council on the draft *Plan*, and acknowledges the relationship between our organisations and looks forward to building upon this to achieve the outcomes identified in the draft *Plan*.

About the GBCA

As you are aware, the GBCA is the industry association committed to developing buildings, cities and communities that are productive, liveable, healthy, resilient and sustainable:

- **We rate** the sustainability of buildings and communities through Australia's only national, voluntary, holistic rating system – Green Star.
- **We educate** industry and government practitioners and decision-makers and promote green building programs, technologies, design practices and operations.
- **We advocate** for the sustainable transformation of the built environment.

The GBCA represents 650-plus individual companies with a collective annual turnover of more than \$40 billion. Our membership reflects the diversity of Australian business with over 500 small-to-medium enterprises through to 75 companies with annual turnover of more than \$100 million and 24 companies now listed in the ASX200, with a combined market capitalisation of more than \$620 billion. Members include major developers, professional services firms, banks, superannuation funds, product manufacturers, retailers, suppliers and government including Council and a further 42 local governments across Australia.

About Green Star

Launched by the GBCA in 2003, Green Star is Australia's only national, voluntary and holistic rating system for sustainable buildings and communities. The Green Star rating system has been developed by the Australian industry and locally adapted to suit the Australian market. From individual buildings to neighbourhoods, precincts and entire communities, Green Star is transforming the way our built environment is designed, constructed and operated. Council was an early local government adopter of Green Star, achieving 6 Star certification back in 2009, for Council House 2. There are now over 1460 Green Star-certified projects across Australia:

- 399 Green Star-certified projects in Victoria, with 144 of these within Council's Local Government Area
- 34,000 people living in Green Star-certified apartments
- 150,000 people moving into Green Star – Communities
- 1.3 million people visiting a Green Star-rated shopping centre each day
- 30 per cent of Australia's Central Business District (CBD) office space being Green Star-certified.

This submission focusses on the goals: *A City That Cares For Its Environment; A City for People; A Creative City; A Prosperous City; A Knowledge City; A Connected City; A Deliberative City and A City Planning for Growth*, and identifies how the Green Star rating tools can assist Council in achieving the identified draft outcomes.

A City That Cares For Its Environment

One of the identified draft outcomes within goal one '*A City That Cares for Its Environment*' is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the municipality as well as the uptake of renewable energy.

To assist the built environment, the property and construction industry, as well as government play its part in achieving Australia's emission reduction targets and to keep global warming within 2-degrees, the GBCA has recently completed a nation-wide consultation on the discussion paper, '*A carbon positive roadmap for the built environment*'. The discussion paper set the scene for a 1.5-degree future and outlined potential priorities for the industry, and the roadmap for action, such as defining carbon neutral buildings and precincts (a draft paper will be released for further comment in late 2017).

Our goal is to build a carbon positive future that is healthy, productive and resilient through cost-effective and achievable actions. To do this, we will be working with industry to achieve the following priorities:

- 1- Promote energy efficiency – driving quality design first, and efficient systems next
- 2- Drive investment in resilient, renewable, energy infrastructure in Australia
- 3- Increase markets for net zero carbon products, materials and services
- 4- Promote offsets for any remaining emissions.

To align with these targets the GBCA is proposing to place additional emphasis on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for Green Star – Design & As Built and Green Star - Interiors projects. These changes will introduce minimum greenhouse gas emissions thresholds in order to achieve higher-level Green Star ratings (5 and 6 Star). Where appropriate, by requiring Green Star certification within Council policies, this will assist in achieving the prescribed Greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets across the municipality.

Proposed minimum point's thresholds are listed below:

Green Star rating	Minimum Points in GHG Emissions Credit	Improvement over BCA
4 Star	1 (Conditional Requirement)	10 per cent
5 Star	3	25 per cent
6 Star	6	40 per cent

The GBCA applauds Council on the leadership it has shown in advocating for Green Star outcomes within the Local Government Area (LGA). To ensure the proposed greenhouse gas emission reductions are achieved, the GBCA advocates that Council continue to mandate Green Star outcomes for both industry and Council's own buildings to assist in achieving many of the outcomes proposed in the draft *Plan*.

The Value of Green Star

The *Value of Green Star* report (2013), looked to quantify the overall impact of the Green Star rating system on greenhouse gas emissions, operational energy usage, operational water consumption and construction and demolition waste. The study compared data from 428 Green Star-certified projects with buildings that just met average or minimum practice standards.

