



Choose better furniture with GECA

Furniture transforms our homes and workplaces from empty rooms to inviting, useful spaces. But how often do we consider the environmental impact of the products that help us work, rest and play? The manufacture, use and disposal of furniture products can have a negative environmental impact caused by anything from the choice of raw materials used, to coatings, textiles, and adhesives. Manufacturers may use hazardous treatments, or may be managing their energy and water use poorly during production.

When a product is certified against Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA)'s Furniture standards, 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 standards include office furniture, chairs, desks and workstations, couches, stools, coffee tables, fittings and foam. Products can be certified at Level A or Level B for recognition by the Green Building Council of Australia.

Find GECA certified furniture, fittings and foam 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

- Avoid illegal harvest of wood and fibre for raw materials
- Emissions to air and water heavily restricted
- Product must be easy to recycle or dispose of in an environmentally responsible way
- Replacement parts must be made available to users
- Use only GECA certified (or equivalent) fabrics and adhesives (*Level A only*)

Better for human health

- Limits on heavy metals in final product
- Restrictions or bans on known carcinogens, mutagens or other specific harmful substances
- Volatile organic compounds limited (*Level A only*)

Better for ethical considerations

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

www.geca.org.au



The GECA Furniture standards

	Key criteria	Why it matters	GECA requirements
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable harvest and treatments for wood and fibre 	Illegal harvesting, genetically modified organisms, and unsustainable management can threaten ecosystem health and local communities.	Timber and other natural fibres must not come from uncertified sources, illegal harvesting, genetically modified organisms, or environmentally destructive practices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product packaging, stewardship and recyclability 	Ensuring the availability of replacement parts allows end-users to extend the useful life of an existing product. Products that are difficult to separate into recyclable parts at end-of-product life are more likely to contribute to landfill, even if the components are recyclable.	Manufacturer must make replacement parts for easily worn-out components, such as hinges, available to users. Appropriate recycling and/or stewardship program to take back products at end of life must be in place. Product must be easily separated into recyclable units at end of life.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emissions to air and water 	Pollutants and toxins can threaten air quality. Discharge of waste water and damaging substances can threaten aquatic ecosystems.	Emissions to air of formaldehyde heavily restricted. Discharges to water from foam, latex or rubber production must be treated and reduced before release into environment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum resource efficient material content (<i>Level A only</i>) 	Materials sourcing and production processes can have negative environmental impacts, which can be reduced with appropriate management and optimisation.	The product or each component must consist of a specific amount of non-petrochemical, recycled or rapidly renewable components.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified fabric (<i>Level A only</i>) 	Fabrics of uncertain origin could pose environmental, social and human health risks.	All fabrics must be GECA certified or under other recognised international ecolabels, or must satisfy relevant GECA standard requirements.
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy metals 	Substances classified as 'heavy metals' represent a human health risk, particularly for infants.	Heavy metals must not be added during product manufacture.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous materials 	Short, medium and long term risks to human health and the environment, such as from substances that are potentially allergenic, carcinogenic or disruptive to hormone systems.	Specific hazardous materials must not be added during manufacture. No known carcinogens, mutagens or harmful substances permitted. Restrictions on 1,3-butadiene and aniline-based amines.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) (<i>Level A only</i>) 	VOCs can trigger a range of human health issues and affect indoor air quality.	Volatile organic compounds limited.
Ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair pay and safe working conditions 	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"> Legal compliance 	Organisations must comply with required local and international laws and regulations.	Requirements for lawful conduct and environmental compliance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental claims 	Claims must be true and substantiated – greenwashing is not acceptable.	All claims must be true and substantiated.

For full list of criteria, refer to the **GECA Furniture, Fittings and Foam Level A (FFv2.1i-2010)** and **GECA Furniture and Fittings Level B (FFv2.0i-2006)** standards.

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.

