

Green Star Fitouts

For retail brands

Better fitouts,
today and tomorrow.



Founded by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) in 2003, Green Star is an internationally recognised rating system setting the standard for healthy, resilient, positive buildings and places.

Using Green Star, the Green Building Council of Australia has certified thousands of buildings, interiors and precincts around the country, driving better buildings for today and tomorrow.

-  Reducing the impact of climate change
-  Enhancing our health and quality of life
-  Restoring and protecting our planet's biodiversity and ecosystems
-  Driving resiliency in buildings, fitouts, and communities
-  Contributing to market transformation and a sustainable economy.



Retail fitouts do more than shape how a store looks.

They communicate what your brand stands for – often long before a customer picks up a product. Every material, finish and design decision sends a signal about quality, care and credibility. Yet behind the shopfront, fitouts can also carry hidden impacts that quietly erode trust over time

Fitouts are among the fastest-growing sources of carbon in buildings¹, generate substantial waste² and, when poorly designed, can create unhealthy and uncomfortable environments that can reduce dwell time, erode staff performance and quietly affect the bottom line.³

For years, these impacts sat outside the spotlight. But as expectations rise around circularity, climate performance and healthier interiors, these once-hidden impacts can no longer be overlooked.

In this document:

- Why fitouts matter: the hidden impacts behind the shopfront
- The opportunity: turning risks into value
- Applying Green Star Fitouts across your retail network

Green Star Fitouts provides a practical way forward

Green Star Fitouts offers a clear, practical framework to guide better fitout decisions from the outset – helping brands deliver stores that are healthier, lower-carbon, lower-waste and designed to adapt. Spaces that support trust, not just transactions.

Whether you're creating a flagship, rolling out stores at scale or refreshing existing locations, Green Star Fitouts helps brands transform fitout decisions into long-term brand value – creating stores that feel better, perform better and stand for something more.

At the Green Building Council of Australia, we see every day that high-performing interiors never have to compromise great design. The most inspiring spaces can also be healthier, lower-impact and future-ready – delivering better outcomes for today, and tomorrow.

Green Star Fitouts
Better fitouts, today and tomorrow



SECTION 1

Why retail fitouts matter: the hidden impacts behind the shopfront

Fitouts shape how people feel in a space — but behind every finish, material and layout sits a set of hidden carbon, waste, health and business impacts that can no longer be overlooked.



Carbon

Retail fitouts play a far bigger role in carbon emissions than most people realise.

Unlike a building's structure and façade, fitouts are replaced far more frequently. Most retail stores are refurbished every **6–8 years**, with shopping-centre tenancies often refreshed even sooner – typically every **3–4 years**.⁵ Each refurbishment locks embodied carbon into materials such as flooring, finishes and fixtures, only for much of it to be stripped out after a short period of use.⁵

Over time, this constant churn drives significant embodied carbon, making fitouts one of the fastest-growing sources of carbon in buildings.¹

Because fitout materials and construction sit largely within a brand's control, the impact of these decisions compounds quickly as stores are refreshed, relocated or rolled out at scale. Across a portfolio, this creates a material and growing Scope 3 carbon exposure – directly influencing climate targets, disclosure obligations and brand credibility.

DISSH Bondi, NSW, DISSH,
4 Star Green Star – Interiors rating v1.3



The risks for retail brands



Scope 3 reporting is mandatory from 2026

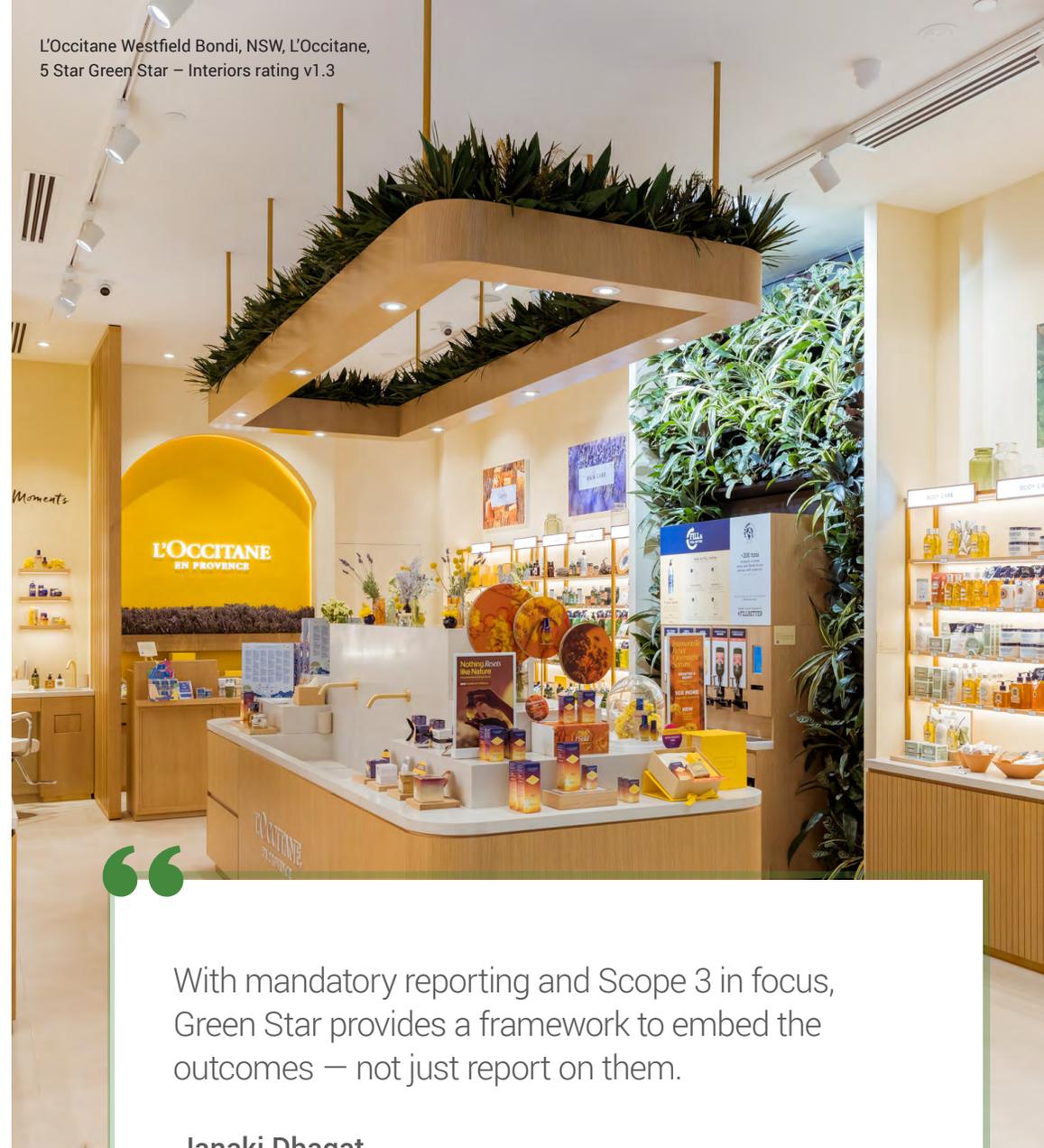
Australia's climate disclosure regime will require large organisations to report Scope 3 emissions⁶, placing the embodied carbon of retail fitouts firmly under the spotlight. For the first time, brands will need to measure and publicly disclose the emissions associated with their fitouts, not just their products or operations.



Fitout emissions influence climate targets and credibility

There is a clear shift from broad climate ambitions to specific, measurable Scope 3 targets. In 2024, the number of ASX 200 companies with Scope 3 targets increased by 35%⁷, a trend expected to accelerate as more organisations align with the Science Based Targets initiative.

Together, these shifts signal a clear expectation to measure and reduce material Scope 3 emissions – including those from fitouts. If left unmanaged, fitout emissions can undermine the credibility of climate targets and create gaps in transition plans.



With mandatory reporting and Scope 3 in focus, Green Star provides a framework to embed the outcomes – not just report on them.

Janaki Dhagat
Sustainability Manager, Charter Hall

Waste

Every retail fitout creates waste – not because materials are worn out, but because the store changes.

When layouts shift, leases end or branding evolves, fitouts are stripped out long before materials reach the end of their useful life. Flooring, joinery, fixtures and ceilings are routinely removed and discarded, even when they are still in good condition.⁵

The average retail fitout produces 12 tonnes of waste, with around \$140 per m² lost on materials that are ordered, installed and ultimately discarded.² For a typical 200 m² retail, **that equates to more than \$28,000 in wasted materials per fitout.**

For retail brands, this waste isn't a one-off event. It's repeated with every refurbishment, relocation or rollout – multiplying the impact across a portfolio.

As expectations tighten around circularity, this presents a growing risk for organisations. Waste-intensive fitouts increasingly translate into higher costs, Scope 3 emissions exposure and brand risk – making adaptability and material efficiency critical considerations from the outset.



“

When fitouts are removed before they've reached the end of their useful life, we're not just creating waste – we're destroying value. We're not realising the return on our initial investment, and that cost is borne across the entire ecosystem, from tenants to building owners and consultants.

Clayton Bristow,
Managing Director, FF&3



Know the risks in a tightening circularity landscape

Australia's new Circular Economy Framework⁸ sets a national ambition to double circularity over the next decade – signaling rising pressure on waste generation, disposal, resource recovery and reporting. In this context, short-lived, waste-heavy fitouts are increasingly viewed as a liability.

Three emerging risks for brands



Scope 3 reporting and governance expectations

Waste-intensive fitouts inflate a tenant's Scope 3 emissions¹ and can leave organisations out of step with circularity standards⁸. Every deficit, relocation or refurbishment creates a measurable Scope 3 impact – one that large organisations will need to disclose from 2026.



Escalating waste and disposal costs

Rising landfill levies⁹ and disposal charges mean the cost of every strip-out or refresh is increasing. Waste must be removed, transported and processed – costs typically borne by tenants and likely to continue escalating.



Brand, ESG and trust implications

Short-lived, waste-heavy interiors can undermine sustainability commitments and negatively influence perceptions among investors, employees and customers. Investor scrutiny is rising: 22% of investors in 2025 now integrate circular economy risks and opportunities into their assessments – up from 12% in 2023.¹⁰



The in-store experience

Materials, lighting, layout and finishes shape comfort, wellbeing and the overall feel of a space — influencing how long customers stay, how staff experience their work, and how a store performs. Experience drives performance. For every 1% increase in customer dwell time, sales rise by 1.3%.³

How a fitout shapes the in-store experience



Air quality

Fitout materials can emit VOCs long after installation, affecting indoor air quality. These compounds can irritate the eyes, skin and airways and cause headaches and fatigue for staff and customers.¹³



Lighting

Lighting shapes mood, comfort and product perception¹¹. Fitout decisions affect access to daylight, with well-lit stores linked to longer dwell time and stronger sales.³



Acoustics

Partitions, ceilings, flooring and layout shape how sound is experienced in-store. Poor acoustics can create noisy, stressful spaces that can shorten dwell time and affect staff comfort.³



Layout

Clear layouts and intuitive circulation make stores easier to navigate and more enjoyable to spend time in. Fitout design shapes how customers move, pause and interact — influencing both experience and efficiency.³



Thermal Comfort

Fitout layouts, partitions and equipment can disrupt airflow, creating hot or cold zones throughout a store. Poor thermal comfort increases fatigue, shortens browsing time and makes stores less comfortable places to work.³



Biophilia

Fitout choices that incorporate greenery, natural textures and restorative elements have been shown to increase dwell time by up to 279%, and slow walking speeds by 12.2%¹² — creating calmer, more browsing-friendly stores.





Green Star has a direct and meaningful impact on our team members, reinforcing our commitment to their wellbeing. Our stores are designed to be healthier and more ergonomic, incorporating nature-inspired elements and greenery that enhance interest, comfort, and the overall in-store experience.

Sage Calamari

Sustainability Specialist, Country Road Group

Brand reputation

Today, the carbon, waste and health impacts of fitouts can't be ignored. Expectations are rising, trust is fragile, and scrutiny around sustainability and greenwashing is intensifying. Store environments are no longer judged on aesthetics alone – they're seen as a reflection of brand values and a way to show that sustainability commitments are real.

What the numbers tell us

85%

of Australians are concerned about the amount of waste and consumption in society⁸

78%

want to see clear evidence of environmental improvement driven by real action¹⁴

82%

of Australians remain sceptical about social and environmental claims⁴

71%

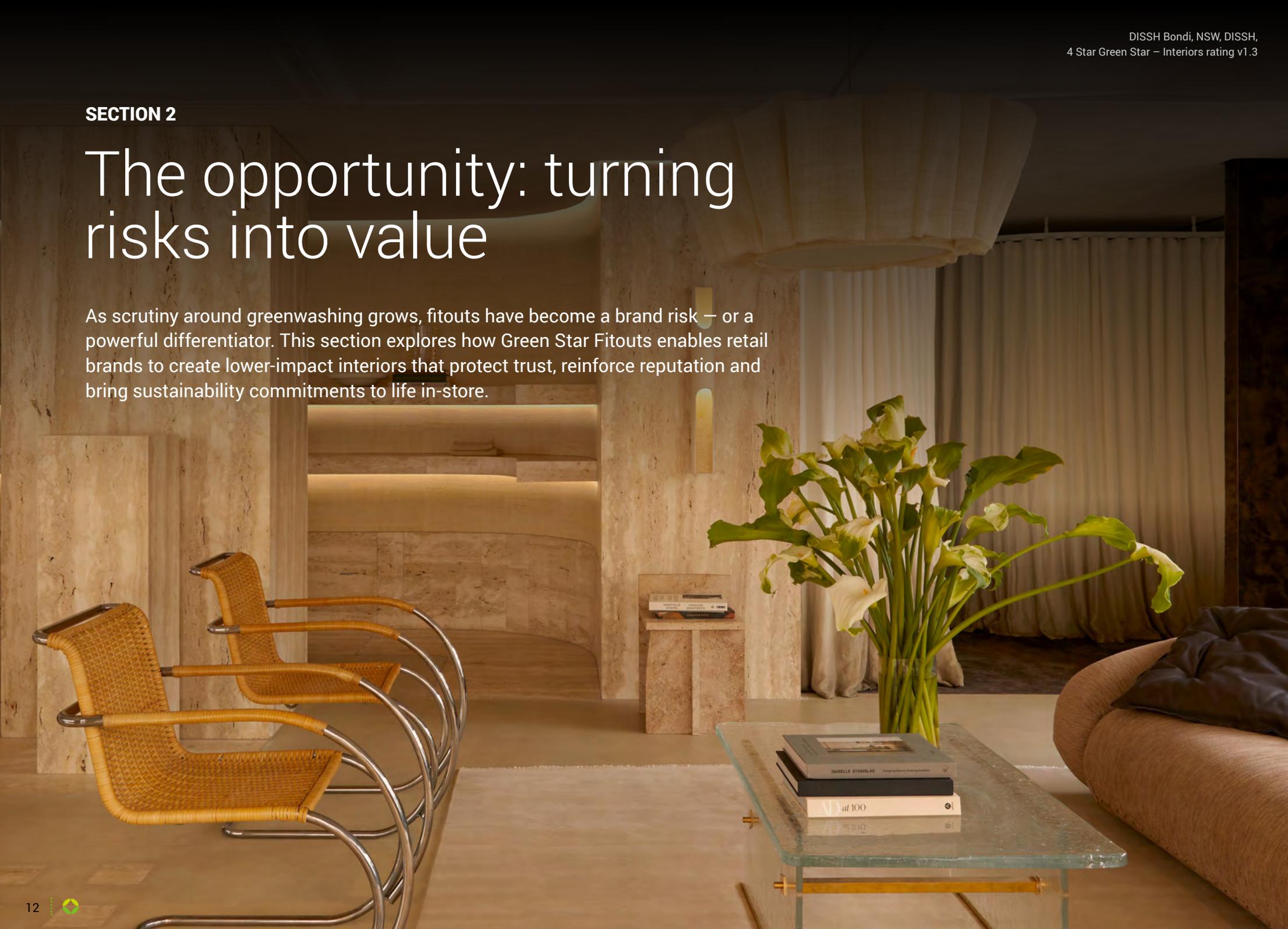
of respondents stated they would permanently lose trust in a brand if it became clear that the company placed profits above people⁵

Greenwashing is a top ACCC priority for 2025–26, with a focus on energy, food, fashion and homewares.¹⁶

SECTION 2

The opportunity: turning risks into value

As scrutiny around greenwashing grows, fitouts have become a brand risk – or a powerful differentiator. This section explores how Green Star Fitouts enables retail brands to create lower-impact interiors that protect trust, reinforce reputation and bring sustainability commitments to life in-store.





Green Star Fitouts: a framework for better interiors

Green Star Fitouts helps retail brands turn sustainability commitments into visible, credible action in-store. With a practical framework focused on six key impact areas, it enables teams to deliver lower-carbon, lower-waste and healthier stores – strengthening brand trust while embedding consistency across portfolios.

The six foundations of better fitouts



Circular

Embeds circularity enablers throughout the design and construction of the fitout.



Responsible

Recognises activities that ensure the fitout is designed, procured, built, and handed over in a responsible manner.



Healthy

Promotes actions and solutions that improve the physical and mental health of occupants.



Positive

Encourages a positive contribution to key environmental issues of carbon, water, and the impact of materials.



People

Encourages solutions that address the social health of occupants.



Leadership

Recognises projects that set a strategic direction, build a vision for industry, or enhance the industry's capacity to innovate.



Carbon: unlocking lower carbon interiors

Green Star Fitouts provides clear, practical guidance to help retail brands reduce the carbon impact of their stores – supporting lower Scope 3 emissions across fitouts and helping brands meet climate and ESG commitments with confidence.

How Green Star Fitouts helps you reduce carbon



Reduce upfront carbon through design and material decisions

The framework sets clear targets for lowering upfront carbon early in design – while giving teams the flexibility to choose materials and solutions that suit their store format, rollout model and brand expression.



Extend material life to minimise repeated emissions

Guidance sets clear targets that steer project teams toward interiors that adapt more easily and minimise replacement cycles – reducing the repeated embodied carbon impacts of fitouts over a building's life.



Cut operational carbon through smarter energy choices

Green Star Fitouts guides teams on how to eliminate fossil fuels, use high-efficiency systems and transition to renewable energy in areas under the tenant's control. This directly reduces operational emissions while helping tenants meet their climate commitments.



Compensate for what can't be avoided

Where emissions can't be fully eliminated, Green Star Fitouts provides direction on how to compensate for residual upfront carbon in a credible, transparent way.

Circularity: designing retail interiors that reduce waste and adapt over time

Green Star Fitouts gives retail brands clear direction on how to support more circular fitouts – reducing waste, extending the life of materials and fixtures and staying ahead of tightening circularity expectations.

How Green Star Fitouts supports circular retail fitouts



Keep materials in use for longer

Green Star Fitouts helps teams identify what can be reused by setting clear targets and providing consistent ways to measure and calculate circular outcomes. This reduces unnecessary replacement cycles, a major driver of waste and embodied carbon in retail fitouts.



Design for adaptability, not demolition

Green Star Fitouts provides direction on how to embed flexibility through modular systems, multifunctional layouts and adaptable service models. This helps fitouts evolve over time without generating large volumes of waste during every change of needs.



Enable future reuse from the start

Green Star Fitouts sets clear expectations for documenting fitout components through digital asset registers, helping today's store become a resource for future fitouts. This supports material recovery and keeps valuable products in circulation rather than sent to landfill.



Choose responsible products

Green Star Fitouts includes practical tools to help teams select responsibly manufactured products and maximise resource recovery during delivery. This removes guesswork and gives brands confidence that products meet clear, credible standards – supporting both circularity goals and brand trust.



CR Chatswood Chase and the new Fitouts tool have prompted a fresh review of our internal processes, enabling us to enhance circularity through more effective fixture tracking. In addition, the Fitouts Circularity Calculator will help us plan for end-of-use outcomes during the design phase, ensuring future projects are more attentive to sustainable procurement.

Sage Calamari

Sustainability Specialist, Country Road Group



Country Road Ballarat, Vic, Country Road, 6 Star Green Star – Interiors rating v1.3



Health and wellbeing: creating retail interiors that support people everyday

How Green Star Fitouts supports healthier retail interiors



1. Cleaner air and low-toxicity materials

Green Star Fitouts sets clear expectations for low-VOC materials, reduced chemical exposure and improved indoor air quality – helping create stores that feel fresh and comfortable for customers, and healthier for staff who spend long hours in the space.



2. Better comfort through lighting, acoustics and thermal performance

The framework provides direction on designing for high-quality lighting, effective acoustic performance and stable thermal comfort – key drivers of customer comfort, dwell time and staff satisfaction in retail environments.

While the base building sets the backdrop, the fitout shapes the everyday experience – for customers and staff.

Green Star Fitouts provides clear, practical direction to create healthier, high-performing interiors that support wellbeing and meet rising expectations.



3. Ergonomic, inclusive and supportive layouts

Guidance on layout, ergonomics and accessibility helps ensure stores are easy to navigate, inclusive and comfortable – supporting both the customer journey and day-to-day retail operations.



4. Connection to nature and place

Green Star Fitouts encourages the use of biophilic design elements and natural materials, supporting wellbeing and creating calmer, more inviting retail spaces that customers want to linger in.



Green Star certification undergoes a rigorous assessment process adhering to the highest industry standards. This approach is essential, as it plays a crucial role in reducing the impact of climate change while simultaneously improving the overall health and quality of life for everyone.

Junho Oh,
Project Manager, L'Occitane Australia

Choosing responsible products with confidence

One of the biggest challenges in any fitout is knowing which materials are genuinely responsible. With thousands of products on the market — and rising scrutiny around greenwashing — project teams often struggle to identify options that have a lower environmental impact, are transparent, respect human rights and support a circular economy.

The **Responsible Products framework** provides a clear, structured way to navigate this complexity. Through the Responsible Products **score checker**, teams can search recognised product certification initiatives and understand how certified products score against Green Star requirements.

This makes it far easier to identify materials that are environmentally responsible, transparent, ethically produced and circular — and, in turn, secure the Green Star points needed to achieve certification.



Reducing cost through better fitout design

For retail brands, fitout decisions affect cost – not just at delivery, but every time a store is refreshed or rolled out again. More adaptable, durable fitouts are easier to update, cost less to run, and stay fit for purpose as formats evolve. Green Star Fitouts provides clear direction to support these outcomes.

How Green Star Fitouts helps reduce cost



Reduce upfront spend through smarter reuse

The framework helps teams identify where existing materials, furniture and equipment can be retained or reused before purchasing new, helping lower procurement costs and reduce demolition and disposal expenses.



Design spaces that can evolve with changing needs

Guidance on flexible layouts, maintainable materials and adaptable systems helps reduce the need for major interventions as stores evolve with changing layouts, branding or tenancy requirements. This supports lower churn costs and fewer costly fitout refreshes over time.



Lower operating costs through efficient systems

Direction on energy-efficient lighting, equipment and HVAC, along with water-efficient fixtures and tenancy-level metering, helps brands better manage energy and water use – reducing ongoing bills and improving operational efficiency.



Myth: Green Star Fitouts add significant cost to projects

Evidence from completed Green Star Interiors projects shows the cost uplift is modest and predictable, even at higher certification levels.

Typical share of total project budget associated with Green Star certification:



Unlocking opportunities through certification

Certification strengthens everything you deliver through Green Star Fitouts. Here are four opportunities you unlock only with certification:



Easier, more robust reporting

Independent certification provides clear, structured documentation aligned to recognised standards – supporting ESG reporting, investor disclosure and internal governance. It simplifies evidence gathering and strengthens the credibility of what you report.



Reduced reputational risk

Greenwashing is a core ACCC enforcement priority for 2025–26, with a particular focus on sectors including energy, food, fashion and homewares.¹⁶ In a market increasingly scrutinising sustainability claims, independent certification protects your reputation. It ensures every claim is credible, verified and defensible.



Stronger alignment across stakeholders

Certification establishes a clear, shared benchmark for success. For retail brands, this means smoother delivery, fewer surprises, and greater confidence that fitout decisions are delivering the outcomes you intend.



Verified sustainability leadership

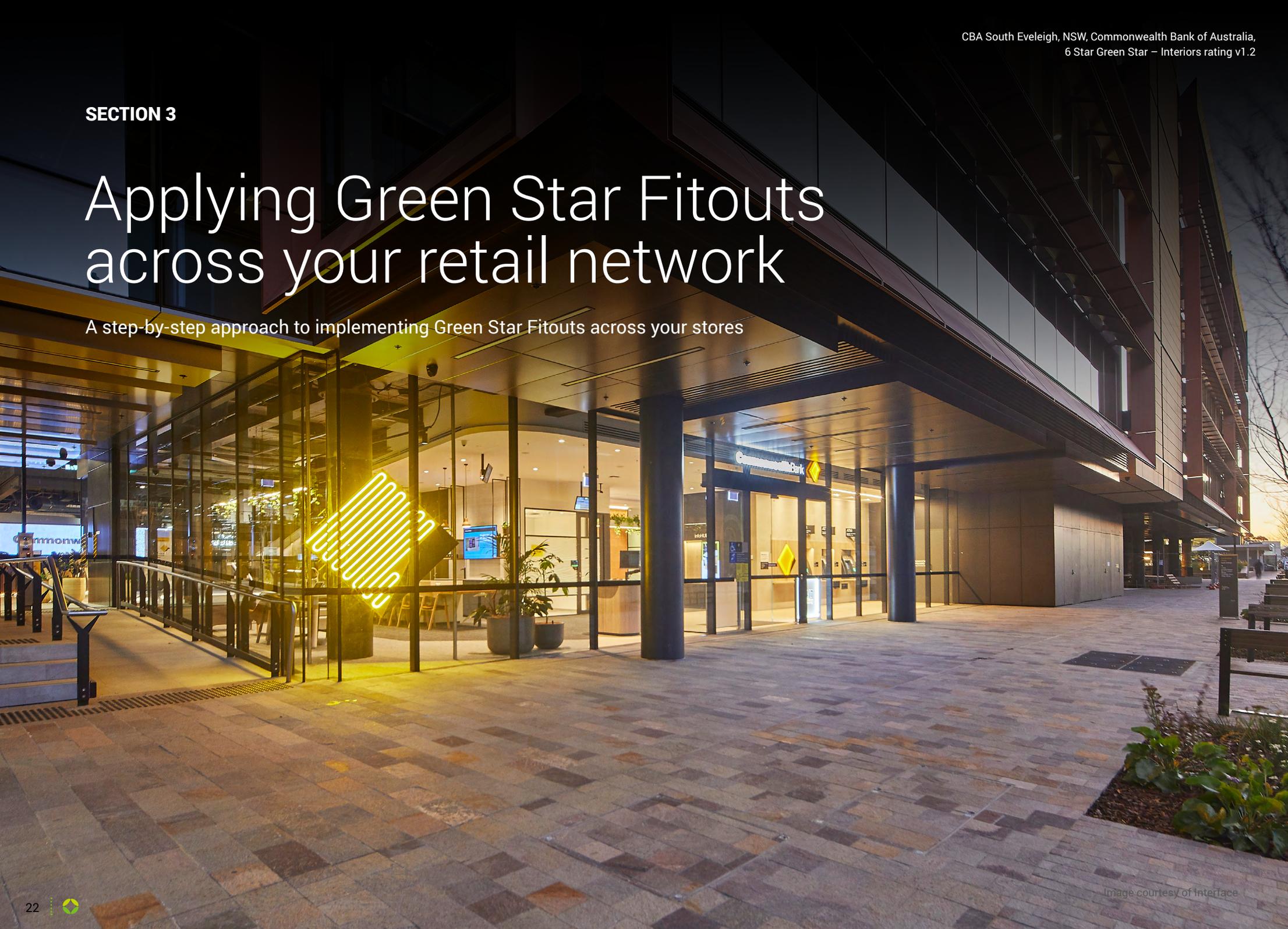
Certification shows that sustainability is a genuine priority – embedded in how you operate, not simply expressed in messaging. It aligns your brand with independently verified performance at a time when the market expects nothing less.



SECTION 3

Applying Green Star Fitouts across your retail network

A step-by-step approach to implementing Green Star Fitouts across your stores



How to apply Green Star Fitouts to your next store

Green Star Fitouts is designed to work whether you're delivering a single store or managing fitouts across a retail network. Brands can apply it in the way that best suits their format, scale and rollout strategy.

Apply Green Star Fitouts to a single store

If you're designing, refurbishing or relocating one store, Green Star Fitouts can be used as a one-off framework. It guides decisions from design through delivery, giving confidence that the store meets best-practice standards for sustainability, health and performance streamline documentation

This approach is ideal for:

- A flagship store
- A major store refurbishment or relocation
- Piloting a more sustainable, higher-performing store format

Apply Green Star Fitouts across multiple stores

For brands managing multiple locations or national rollouts, Green Star Fitouts can be applied consistently across many stores. This supports a repeatable approach to fitouts, helping reduce variation, embed clear expectations and lift performance over time.

This approach is ideal for:

- National or regional store networks
- Rolling store refresh or rollout programs
- Standardising sustainability, wellbeing and brand outcome across locations



How Green Star Fitouts works



Meet Minimum Expectations

All Green Star Fitouts projects must meet a set of Minimum Expectations. These establish a strong baseline – ensuring the fitout maximises opportunities to integrate reused products, delivers higher performance in energy, water and health, and aligns with key outcomes of the Climate Positive Pathway.



Deliver on the Climate Positive Pathway

Projects must achieve a set of required credits that drive meaningful reductions in upfront and operational emissions. This supports retail brands in managing the carbon impacts of fitouts, including scope 3 emissions.



Achieve additional points

Beyond the required elements, projects target additional credits to reach their desired rating. Brands choose the focus areas most relevant to their priorities – whether that's carbon reduction, circularity, health and wellbeing, responsible materials, cost efficiency, or a combination of these.

Image courtesy of Interface



What every Green Star Fitout must deliver

At the heart of Green Star Fitouts are a set of **Minimum Expectations**. Together, these create a consistent baseline that supports organisational climate goals, improves occupant experience and reduces environmental and operational impact. Every certified project must demonstrate it meets these expectations.



Identify opportunities to include reused elements in the fitout



Be verified to work and be maintainable over time



Provide good lighting and acoustic comfort



Be fully electric



Be designed to consider the diverse needs of our population



Provide improved air quality and ensures procurement of low toxin materials



Be water and energy efficient



Ensure almost all materials are low toxin



Have lower upfront carbon



Implement site practices that support a reduction in wasted materials

Understanding the ratings

Green Star Fitouts offers three rating levels, providing flexibility depending on the ambition and scale of the project. Projects can also choose to obtain a Green Star Designed assessment, which demonstrates they are on track to achieve certification.



A 4 Star rated fitout is Best Practice compared to industry standard.



A 5 Star rated fitout demonstrates Australian Excellence.



A 6 Star rated fitout showcases World Leadership.

1	Minimum Expectations	✓	✓	✓
2	Climate Positive Pathway		✓ Meets Climate Positive Pathway requirements	✓ Meets Climate Positive Pathway requirements
3	Credit achievements		✓✓ Must achieve 20 points from a range of credits	✓✓✓ Must achieve 45 points from a range of credits.

Better together: How all four Green Star rating tools strengthen your asset

When used together, Green Star Fitouts, Green Star Performance and Green Star Buildings create a connected, end-to-end approach to sustainability for your brand.



Green Star Fitouts focuses on the interior spaces people use every day – ensuring they are healthy, low-impact and ready to adapt as needs change.



Green Star Performance supports ongoing operational excellence, helping buildings continue to perform as intended over time.



Green Star Buildings ensures the base building is designed and delivered to a high standard of sustainability and performance.

Together, these tools provide tenants with confidence that their stores sits within a broader, best-practice sustainability framework – supporting people, performance and credibility, today and into the future.



CASE STUDY

Country Road Chatswood

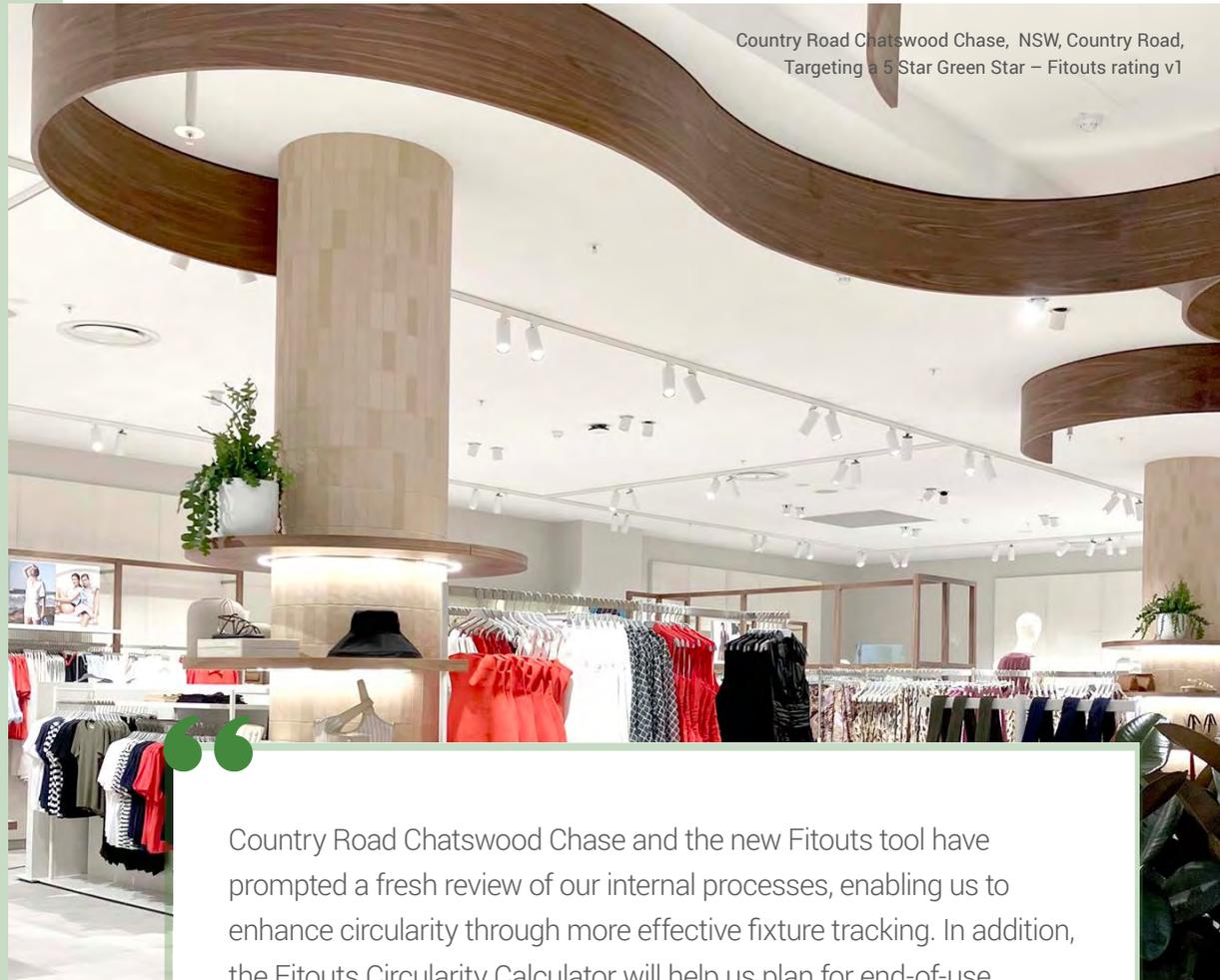
Country Road Chatswood Chase is a flagship store targeting a 5 Star Green Star rated fitout – but it's not Country Road's first Green Star rodeo.

As an early access partner for the new Fitouts Green Star rating tool, Country Road's Chatswood Chase store builds on what the team have already achieved across 23 stores in Australia – including in Ballarat. When it comes to the projects currently in the works, the team's goal is clear.

"Our goal is to create beautiful stores with the least impact on the environment. We achieve this by considering all areas we can control, this includes energy efficiency and powering with renewables – which is part of Country Road Group's Good Business Journey.

"On site, our goal is to aim for 90% diversion from landfill for all construction waste. We aim to ensure compliance on site not only supports sustainability goals but also creates a healthier environment for the construction team, customers, and team members" explains Sage Calamari.

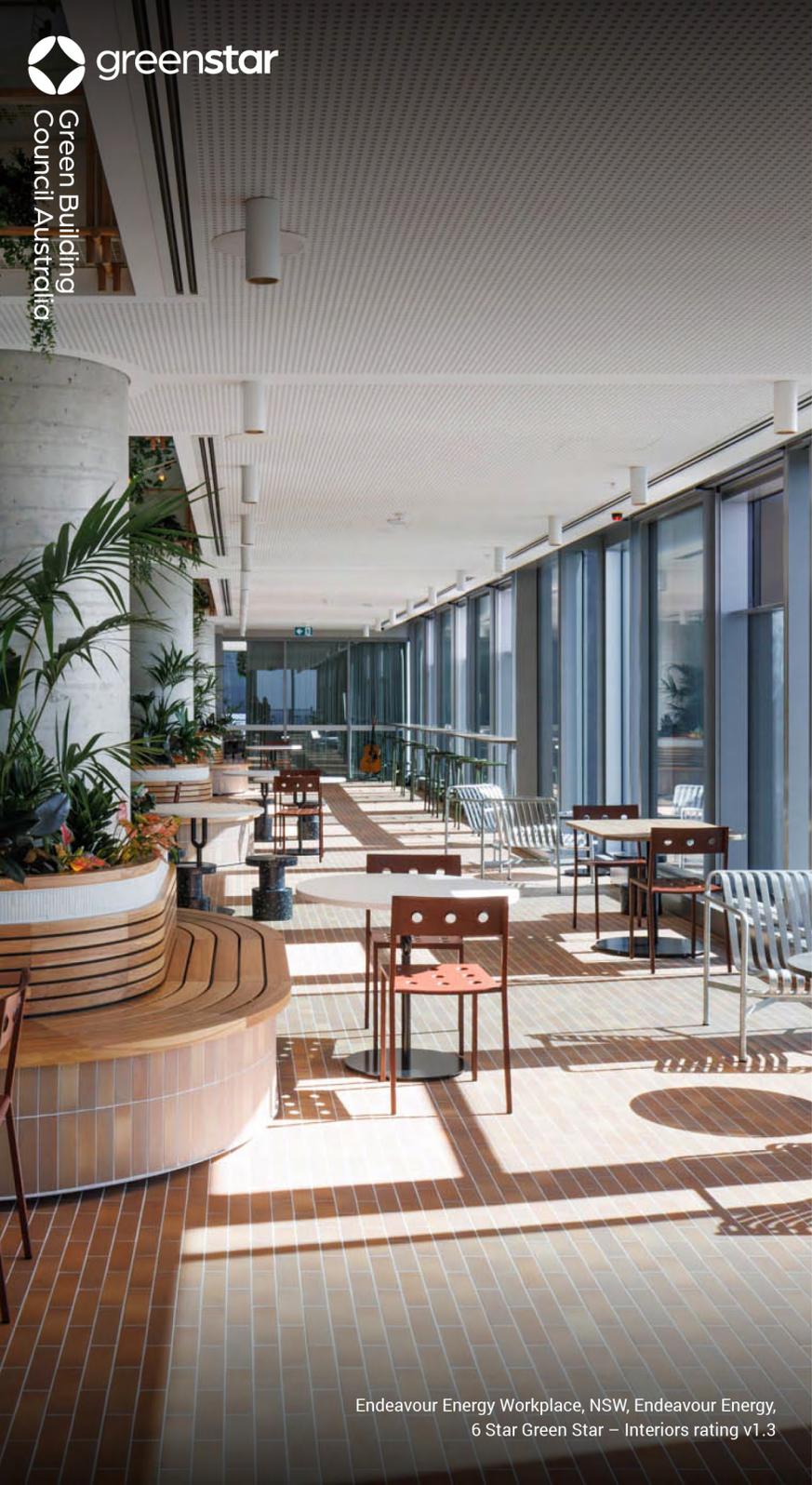
[Read the full case study](#)



Country Road Chatswood Chase, NSW, Country Road,
Targeting a 5 Star Green Star – Fitouts rating v1

Country Road Chatswood Chase and the new Fitouts tool have prompted a fresh review of our internal processes, enabling us to enhance circularity through more effective fixture tracking. In addition, the Fitouts Circularity Calculator will help us plan for end-of-use outcomes during the design phase, ensuring future projects are more attentive to sustainable procurement. While Green Star may have served as the impetus for these initiatives, they have proven to be smart, practical choices that are simple to implement and deliver long-term operational benefits.

Sage Calamari
Sustainability Specialist, Country Road Group



Start the journey towards better

If you're ready to start the journey towards a better built future, [contact us](#) for more information or to request a briefing.

Better fitouts,
today and tomorrow.

References

1. Green Building Council of Australia (2024) [Scope 3 Emissions in the Built Environment: Discussion Paper](#). GBCA.
2. Green Building Council of Australia (2025) [Australia's Wasted Opportunity: 2025 Benchmarking Report](#). GBCA.
3. World Green Building Council (2016) [Health, Wellbeing & Productivity in Retail: The Impact of Green Buildings on People and Profit](#). WorldGBC.
4. South Pole (2025) [Convincing or Confusing? A study into which sustainability terms Australians know and trust – a...](#) South Pole.
5. Arup (2022) [Circular Fit-Out in Retail Stores: Circular Design Principles](#). Arup.
6. Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) (2024), [AASB S2: Climate-Related Disclosures](#). Melbourne: AASB
7. Australian Council of Superannuation Investors (ACSI) (2024) Promises, Pathways & Performance: Climate reporting in the [ASX200](#). ACSI.
8. Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (2023) [Australia's Circular Economy Framework](#). Canberra: DCCEEW.
9. NSW Environment Protection Authority (2024) [Waste Levy: Regulated Area and Levy Rates](#). Sydney: NSW EPA.
10. Investor Group on Climate Change (IGCC) (2025) [State of Net Zero Investment 2025: Full Report](#) IGCC.
11. Lin, Y. F., & Yoon, S. Y. (2015). [Exploring the Effects of Lighting on Consumer Responses in a Retail Environment using 3D Walk-T...](#) