



# Guide on how to prepare a Green Star submission

May 2018

# Introduction

You've been empowered with preparing a Green Star submission – Where do you start? Where do you find the information you need? What are some tips from the experts?

This guide has been developed to help project teams in delivering a submission that is clear and concise, and includes some great tips from Green Star Certified Assessors.

# 1. Resources

*Understand the supporting resources required to prepare a Green Star submission.*

A Green Star rating tool is composed of a series of resources, which need to be used. These are:

- **Submission Guidelines** – contains all the rating tool and credit requirements (PDF).
- **Scorecard** – used for points scoring and assessment purposes (Excel).
- **Submission Templates** – used for demonstrating compliance (Word).
- **Calculators** – used for determining points in certain credits (Excel).
- **Calculator Guides** – used to explain the calculators (PDF).
- **Technical questions and FAQs** – used to provide additional technical assistance ([Online](#)).

For a detailed description of each of these resources, refer to the 'Introduction' section within the Submission Guidelines for your project.

**TOP TIP!** These resources are specific to each Green Star rating tool version. Make sure you use the version relevant to your projects registration.

These resources are most effective when used from the early stages of preparing your submission.

These documents are all freely downloadable from your [Green Star Project Manager](#). Simply search your project, and the rating tool's resources will be available to download. Refer to screenshots further below to view this.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Green Star resources will be updated over time to correct errors, provide clarifications, and make usability improvements. Project teams are only required to comply with the Green Star resources available to the project at the date of registration, or if the project team chooses, a more recent rating tool version.

## What to do



- ✓ Gain access to all resources early in the process.
- ✓ Review the Submission Guidelines thoroughly, as they provide comprehensive information on how the other resources relate to a Green Star submission.
- ✓ Refer to the Calculator Guides for information on how to complete the calculators.
- ✓ Complete a Submission Template for every credit submission being targeted.
- ✓ Complete the calculator for every credit which has one.

## What not to do



- ✗ Refer to the Submission Guidelines only.
- ✗ Focus on credit content without reading the requirements in the 'Introduction' to the Submission Guidelines
- ✗ Use versions of Green Star resources released prior to the project's registration date.
- ✗ Use Green Star resources developed for other rating tools.

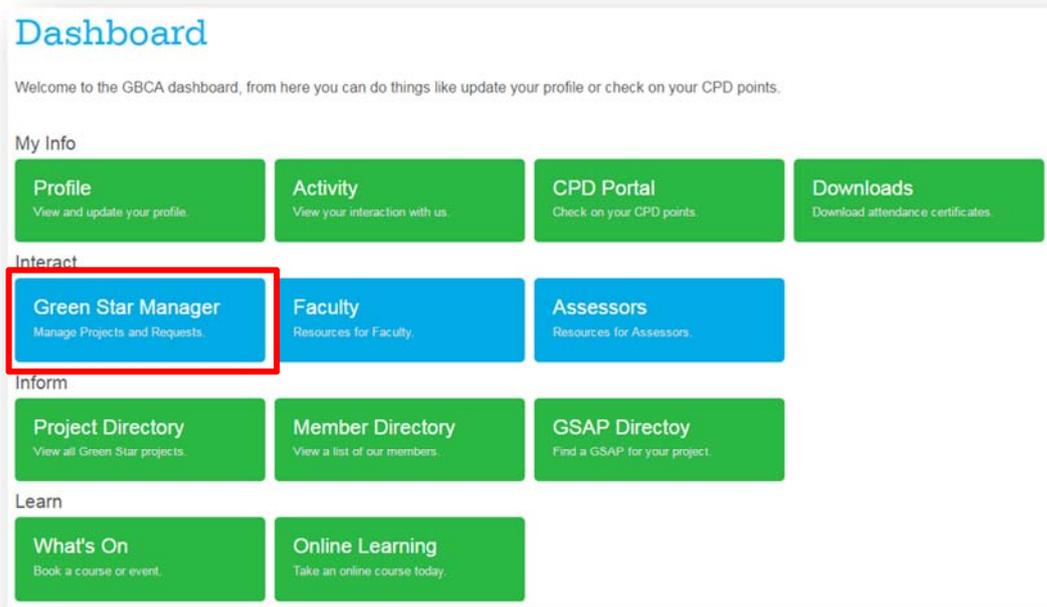
## Assessor's Perspective

“Remember that the GBCA are there to help you achieve your Green Star rating! If you have an alternative method of showing compliance just ask for help from your Technical Coordinator. Seeking advice on the pathway for your project to achieve its rating makes the assessment process easier for complex or unusual projects. Just remember to include their responses in your submission!”

