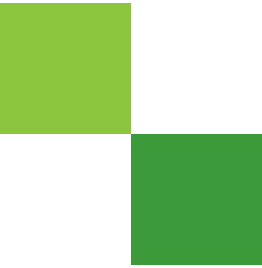




sustainable living[®]
FABRICS

PUTTING SUSTAINABLE INTO LIVING



The Start: July 2004

Greenwashing (taking part of the environmental story and applying it to the whole to create a misleading profile of a product) was rife. Recycled was the preferred content and guidelines as to what constituted a 'green' product were confused and confusing. The Green Building Council, green rating tools and green procurement databases were making an impact on the industry. What direction were we to take?

SUSTAINABLE:

Education

Green Building courses and green procurement seminars were the start of the education process. This led to education on lifecycle analysis principles and researching different green databases, their standards and their acceptance. We educated ourselves on what was driving the market for environmental product, what the market was seeking and how industry was responding.

We reached a clear conclusion: there was room for improvement in market and industry standards. There was an opportunity for us to initiate this and do something significant for the industry and the environment. We would embrace transparent, credible and accountable product stewardship to end of life.

ensuring decisions for today do not compromise the future

GECA Ecolabel

We searched for a standard that was independent and transparent – a rating system to the highest international standards, recognised worldwide, independent, objective and preferably not for profit.

Our research led us to the highest eco standard for textiles, EU Ecolabel and the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN). Membership of GEN requires adherence to strict international ISO14024 series of Ecolabelling standards. Assessment is by independent audit at all stages of production to a clear and transparent environmental standard reflecting best environmental practice.

Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) is the GEN member in Australia and conducts the Ecolabel Program. It is an independent, not for profit organisation offering the only product based life cycle environmental declaration in Australia. The GECA Textile Standard mirrors the requirements of the EU Textile Standard.



**Lic: LF - 2005
Textile Products**



The GECA Ecolabel is for products, not for companies. Our suppliers are audited only in relation to our specific product being assessed – not for any other customer's product.

If a supplier claims their product is environmentally preferable and eligible for Ecolabelling, or that it carries the GECA Ecolabel licence, the product will have a GECA Ecolabel licence. Every GECA Ecolabel licence lists product certified under the licence, and is supported by an Environmental Performance Declaration detailing product performance against environmental criteria assessed in the certification process. These are available for public viewing.

The GECA Ecolabel can only be used on product that wholly complies to the relevant Good Environmental Choice Australia Standard. For example, where furniture has been licensed to carry the GECA Ecolabel, individual fabrics and other coverings will have been assessed as part of the certification process. These individually certified products will be listed in the supporting declaration. Use of fabrics or coverings other than those specifically listed on the declaration means that piece of furniture cannot carry the GECA Ecolabel.

The Good Environmental Choice Australia Textile Standard is detailed and specific and available from the GECA website (www.geca.org.au). It is a transparent, precise document representing a standard that is either met or not met.

The GECA Ecolabel sets a benchmark that puts every product group on a level environmental playing field, offering absolute certainty that a product with Ecolabel is environmentally preferable. With the GECA Ecolabel as an industry standard, green washing could be eliminated.

Our Goal

We set out to have all our fabrics licensed to carry the GECA Ecolabel without compromising quality. If a product could not comply, it would be dropped from our range. The products with the GECA Ecolabel were to be grouped together as the Green Living™ Collection, offering a complete range of guaranteed environmentally preferable fabrics. Was this feasible and achievable?

The Feasibility Study

Using the GECA Textile Standard, we conducted our own audit of our supply chain from raw materials to finished product. The changes required seemed feasible but would be costly and take time and effort. With this in mind we proceeded.

The Path to Compliance

We selected suppliers with the greatest potential to change and who embraced our goals with enthusiasm. We took the Standard to them, identified areas for change and worked with them to facilitate change. It took time, patience and problem solving skills. It became clear that for critical inputs such as wool we needed to source the compliant product ourselves, and that to ensure the yarn used by weavers complied we would supply our yarn to weavers. This proved particularly important with weavers who were unable to source compliant yarn but who were important suppliers to us. It introduced a degree of control into inputs that was not previously possible.

GÉCA

In November 2004 we contracted GÉCA to assess each fabric for certification to carry their Ecolabel. GÉCA audited each process and required more changes, but in May 2005 every fabric in the Green Living™ Collection was licensed to carry the GÉCA Ecolabel.

The Changes

Some changes were small and simple, others turned into major projects.

We specified wool that met EU Ecolabel standards and in the end had to source this wool ourselves. The wool comes from farms practising eco farming methods who are contracted by our woolbuyer to supply the tightly specified wool. We require every batch of wool to be independently tested until a long-term pattern of compliance is established and then regular random

testing is accepted. Long-term contracts ensure a continuous and adequate supply of eco certified wool for our needs. For audit purposes every batch of wool we use maintains its batch identity through to finished product.

The wool is specified as Leanwool®, an environmentally preferable fibre. Using internationally acceptable methodology and standard lifecycle analysis, it is estimated that Leanwool® creates 15 kg of CO2 equivalents for every kilogram of leanwool produced, compared to 52 kg for every kilogram of generic wool and 39 kg and 28 kg respectively for each kilogram of polyester and recycled polyester produced.

Before being spun, the wool is scoured which can have negative environmental impact from the release of polluted water and use of toxic chemicals. We sourced a scourer that treated its water before release and was prepared to change to low toxicity chemicals to meet the Standard.

We had a number of wool yarn spinners. We now only use spinners who have our wool scoured by wool processors who have been audited by GÉCA for the processing of our wool and who transparently process the wool to the GÉCA Standard. The spinner supplies documentation to us to ensure the yarn is from our wool and processed by approved processors.

