



Q: DO PVC PRODUCTS CERTIFIED UNDER THIRD PARTY ECOLABELS AND PRODUCT CERTIFICATION SCHEMES COMPLY WITH THE PVC CREDIT?

A: Again, not necessarily. Unless the third party ecolabel or product certification scheme integrates the specific best practice PVC Guidelines, products certified under these schemes do not earn the PVC Credit points. PVC Credit Compliance schemes must either be JAS-ANZ accredited or pre-qualify for GBCA recognition by demonstrating full compliance with Part I, Section A – Governance and Transparency of the GBCA Assessment Framework for Product Certification Schemes.

Q: WHERE IS PVC MOST COMMONLY USED?

A: PVC is the most widely used polymer in building and construction applications. Unlike other polymers predominantly used for short-lived applications such as packaging, PVC is mostly used in long life building applications. The most common of these are pipes, conduit, cable insulation and flooring. It is also used in window and door profiles, permanent formwork wall construction,

roofing and architectural membranes, wall coverings, office furniture and furnishings.

Q: HOW DOES OR WILL PVC CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABILITY OF THE BUILDING?

A: PVC often outperforms competing or traditional materials on a life cycle basis. Product development and innovation by Australian manufacturers is further improving material efficiency and energy efficiency. Because it uses less oil for its feedstock, PVC is considered to be one of the least energy intensive of all thermoplastics and PVC products are often found to have a lower embodied energy when compared to competing materials.

Key factors:

- durability and long life
- low embodied energy
- partly derived from an abundantly available resource – salt
- low maintenance
- thermal efficiency
- can be, and is recycled
- life cycle costs and performance
- material efficient innovations



Vinyl Council Australia

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The Vinyl Council of Australia is working to advance the sustainability of the vinyl, or PVC, industry in Australia. Its members are drawn across the supply chain of the vinyl industry. The information contained is given in good faith and has been derived from sources believed to be reliable and accurate. The Vinyl Council of Australia does not accept responsibility for any loss or damage as a result of its use.

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Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. Image courtesy of Gerflor.



Vinyl Council Australia

PVC AND GREEN STAR

USING BEST PRACTICE PVC IN GREEN STAR PROJECTS





In April 2010, a revised PVC Credit in the Green Star building rating tool was released following an extensive 18 month review by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA).

Today, under the updated PVC Credit, projects are able to claim up to two points towards their Green Star rating if the project's vinyl flooring and resilient wall coverings, cable, pipe and conduit (which together account for the majority of PVC use in buildings) meet the compliance requirements of the Best Practice Guidelines for PVC in the Built Environment (the Guidelines).

All other PVC applications – window frames, wall profiles, fittings and furnishings, etc – can be specified in Green Star projects without discrimination; however they will not be eligible to earn points under this Credit.

Q: WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR CHANGE?

A: The GBCA has recognised the progress of the Australian PVC industry to improve its environmental performance, largely through the industry's Product Stewardship Program. Following recommendations of its PVC Expert Reference Panel (ERP) and a comprehensive life cycle review, the GBCA recognised industry had addressed a number of its earlier concerns and made significant improvements over the past five years that warranted a new approach to PVC specification.

Under the revised PVC Credit, Green Star motivates best practice in the PVC industry and encourages the minimisation of environmental and health impacts of the PVC life cycle.

Q: HOW CAN PVC BE SPECIFIED UNDER THE PVC CREDIT?

A: Up to two points are awarded where a percentage of the most common uses of PVC in buildings (by cost) are independently verified as compliant with the Best Practice Guidelines for PVC in the Built Environment. The Guidelines establish best environmental practice throughout the life cycle of PVC products, covering:

- Chlorine
- Vinyl Chloride Monomer
- Waste, Water, Air and Product Emissions
- Stabilisers and Plasticisers
- End of Life Product Stewardship
- Recycled content.

Points are awarded as follows:

- One point – where 60% of common PVC products (by cost) complies; and
- Two points – where 90% of common PVC products (by cost) complies.

Q: WHAT DOCUMENTATION NEEDS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR GREEN STAR PROJECTS?

A: Under the PVC Credit Guidelines, product suppliers will need to provide a third party verification certificate that their products meet the Guidelines. Until the finalisation of a guidance document for auditors, the GBCA has allowed an interim measure as evidence that a product complies in the form of a signed Manufacturer's Declaration. Examples of Declaration formats are provided on the GBCA website in the PVC Credit section: www.gbca.org.au/green-star/materials-category/revised-green-star-pvc-credit/2716.htm

In October 2011, GBCA published the *Green Star PVC Credit – Auditor Verification Guidance* document detailing the means by which auditors are to establish compliance with the Guidelines. To obtain the verification certificate required by Green Star projects, PVC product suppliers will need to arrange compliance audits of their products with JAS-ANZ (or equivalent) accredited bodies, or accredited auditors registered by RABQSA or other equivalent national or international auditors.

Refer to the *Auditor Verification Guidance* document on GBCA's website for further detail of the process at www.gbca.org.au/uploads/156/2716/Auditor%20Verification%20Guidance.pdf

Q: WHAT IS THE TIMING OF THIS CHANGE FOR PROJECTS?

A: Green Star projects registered before the 7 April 2010 have the option to use either the old Green Star PVC Minimisation Credit or the current 'best practice' Credit. Any projects registered after 7 April 2010 must use the current Credit.

Green Star projects registered before 1 March 2012:

GBCA has determined that projects registered for Green Star certification before 1 March 2012 can submit either a signed Manufacturer's Declaration from the product supplier or an independent auditor's certificate for the product, if available, as evidence of compliance to the Guidelines, regardless of when the submission is made.

Green Star projects registered after 1 March 2012:

GBCA has determined that only an independent auditor's certificate of the product's compliance to the Guidelines is acceptable evidence to achieve the Credit points for projects which are registered for Green Star certification after 1 March 2012.

Q: HOW CAN BEST PRACTICE COMPLIANT PVC BE IDENTIFIED?

A: The Vinyl Council of Australia has an on-line registry of PVC building products whose suppliers have issued interim Manufacturer's Declarations or have obtained independent audit certificates of compliance: www.vinyl.org.au/PVC-CreditinGreenStar.

Suppliers who demonstrate independently verified compliance with the PVC Credit Guidelines may apply for use of the Vinyl Council's Best Environmental Practice trade mark and be recorded on the on-line registry of compliant products.



Look for this logo to be confident that the PVC, or vinyl, product specified meets the Green Star PVC Credit Guidelines.

Q: DO PVC PRODUCTS EARNING POINTS UNDER THE MATERIALS & FITOUT CALCULATORS COMPLY WITH THE PVC CREDIT?

A: Not necessarily. While PVC products, including those certified by product certification schemes and ecolabels, may earn points by meeting the criteria under these Calculators, unless they have been independently verified against the PVC Credit's best practice Guidelines, they do not earn the additional points available under the PVC Credit.