



## Choose GECA for better carpets

Despite their soft and cosy feeling under our feet, carpets can have a range of environmental and health impacts just like any other product. For example, both natural and synthetic carpet fibres require water and energy intensive processes and both may release harmful pollutants into the environment. There may also be significant quantities of toxic substances used during manufacture, and carpet products can contribute substantially to landfill.

When a product is certified against Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA)'s Carpets standard, consumers can be sure that the product has been assessed to meet environmental, human health and ethical impact criteria. GECA certification removes doubt and confusion and makes identifying environmentally and socially preferable products easier.

Products covered by the standard include natural fibre carpets such as wool; synthetic polymer carpets comprised of nylon blends, polypropylene, polyester, acrylic and polyamide; and blends of these materials.

Products certified under GECA's Carpets standard also contribute towards achieving credit points for projects being certified under the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star materials calculator tools.

Find GECA certified carpet products on our **website**. If your favourite product is not listed, why not ask them to get certified.

### Why buy GECA certified products?

#### Better for the environment

- No chemical bleaching, phthalates or halogenated organic substances
- Restrictions for pest control methods
- Air and water emissions must be responsibly managed
- Product must be easy to recycle or dispose of responsibly

#### Better for human health

- Minimised VOC (volatile organic compounds) content
- No known carcinogens, mutagens or reproductive toxins as ingredients
- No toxic heavy metals
- Restrictions on harmful substances such as 1,3-butadiene and azo dyes

#### Better for ethical considerations

- No unsubstantiated claims (greenwashing)
- Workers can expect fair pay, equal opportunity, and a safe working environment

[www.geca.org.au](http://www.geca.org.au)





# The GECA carpets standard

	Key criteria	Concerns	GECA Standard
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fibre sourcing and processes</li> </ul>	Chemical bleaching often uses chlorine or sulphur compounds which can form hazardous pollutants. Other treatment processes can have harmful environmental effects.	Carpet yarn must not be chemically bleached. Surfactants used for scouring natural fibres must be aerobically biodegradable and correctly treated.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pest control</li> </ul>	Pesticide run-off can contaminate local water supplies and harm workers.	Restrictions on the use of insecticides, biocides and fungicides at all stages of the sourcing and manufacturing process.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emissions to air and water</li> </ul>	Discharge of waste water and damaging substances can threaten aquatic ecosystems. Pollutants and toxins can threaten air quality. Lower emissions reduce toxic air pollution and incidents of acid rain.	Acrylic fibres must meet limits for air emissions during manufacture, including NO <sub>x</sub> and SO <sub>2</sub> . Restrictions on effluent discharge to the environment. Known aquatic toxins prohibited.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phthalates and halogenated organic substances</li> </ul>	Many phthalates and halogenated organic substances harm health (some are endocrine disruptors) and the environment.	Halogenated organic substances and phthalates must not be intentionally added during manufacture.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Material efficiency and preferable material content</li> </ul>	Materials sourcing and production processes can have negative environmental impacts, which can be reduced with appropriate management and optimisation.	Material efficiency data must be collected for each key step in the manufacturing process in a format that allows for optimisation of production.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product care and disposal</li> </ul>	Ensuring the availability of replacement parts, plus ease of recycling, is a simple way of allowing end-users to extend the useful life of an existing product. This minimises the impacts of disposal and new production.	Carpets must be easy to clean and easy to separate into recyclable components at end of life. Modular tile carpet must come with a replacement or rotation offer for worn tiles.
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volatile organic compounds</li> </ul>	VOCs may contribute to poor indoor air quality and trigger allergies, asthma and headaches.	Restrictions on VOC content and 4-PCH in carpet and adhesives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazardous materials</li> </ul>	Short, medium and long term risks to human health (for example, potential cancers, genetic changes or birth defects) and the environment.	Specific hazardous materials must not be added during manufacture. No known carcinogens, mutagens or harmful substances permitted. Restrictions on 1,3-butadiene in latex rubber or foams. Restrictions on azo dyes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy metals</li> </ul>	Can have detrimental effects to the health of manufacturing staff and users of the finished product.	Toxic heavy metals, such as lead, cadmium, mercury, chromium, arsenic and others, must not be deliberately added or used.
Ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human rights</li> </ul>	Safe working conditions, fair and equal opportunities should be available to workers.	Requirements for workplace safety, fair pay and equal opportunity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal compliance</li> </ul>	Compliance with the law is a crucial part of manufacturing a sustainable product.	Requirements for lawful conduct and environmental compliance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental claims</li> </ul>	Greenwashing misrepresents a product's environmental attributes to customers.	All claims must be true and substantiated.

For full list of criteria, refer to the **GECA Carpets Standard (GECA 50-2011 v2)**.

GECA runs Australia's only independent, not-for-profit, multi-sector ecolabelling program and is the only Australian member of the Global Ecolabelling Network. It develops standards against which products can be independently audited by GECA's JAS-ANZ accredited conformity assessment bodies. Its standards are developed following ISO14024 principles for global best practice in ecolabelling. More information is available at [www.geca.org.au](http://www.geca.org.au).

