



Choose better floors with GECA

We step all over our floors each day, but how much do we know about the impact those floors have on the environment and our health? The main environmental impact comes from the different types of raw materials used, products for surface treatment and glue, and from the energy used during manufacturing. Flooring can also affect indoor air quality if it emits volatile organic compounds (VOCs), triggering respiratory conditions.

When a product is certified against Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA)'s Floor Coverings 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 parquet, wooden planks, engineered wood products (such as laminate), linoleum, bamboo, cork, rubber and vinyl flooring.

Products certified under GECA's Floor Coverings standard also contribute towards achieving credit points for projects being certified under the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star scheme.

Find GECA certified floor coverings 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
- Product must be easy to recycle or dispose of in an environmentally responsible way
- Restrictions on pesticide use
- Product must use a set amount of recycled, renewable or non-petrochemical components
- Lower waste generation and resource consumption

Better for human health

- Minimised VOC (volatile organic compounds) content
- No known carcinogens, mutagens or reproductive toxins can be added during manufacture
- Limits on heavy metals, phthalates and halogenated organic substances in final product

Better for ethical considerations

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

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The GECA floor coverings standard

	Key criteria	Concerns	GECA Standard
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"> Fungicides, insecticides and toxicity 	Some treated wood can be harmful to aquatic organisms.	Certain fungicides and insecticides must not be used. Outdoor wood cannot be harmful to aquatic organisms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste minimisation 	Overconsumption of resources and generation of waste can have a significant impact on the environment.	Effective waste minimisation policies and procedures must be in place.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material efficiency and recycled content 	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"> Recyclability 	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.	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.
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phthalates and halogenated organic substances 	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 rubber manufacture.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volatile organic compounds 	VOCs may contribute to poor indoor air quality and trigger allergies, asthma and headaches.	VOC content is limited. Restrictions on formaldehyde levels.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous materials 	Short, medium and long term risks to human health 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 and aniline-based amines.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy metals 	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"> Human rights 	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 Floor Coverings Standard (GECA 25-2011 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.

