



Choose better textiles with GECA

While we all need clothes to wear and furnishings in our homes and workplaces, textile products can have negative impacts on the environment and human health. These can occur across the product's life cycle. They may include the use of biocides in agricultural practices, substances used in manufacturing which can harm waterways, hazardous materials which cause skin irritation during wear, or poor working conditions for textile manufacturers.

When a product is certified against Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA)'s Textiles and Leather 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 soft furnishings, leather, cleaning cloths, clothing and accessories; and fibre, yarn and fabric intended for use in such textile products.

Find GECA certified textiles 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

- Pesticide use is strictly limited
- Known aquatic toxins prohibited
- No illegal harvest of wood and fibre for raw materials
- Biodegradable substances must be used in manufacturing
- Waste management and energy use strategies in place

Better for human health

- Limits on heavy metals in final product
- Restrictions or bans on known carcinogens, mutagens or other specific toxic substances, including potentially cancer-causing dyes and dye byproducts

Better for ethical considerations

- No unsubstantiated claims (greenwashing)
- Workers can expect fair pay, equal opportunity, and a safe working environment
- Manufacturers must comply with International Labour Organisation Conventions for no forced labour or worker exploitation

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The GECA textiles and leather standard

	Key criteria	Why it matters	GECA requirements
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pesticide use 	Pesticide run-off can contaminate local water supplies and harm workers	Strict limits on amounts of pesticides present in raw materials (eg cotton, wool)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste minimisation and reporting 	Overconsumption of resources and generation of waste can have a significant impact on the environment.	Effective waste and energy management policies and procedures must be in place.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emissions to water 	Discharge of waste water and damaging substances can threaten aquatic ecosystems.	Restrictions on effluent discharge to the environment. Known aquatic toxins prohibited. Restrictions on zinc, copper and chlorine compounds for man-made cellulose fibres.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emissions to air 	Pollutants and toxins can threaten air quality. VOCs can also trigger a range of health concerns.	Emissions to air of acrylonitrile, N ₂ O, sulphur and other compounds restricted. Organotin compounds banned in elastane fibres. VOC limited.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable harvest 	Illegal harvesting, genetically modified organisms, and unsustainable management can threaten ecosystem health and local communities.	Raw materials from wood and fibre must not come from uncertified sources, illegal harvesting, genetically modified organisms, or environmentally destructive practices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodegradability 	Non-biodegradable substances persist in land and water, threatening ecosystem health.	At least 95% of complexing agents and softeners used must be biodegradable.
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy metals 	Substances classified as 'heavy metals' represent a human health risk, particularly for infants.	Restrictions of heavy metals, such as chromium, arsenic, lead, antimony and cadmium, in manufacturing and final products.
	<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.	Use of hazardous materials (as defined in criterion 30 of standard), including APEOs, formaldehyde, and biocides, is limited. No known carcinogens, mutagens or toxic substances permitted.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dyes 	Certain dyes and dye byproducts have been classified as skin sensitisers, carcinogenic, mutagenic and reproductive toxins.	Limits and restrictions placed on certain dyes, including azo dyes.
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.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human and labour rights 	No forced labour or worker exploitation for products with an overseas supply chain	Must show compliance with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions.

For full list of criteria, refer to the **GECA Textiles and Leather Standard (TLv3.0-2014)**.

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 ISO 14024 principles for global best practice in ecolabelling. More information is available at www.geca.org.au.