We had several polyester yarn suppliers. Two comply from early processing to finished yarn. The polyester yarn used in our fabrics now comes exclusively from these suppliers. We had difficulty sourcing recycled polyester that met the GÉCA Standard but persevered and now have one supplier who meets the GÉCA Standard for our product.

The yarn is woven into fabric. To ensure the yarn used is as specified, we supply yarn to our weavers. Careful auditing ensures substitution does not occur and our yarn is not available to the weaver to make into product for other customers. The yarn may be dyed before weaving or the woven fabric may be dyed. Changes were required at each dyehouse to ensure all dyes and chemicals used for our product met the Standard.

We contracted CETEC to test all fabrics for emissions to the Green Star Building Interiors standard. They all tested as well below the minimum acceptable standard.

Our fabrics are superior quality with proven durability. We increased our warranty to 12 years. We resourced and identified recycling opportunities for our fabrics and set up a recycling program for fabrics at end of life to be recycled into yarn or industrial products.

Our sampling did not meet our environmental requirements. PVC binders and acrylic boxes were unacceptable. We identified recycling opportunities for our existing sampling and changed binders and boxes to recycled board.

Industry change cannot be effected without education and our Senior Management have all undertaken Green Star training.

We have entered an agreement with Greenfleet to plant 30000 trees annually to offset carbon dioxide emissions, including methane from the sheep, attributed to the production and wholesaling of the Green Living Collection from raw materials through to delivery to the customer. The trees are planted in Australia where most of these emissions impact. www.greenfleet.com.au

The Outcome

We have set an industry benchmark for environmental fabrics that is not only transparent and independent but is recognised worldwide as meeting international Ecolabel standards.

This has been achieved without compromising quality or service. However, from raw materials to finished product our requirements were specific to our product and changes made were specific to our product. As a result at almost every stage of production there was a price premium attached for meeting the stringent requirements of Ecolabel. We are a pioneer in ecolabelling in Australia for commercial furnishing fabrics, and we discovered pioneering sustainability cannot be achieved without cost.

Our GEC Licences specify each fabric certified to carry the GÉCA Ecolabel and these fabrics comprise the Green Living™ Collection. A copy of the Licences and an Environmental Performance Declaration (EPD) summarising environmental performance against criteria assessed, are available on the GÉCA website for specifiers to include in their environmental submissions to their client or for Green Star Rating credit purposes.

Our Accredited Green Star Professional is available to advise on how our fabrics can attract Green Star credit points

Conclusion

We have fulfilled our aim to embrace transparent, credible and accountable product stewardship to end of life.

The result is our Green Living™ Collection carries the internationally recognised Good Environmental Choice Australia Ecolabel, enabling specifiers and procurement officers to meet their environmental commitments without compromise. The Green Living™ Collection provides total confidence that what is specified and procured is guaranteed environmentally preferable.

For more information:

www.greenliving.com.au

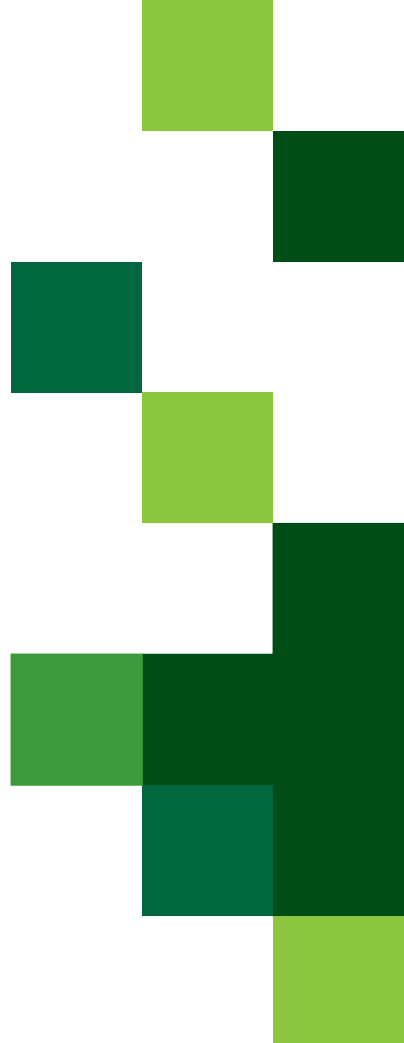
www.geca.org.au

www.gbcaus.org

For product enquiries:

sales@greenliving.com.au

We have set an
industry benchmark
for environmental
fabrics



Green Living™ Collection

Decisions for today without compromising the future.

All fabrics in the Green Living™ Collection must meet the following criteria:



RECYCLABLE



Lic: LF - 2005
Textile Products



12 HEAVY DUTY COMMERCIAL USE

and/or

S1 COMMERCIAL SCREEN FABRICS

Tested for VOCs | Green star credits | Made in Australia or NZ

PLUS they contain one or more of the following:



RECYCLED
PET

LEANWOOL®

ECOWOOL® YARN

ECO-POLYESTER™



green building council australia
MEMBER

Sustainable Living Fabrics

Head Office

48 Downing Street
(PO Box 57) Oakleigh
Victoria Australia 3166

Freecall: 1800 224 184

P: +61 3 9563 4755

F: +61 3 9563 0113

E: sales@greenliving.com.au

www.greenliving.com.au

Adelaide: 1800 224 184

Brisbane: 1800 628 411

Canberra: 1800 420 933

Darwin: 1800 420 933

Melbourne: 1800 224 184

Perth: 1800 289 677

Sydney: 1800 420 933