

## *Build better walls with GECA*

Panel boards (internal lining substrates) play an important role lining our walls, ceilings and even floors. They use a variety of materials such as timber, gypsum, fibre cement and aluminium, among others. Like any other building material, there are a range of environmental and health concerns associated with their use.

When a product is certified against Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA)'s Panel Boards 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 particle boards, edge glued panels, fibre cement boards, plasterboard, gypsum board, ceiling tiles, and boards made from plastics and other materials.

Products certified under GECA's Panel Boards standard also contribute towards achieving credit points for projects being certified under the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star fitout calculators.

Find GECA certified panel boards 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 illegal harvest of wood and fibre for raw materials
- Restrictions on pesticide use
- Product must use a set amount of recycled, renewable or non-petrochemical components
- At end of life, the product must be easy to recycle or dispose of in a responsible manner

#### **Better for human health**

- No known carcinogens, mutagens or reproductive toxins as ingredients
- Volatile organic compounds strictly limited
- Products must demonstrate radioactive safety

#### **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 panel boards standard

	Key criteria	Concerns	GECA Standard
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable harvest and treatments for wood and fibre</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Fungicides and insecticides</li> </ul>	Exposure to certain wood treatments can lead to contamination of waterways and soil, and can also harm workers and end-users.	Certain fungicides and insecticides must not be used in wood products.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adhesives and textiles</li> </ul>	Textiles and adhesives of uncertified origin can pose environmental and health risks.	Adhesives and textiles must be GECA certified or satisfy equivalent criteria.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum resource efficient material content</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Product packaging, stewardship and recyclability</li> </ul>	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.
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazardous materials</li> </ul>	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, aniline-based amines and elemental chlorine.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radioactive safety</li> </ul>	Sources of radioactivity can pose a threat to human health.	Interior panel boards containing materials that may be rich naturally-occurring radioactive sources must demonstrate radioactive safety.
	<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.	VOC content is limited. Restrictions on formaldehyde levels.
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>	Organisations must comply with required local and international laws and regulations.	Requirements for lawful conduct and environmental compliance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental claims</li> </ul>	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 Panel Boards standard (GECA 04-2011 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).

