

Sustainable Data Centres Working Group

Terms of Reference

What you need to know

The Sustainable Data Centres Working Group has been established to guide and support the Green Building Council Australia (GBCA) in the delivery of the Sustainable Data Centres Program.

The Working Group reports to the Executive in charge of the Sustainable Data Centres Program, or delegated Senior Manager, and supports the broader goals of the program by ensuring that guidance and standards reflect best practice and the needs of the sector.

Working Group members are composed of industry professionals with expertise in data centre design, construction, operation, investment, and associated sectors.

Background

Green Star is an internationally recognised rating system that delivers independent verification of sustainable outcomes throughout the life cycle of the built environment.

Data centres are at the heart of Australia's digital economy. Their environmental and social impact is growing just as fast as demand – making sustainable design, construction, and operation critical. The GBCA has launched the Sustainable Data Centres Program to define and deliver best practice sustainability outcomes for this sector, and to set the standard for ESG leadership in digital infrastructure.

The program has five strategic pillars:

- Industry Convening – bringing together owners, operators, investors, government, and consultants to shape the program.
- Standards Development – developing best-practice guidance and the potential for a Green Star certification pathway for data centres.
- Policy & Advocacy – delivering clear policy positions for government to drive sustainable digital infrastructure.
- Education & Reach – expanding industry knowledge through thought leadership, events, webinars, and media engagement.
- Global Collaboration – alignment with international frameworks includingGRESB, Climate Bonds, and WorldGBC.

What is the role of the Working Group?

The Working Group advises the GBCA across a broad range of topics relevant to sustainable data centres. Members bring expertise from across the sector and are appointed by the GBCA. At the GBCA's request, the Working Group may be asked to:

- Provide specialist reviews and technical advice related to the Sustainable Data Centres Program.
- Assist with the development and review of thought leadership papers, issues papers, and guidance documents in line with the GBCA's vision and strategy.
- Evaluate the views of stakeholders as provided to the GBCA as part of the stakeholder consultation process.
- Potential to advise on the development of a Green Star certification pathway for data centres, including credit frameworks, benchmarks, and weightings.
- Provide input into policy positions that support sustainable digital infrastructure in Australia.
- Support the GBCA's engagement with international frameworks, including GRESB, Climate Bonds Initiative, and WorldGBC.

The Working Group may also participate in targeted focus groups addressing specific impact areas, including energy and carbon, water, materials and circular economy, nature, and social impact.

At the GBCA's discretion, the scope and activities of the Working Group may be updated over time to reflect the evolving needs of the program.

What are we looking for?

We are seeking individuals with deep experience relevant to sustainable data centres and the built environment. Representation will span the following sectors:

- Data centre developers, lessors, and operators
- Key industry consultants experienced with data centres
- Builders
- Supply chain: product manufacturers and suppliers
- Utilities: energy and water providers
- Key government stakeholders
- Investors and finance providers

The Working Group works best when it offers diverse opinions and distinct points of view. We want a mix of backgrounds, locations, and career stages. We invite both experienced professionals and emerging leaders to nominate.

In recognition of our reconciliation efforts, we welcome professionals with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background to join us. We support efforts to increase gender diversity in our industry and aim to have no more than 60% of the Working Group from a single gender. We strongly encourage women and those who identify as women, non-binary, or gender-diverse to apply.

In most cases, members must be from GBCA member organisations. We may waive this requirement at our sole discretion to bring in additional or relevant expertise.

Being part of the Working Group

The term of appointment of the Working Group will be determined on a case-by-case basis, aligned with the program timeline and phases of work.

The Working Group will have an appointed chairperson (by the GBCA) to facilitate the process. The GBCA will provide secretarial duties.

The Working Group is expected to meet quarterly, with additional meetings or targeted focus groups convened as required. A majority of Working Group members and the Chair must be present for a meeting to proceed with formal recommendations.

Where quorum is not achieved, the meeting will still proceed, but recommendations will be taken on notice and confirmed via circular to all members. Recommendations will be presented to the Executive in charge of the Sustainable Data Centres Program or delegated Senior Manager.

GBCA staff will attend all meetings. Meetings will be recorded for archival purposes and may be held via teleconference or in person. Meeting logistics will be arranged by the GBCA in advance. The GBCA cannot cover costs for member time or travel.

The GBCA will prepare and circulate meeting minutes to the Chair for approval and then to the rest of the group. The GBCA reserves the right to publish all meeting minutes on its website.

The Working Group is not a formal committee and provides recommendations only. Members do not have any authority to act or speak on behalf of the GBCA. Members are expected to maintain confidentiality of all discussions.

The GBCA will review appointments if a member does not attend or provide feedback on more than two occasions in any given year. The GBCA may remove or appoint Working Group members at any time.

What is expected of you

You agree to work towards consensus. You will work with your fellow members to seek resolution and find common ground. Consensus means most people in the group agree and there is no sustained, strong opposition – it does not mean unanimous agreement.

You are expected to act in a professional manner and with a high level of personal integrity. Any conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, must be communicated to the GBCA prior to your appointment.

You are not permitted to share discussions or information to parties outside the Working Group without the GBCA's approval. By participating, you agree to maintain confidentiality of all information provided and all conversations within the Working Group.

You acknowledge that legal interest in any intellectual property developed by the Working Group will vest with the GBCA.

Unless exempted, you must remain part of a GBCA member organisation to participate in the Working Group. If you move to an organisation that is not a member of the GBCA, you must advise us. At the GBCA's discretion, you may remain on the Working Group provided you help bring your organisation into GBCA membership within 12 months.

You are appointed as an individual, not as a company representative. While the GBCA can accept replacements on your behalf, this requires prior approval and the GBCA reserves the right to decline. Temporary replacements will be accepted for parental leave, long service leave, illness, or similar personal reasons, subject to agreement on the right candidate.

Being part of the Working Group does not preclude you from participating in GBCA Advisory Groups or Expert Reference Panels.

Nominating to the Working Group

Calls for nominations occur via the GBCA website and our media channels. An Expression of Interest process is the primary pathway for nominations, though the GBCA may also directly invite individuals with relevant expertise.

When nominating, you will need to provide your contact details, relevant experience, and a copy of your LinkedIn profile.

In most cases, you must be part of a GBCA member company to nominate. The GBCA may waive this requirement at its sole discretion to bring in additional or relevant expertise.

The GBCA may review these Terms of Reference from time to time to reflect the evolving needs of the Sustainable Data Centres Program.

Revisions and amendments

May 2026 – Initial version established for the Sustainable Data Centres Working Group.