The report found that on average, Green Star-certified buildings:

- produce 62 per cent fewer greenhouse gas emissions than average Australian buildings
- use 66 per cent electricity than average Australian buildings
- use 51 per cent less potable water than if they had been built to minimum industry requirements.

The higher the Green Star rating, the greater the environmental savings across all key areas – greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, water consumption and construction and demolition waste.

Green Star – Performance assesses the operational performance of existing buildings and enables building owners and managers to identify pathways to improve the environmental and financial sustainability of their assets over time. Green Star – Performance provides an opportunity to assist Council in achieving the proposed greenhouse gas emission targets within existing building stock in the LGA.

The Green Star – Performance ‘Energy’ category aims to reward building owners implementing strategies and taking actions to measure and reduce a buildings operational energy use, below that of a comparable standard-practice building. Such reductions are directly related to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, lower overall energy demand as well as reductions in operating costs for building owners and occupants.

It is worth noting that for eligible buildings, NABERS Energy ratings are used to satisfy performance data requirements within the Green Star – Performance Energy category. Where buildings are not able to obtain NABERS Energy ratings, Green Star – Performance sets out a number of alternative pathways for project teams to provide energy performance data.

The NAB office at Docklands was the first project to achieve Green Star – Performance certification and achieved 4 Star Green Star rating. I have attached a case study of this project for further information.

<p><i>2. A City for People; A Creative City: A Prosperous City: A Knowledge City; A Connected City; A Deliberative City and A City Planning for Growth</i></p>

The Green Star – Communities rating tool, established in 2012 as the only holistic, voluntary rating tool for communities and precincts of its kind in Australia, now has a proven record of accomplishment in delivering concrete outcomes and benefits across a range of projects. Developed in consultation with industry and all levels of government, the rating tool examines issues of economic, social and environmental importance and encourages and recognises projects that deliver sustainable buildings and energy efficient homes, designed and constructed to meet the changing needs of occupants across their lifetime. Council was one of the first local governments to adopt the Green Star – Communities rating tool for the Queen Victoria Markets revitalisation project.

By referencing Green Star – Communities in policies and encouraging its use for suitable development projects, Council can take advantage of the sustainability benchmarks and common language developed for the rating tool through extensive and ongoing consultation by the GBCA. This will assist Council to effectively measure proposed outcomes of the draft *Plan* such as:

-
- Opportunities for the community to participate in activities that improve their health and connection to the community
 - Public and purpose-built spaces for community arts and performing arts
 - Opportunities for increased economic participation through social enterprise
 - Opportunities for people to participate in lifelong learning through use of libraries, digital technologies and other resources
 - An expanded pedestrian network
 - Opportunities for all members of the community to participate in civic decision-making.

The Green Star – Communities categories

Governance

The purpose of the Governance category is to encourage and recognise developments that demonstrate leadership within the sector, by the establishment and maintenance of strong governance practices. The category promotes engagement, transparency, and community and industry capacity building. It also seeks to ensure that community developments are resilient to a changing climate.

Liveability

The Liveability category encourages and recognises developments that deliver safe, accessible and culturally rich communities. The category encourages the development of healthy and active lifestyles, and rewards communities that have a high level of amenity, activity, and inclusiveness.

Economic Prosperity

Economic Prosperity category aims to encourage and recognise developments that promote prosperity and productivity. The category encourages affordable living and housing, investment in education and skills development, and the facilitation of community capacity building. The Economic Prosperity category also promotes greater productivity via emerging opportunities in the digital economy.

Environment

The Environmental category aims to reduce the impact of urban development on sensitive ecosystems. It encourages resource management and efficiency by promoting infrastructure, transport, and buildings, with reduced ecological footprints. The Environment category seeks to reduce the impacts of developments on land, water, and the atmosphere.

Innovation

The Innovation category is included within Green Star – Communities as a way of encouraging, recognising, and rewarding the spread of innovative practices, processes and strategies that promote sustainable communities and cities.

The Green Star – Communities rating tool provides an agreed framework and set of benchmarks and independent verification for measuring sustainability outcomes such as affordable housing, sustainable transport, provision of local jobs, investment in education and skills development as well as enhanced productivity through the digital economy.

The GBCA thanks Melbourne City Council for the opportunity to provide comment on the *Draft Council Plan 2017-2021*. Please do not hesitate to contact me by phone on (02) 8239 6200, or via email at luke.farr@gbca.org.au for further information.

Yours sincerely



Luke Farr
Manager - Advocacy