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Good Environmental Choice Australia
"A commitment to credible product information
for sustainable development"

GECA MEDIA RELEASE

NEW AUSTRALIAN PAINT STANDARD LAUNCHED

A new standard which significantly reduces the impact on human health and the environment.

A new national paint standard has been developed by Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) which excludes solvent-based paints, all carcinogenic and mutagenic substances and for the first time, covers artist and student paints.

The standard, 'GECA 23-2012 Paints and Coatings', recognises best-practice, environmentally responsible products and was developed in consultation with leading industry figures.

According to GECA's CEO, Judy Hollingworth: "This new standard is great news for professional painters, home-owners, artists and students alike. It was revised to reflect current industry knowledge and innovation, with a focus on environmental impact, public health and green building."

"Importantly, the standard excludes **all solvent-based paints and coatings**. With advances in paint technology it's now believed that water-based paints can offer the same performance as solvent-based products but without the health and environmental issues related to petroleum-derived solvents."

"The Standard also sets **Lower VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) limits**. These are major contributors to both smog and health problems, from headaches to respiratory issues and cancer, especially for trades professionals who have daily, extended exposure to paint and coating products."

"Low VOC paints are low-odour, which means newly painted spaces are able to be occupied sooner, without the associated health issues."

"The new standard ensures that manufacturers have effective procedures in place in relation to waste minimisation, chemical storage, water recovery, and use of resources and energy. It also requires suitable procedures to be in place to protect staff from hazardous substances."

The new standard requires any product claims regarding 'solar reflectance' to be verifiable and also covers:

- glycol ethers
- ozone depleting substances
- heavy metals
- biocides
- effective product labelling

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Quotes from industry and academia:

Paul Breeze, Group Technical Manager at Wattyl and a member of the Technical Advisory Group behind the standard said: *"This new standard represents a further, worthwhile step towards even-more environmentally preferable and safer coatings"* and noted it was important that the standard *"recognises the Australian context, not only in terms of our harsh weather, but by taking on-board the cost of compliance relative to our smaller economy"*. Paul stressed that *"Australia's self-regulated paint industry has made great headway addressing environmental and health issues on its own, for example, with the removal of lead"* but still felt that this new standard has *"Upped the game, resulting in a tougher, yet more rational standard compared to others"*.

Dr Miles Park, Program Director, Industrial Design, Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW and member of GECA's Standards Committee, commented that *"The improvement of this and other GECA standards reflects industry developments in best practice and society's expectations on raising the environmental performance of paints and coatings. A key improvement in the standard is the reduction of VOCs, especially for interior coatings. This signals to specifiers and users a safer product to use and for those inhabiting recently painted interiors, a healthier indoor environment."*

A copy of GECA's new Paints and Coatings standard is available here:

<http://bit.ly/gecapaint>

For further information about 'GECA 23-2012 Paints and Coatings' please contact:

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ABOUT GECA

GECA is Australia's first, and most recognised, third-party ecolabel scheme. The GECA ecolabel has provided consumers and manufacturers with a reliable, convenient way to make environmentally preferable choices since 2006. GECA is the Australian member of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) and has published more than 40 Standards to date.

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