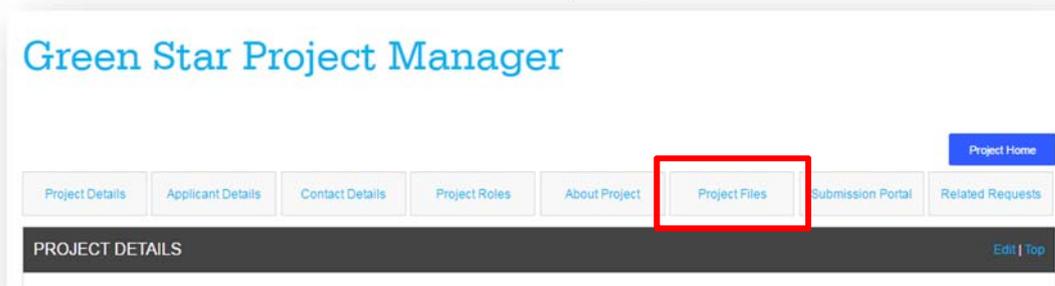
– Deborah Davidson

## Finding your resources

After you've logged in to the GBCA's website, head to the Dashboard and select 'Green Star Manager'.



Then select 'Project Files'.



All resources required for your Green Star submission will be available for download.



## 2. Submission Templates

### *Understand what role the Submission Templates play and how they should be completed*

The Submission Template is a key piece of evidence required to show which criteria have been targeted and how your project has met the Compliance Requirements.

**TOP TIP!** Submission Templates must be filled out and included in your Green Star submission for all credits claimed AND backed up by supporting documentation.

An individual Submission Template has been developed for each credit. The credit sets out the Compliance Requirements, and the Submission Template allows the project team to respond to how these have been met. The same credit numbering system is used in the credit and Submission Template for ease of referencing.

You should aim to provide clear and concise information to the Assessor and reference the supporting documentation.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The Submission Checklist is a free and mandatory resource to be used for every rating tool. It was developed to help project teams avoid common mistakes and ensure that sufficient evidence has been supplied. It is available in Green Star resources in your [Green Star Project Manager](#). Make sure you fill this out and include it in your submission!

### What to do



- ✓ Complete a Submission Template for every credit submission claimed.
- ✓ Consider the Submission Template to be a narrative for the Assessor to navigate their way through the supporting documentation. – explain HOW the project has achieved compliance.
- ✓ Complete the Submission Template as if it were a piece of formal correspondence.
- ✓ Complete only those sections relevant to your project, leaving blank any credit pathways or criteria not targeted.
- ✓ Provide short responses that are clear and concise.
- ✓ Provide longer responses that clarify any items the Assessor may need additional detail on e.g. non-traditional approaches, site-wide approaches, and correspondence with the GBCA.
- ✓ Include reference to any technical questions or FAQs being used by the project.
- ✓ Provide clear links in the supporting documentation table to back-up all claims being made in the Submission Template.
- ✓ Provide truthful and accurate information, acknowledging this in the Declaration section.

### What not to do



- ✗ Provide partially completed responses in the Submission Template with the hope that the supporting documentation will “speak for itself” – the Submission Template links the supporting documentation to the credit requirements.
- ✗ Use an alternative document without prior approval from the GBCA via a technical question or FAQ.

- ✘ Use a Submission Template from a different version of the rating tool – Credit requirements may be different.
- ✘ Copy a Submission Template used for another project's submission.
- ✘ For **Green Star – Design & As Built** and **Green Star – Interiors** projects, submit the same Submission Template from Design Review as for As Built. Information will need to be updated to reflect the stage of the project.
- ✘ For **Green Star – Performance** and **Green Star – Communities** projects, submit the incorrect Submission Template for the stage of the project. Different information is required for Initial Certification and Recertification.

### Assessor's Perspective

“If you can't explain compliance within your submission template as a standalone document, it needs more work. Structure your submission and bookmarks to match the submission template. Tell a story, make it flow.”

– Graham Agar

# 3. Supporting Documentation

*Understand the level of documentation required to support a project's claims.*

Any claims made in the Submission Template should be backed-up by supporting documentation.

This documentation acts as evidence to confirm how the project meets the relevant Green Star requirements, and supports all claims being made within the Submission Template. The supporting documentation provided must be specific to the project, rating tool and stage of delivery.

**TOP TIP!** Provide the recommended documentation where available. Where this is not available, any documentation that offers an equivalent level of information, and assurance, can be provided.

The Documentation Requirements section in each credit of the Submission Guidelines provides recommendations for the types of documents that might be appropriate. However, you don't need to provide all the documents listed in the Documentation Requirements section in each credit – these are suggestions!

Project teams should review the recommended documentation specific to their project's stage of assessment or delivery phase, as outlined below:

- For **Green Star – Communities:**
  - Initial Certification or Recertification (stage of assessment).
  - Prior to Construction, During Construction, or After Construction (delivery phase).
- For **Green Star – Performance:**
  - Initial Certification or Recertification (stage of assessment).

For **Green Star – Design & As Built** and **Green Star – Interiors** projects, the recommended documentation listed is for the As Built stage of assessment only. This is because a Design Review assessment can happen early on in the design process, right up to tender and pre-construction. For a Design Review assessment, always submit the most recent available documentation for their project to achieve the best possible feedback from the assessment process.

To achieve a successful outcome, submit supporting documentation that clearly demonstrates compliance on how the credit has been achieved.

In addition to providing references and links in the Submission Templates, project teams may wish to provide clear guidance to the Assessor on where information may be found in the supporting documentation. For example, include highlighting, notating, PDF bookmarking, referencing, mark-ups, etc, to pin point how the project has complied with the credit.

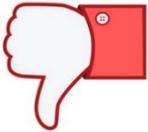
**TOP TIP!** Include a general section in your Green Star submission – containing a project overview, and full set of drawings/reports. In the credit submissions, provide extracts of supporting documentation so the Assessors can refer to the full set of documents in the General section for context if required. This reduces the information needed in each credit and makes submission clearer for the Assessor.

## What to do



- ✓ Submit documentation developed for the project if it shows how the credit has been met, even if it is not listed in the Documentation Requirements.
- ✓ Provide clear and concise information which backs-up all claims being made in the Submission Template.
- ✓ Ensure all GBCA responses to technical questions are included as supporting documentation.
- ✓ Draw attention to critical information (using highlighting, notes etc.) which demonstrates compliance to reduce the likelihood of something being missed.
- ✓ Attach the Round 1 submission in its original form to the Round 2 submission, so that the Assessor can understand any updates to documentation.

## What not to do



- ✗ Provide excessive amounts of supporting documentation which is immaterial to demonstrating compliance – entire reports and documents may be provided, however specific sections which demonstrate compliance should be referenced.
- ✗ Provide documentation that is not referenced in the Submission Template – the Assessor will not be able to draw links between the Green Star requirements and supporting documentation – which may lead to points not being awarded.
- ✗ A simple statement of commitment or completed Submission Template only will normally not suffice. Instead, supporting evidence should be provided showing that the broad strategies and processes to deliver a certain outcome have been agreed to.
- ✗ Rely upon verbal discussions or emails with the GBCA to assist during the assessment – only technical questions and FAQs can be included as supporting documents.

For **Green Star – Communities** and **Green Star – Performance** projects:

- ✗ Re-submit the same documentation from the Initial Certification assessment for the Recertification assessment – where no changes to documentation have occurred in the project team can simply state this in the Submission Template.

For **Green Star – Design & As Built** and **Green Star – Interiors** projects

- ✗ Submit design documentation for the Design Review rating that has been superseded by later versions in the delivery phase – this will reduce the effectiveness of feedback received from the assessment.

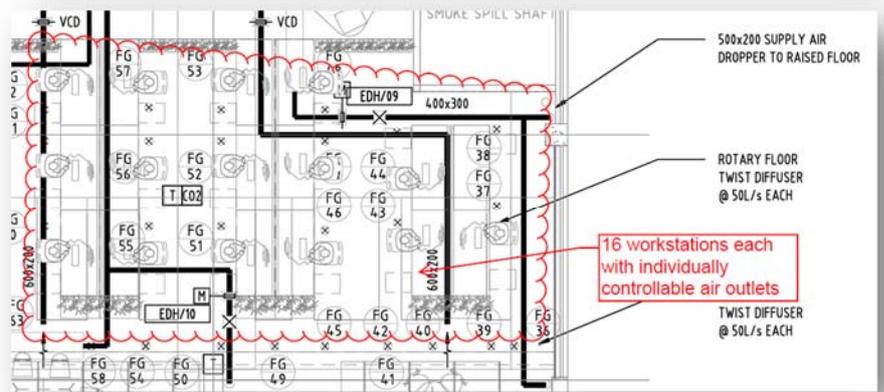
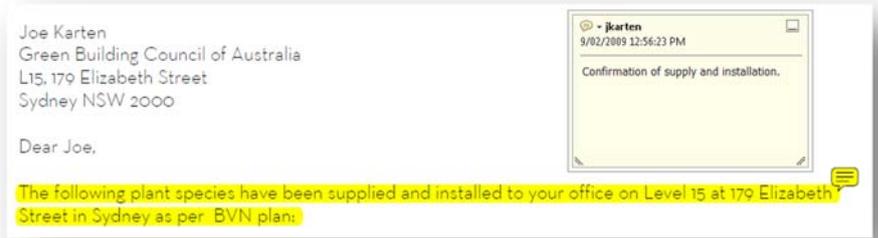
### Assessor's Perspective

“Only include relevant documentation, fill out the submission template completely with the information it asks for, address each item in the supporting documentation list, ensure your information relates the correct period & site and is dated and signed where necessary, highlight, bookmark...”

– Inge Diamond

## Examples

Bookmarking within the PDF, highlighting and notation assists in finding relevant information.



## 4. The seven “C’s” to get your project Certified

### *Understand the key areas to focus on when preparing your submission*

The seven key areas to ensure you have a great Green Star submission is by making sure it is:

1. **Clear** – well laid out and tells a story of the project; evidence is referenced accurately.

#### Assessor’s Perspective

“A Green Star submission is all about communication – you (hopefully) got the technical stuff right in the design and construction, the submission is about showing the assessors how you comply.”

– Kristie Martin

2. **Consistent** – credit information matches – no inconsistency; submission makes sense as a whole.

#### Assessor’s Perspective

“Make sure you have an internal person peer review all your evidence before submission to avoid missing vital information. Familiarity can be dangerous.”

– John Moynihan

3. **Concise** – quality not quantity; provide direct answers explaining how and why the credit criteria has been satisfied.

#### Assessor’s Perspective

“After the cover page and contents page - only include the relevant pages of reports and specifications.”

– Peta Earley

4. **Credible** – make accurate and realistic claims; no false, misleading or contradictory comments.

#### Assessor’s Perspective

“Get a peer review done, very clearly lay out how you meet the credit (almost line by line) and link to the documents that clearly show evidence. Very rarely are people not actually compliant – it is just tough to see the evidence and connect the dots!”

– Quentin Jackson

5. **Complete** – provide all required documents and evidence; answer all questions in the Submission Templates.

### Assessor's Perspective

“Explain clearly in the Submission Template how the project is meeting the intent of the credit - use the discussion boxes.”

“Clearly highlight attachments with content relevant to the credit - if a page doesn't have highlighter on it ask yourself - is this necessary?”

– Paul Davy

6. **Correct** – provide the right documents for the right project; ensure that references, hyperlinks and bookmarks work.

### Assessor's Perspective

“Just like at Uni, if you make it easy for the Assessor to see that your project complies, we'll be more likely to award the credit. Use bookmarks, use the words from the submission guideline and explain why and how if you want us to understand an alternative approach.”

– Karen Hovenga

7. **Convincing** – answer credit requirements in full – explain HOW and WHY they are met; provide specific evidence for each claim.

If you do each of these things in the submission, you're well on your way to getting your project certified.



**Guide on how to prepare a Green Star Submission**

**Round 2 Scorecard addressing non-compliance where points are not awarded and claiming additional points**

Management		14	
<b>Green Star Accredited Professional</b>	To recognise the appointment and active involvement of a Green Star Accredited Professional in order to ensure that the rating tool is applied effectively and as intended.	1.0 Accredited Professional	1 1
<b>Commissioning and Tuning</b>	To encourage and recognize commissioning, handover and tuning initiatives that ensure all building services operate to their full potential.	2.0 Environmental Performance Targets	- Complies
		2.1 Services and Maintainability Review	1 1
		2.2 Building Commissioning	1 1
		2.3 Building Systems Tuning	1 1
<b>Adaptation and Resilience</b>	To encourage and recognize projects that are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate and natural disasters.	3.1 Implementation of a Climate Adaptation Plan	2 2
		4.1 Building Operations and Maintenance Information	1 1
<b>Building Information</b>	To recognise the development and provision of building information that facilitates understanding of a building's systems, operation and maintenance requirements, and environmental targets to enable the optimised performance.	4.2 Building User Information	1 1
		5.1 Environmental Building Performance	1 1
<b>Commitment to Performance</b>	To recognise practices that encourage building owners, building occupants and facilities management teams to set targets and monitor environmental performance in a collaborative way.	5.2 End of Life Waste Performance	1 1

1	Awarded - Compliant	Awarded Round 1
Complies	Awarded - Compliant	Awarded Round 1
		Targeted Round 2
2	Not Awarded - Major non-compliance	Please provide additional documentation supporting the implementation of plan
1	Awarded - Compliant	Awarded Round 1
1	Awarded - Compliant	Awarded Round 1
1	Awarded - Compliant	Awarded Round 1
1	Awarded - Compliant	Awarded Round 1

**Round 2 submission layout addressing non-compliance where points are not awarded and claiming additional points**



**Assessor's Perspective**

“Including succinct baselines and comparison to best practice especially in innovation points is helpful ... it’s not enough to provide a figure on reduction of energy for example that doesn’t have a reference point for comparison.”

– Phil Donaldson

# 6. Assessment Process

## *Understand how Green Star submissions are assessed and stakeholders involved.*

Green Star certification is the only validation of compliance with the Green Star rating system. When a project achieves Green Star certification it provides trusted, third-party verification of the project's sustainability outcomes that can be used by the public, project applicants / owners / occupiers, investors, and other interested parties. Projects which don't achieve Green Star certification can't promote Green Star certification or alignment with the Green Star rating system.

Each Green Star project is allocated a Technical Coordinator. They are involved in any technical support required by the project team throughout the life of the project. The Technical Coordinator's role is to act as an independent, non-biased party that liaises between the project team and Certified Assessor. They ensure all Green Star requirements and processes are followed.

**TOP TIP!** If you have deadlines to get your results or achieve certification, tell your Technical Coordinator early on. They'll work with you to try and meet these deadlines.

Green Star Certified Assessors carry out the assessment process by assessing the Green Star submission and providing feedback to the project team in the assessment results. The Green Star Certified Assessors are professionals working in the Australian construction industry. E.g. architects, engineers, facilities managers, planners etc.

The assessment is documentation-based, all claims made by a project team must be supported with documentation and assessed to ensure they are accurate and complete.

There are two rounds of assessment available, this gives project teams the opportunity to amend any errors found in the first round submission.

### *Ready to submit for assessment?*

Upload your submission online, and then let us know you're ready for the GBCA to assess your project's submission by going to the [Green Star Project Manager](#), and selecting "submit for assessment".

At the end of the assessment, you can view the results here too.

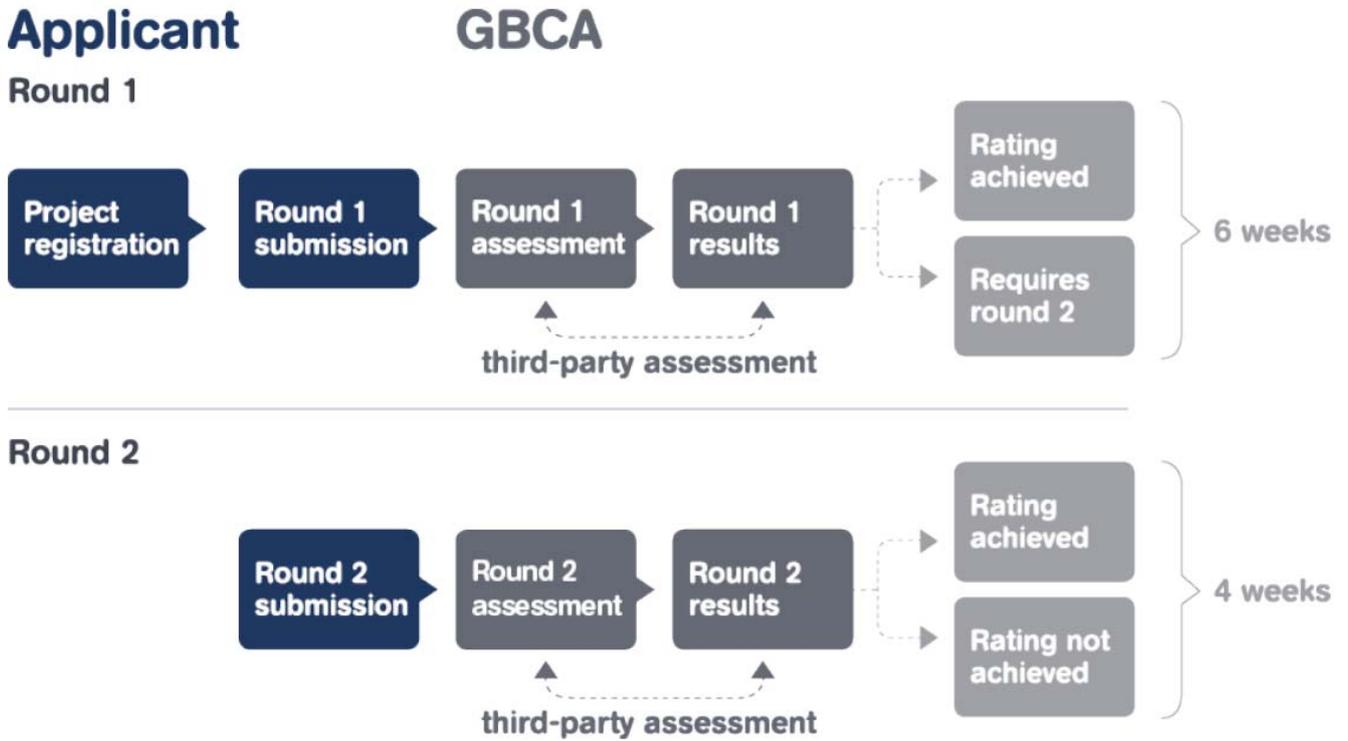
**DID YOU KNOW?** Assessor's comments within assessment results include constructive feedback to project teams to help continually improve the quality of Green Star submissions. If you have questions about the assessment results you receive, submit 'Clarification of Assessment Comments' through the [Green Star Project Manager](#).

### **Assessor's Perspective**

"Avoid dumping all related information into the submission and instead extract out only the relevant parts with a bit of context. Files over 60 pages are rarely helpful and merely make the required evidence harder to identify."

– Ben O'Callaghan

## Certification process



**TOP TIP!** Allow sufficient time to prepare your submission and obtain your results from the GBCA, for the rounds of assessment to take place (indicative timings are stated above) and factor in time to prepare documentation between rounds of assessment.

## 7. Where to from here?

More resources are readily available on the GBCA website and your [Green Star Project Manager](#). The following links will be helpful in producing Best Practice submissions to support your journey to your certified Green Star rating.

- Definitions of terms commonly used by GBCA and Industry: <https://new.gbca.org.au/about/definitions-terms/>
- Green Star Submission Portal <https://submissions.greenstar.org.au/WebInterface/login.html>
- Green Star Project Manager <https://www.gbca.org.au/green-star-project-manager/>
- Ask a question and view the FAQs <https://www.gbca.org.au/green-star-faqs/>
- Key milestones for submission planning <https://new.gbca.org.au/news/green-star-news/key-milestones-submission-planning/>
- Certification process <https://new.gbca.org.au/green-star/certification-process/>
- Innovation Challenges <http://new.gbca.org.au/innovation-challenges/>
- How to Prepare your Green Star Submission <https://www.gbca.org.au/education/videos/158/how-to-prepare-your-green-star-submission/>
- Green Star Rating Tools <https://new.gbca.org.au/green-star/rating-system/>

When your project is certified, your journey is just beginning!

- Marketing your certified project <http://new.gbca.org.au/green-star/certification-process/certified-rating/>
- Case Study Opportunities <http://new.gbca.org.au/showcase/projects/>
- Site tour Opportunities [events@gbca.org.au](mailto:events@gbca.org.au)
- Living Green Star <https://www.livinggreenstar.org.au>

Want to be more involved in Green Star outside of projects? The following links will show you how to do this.

- Membership <https://new.gbca.org.au/get-involved/membership/>
- Sponsorship opportunities <https://new.gbca.org.au/get-involved/sponsorship-promotion>
- Continuing Professional Development Program <https://new.gbca.org.au/get-involved/professional-development>
- Events and courses <https://www.gbca.org.au/calendar/?selecttype=event>
- Future Green Leaders <https://new.gbca.org.au/get-involved/future-green-leaders/>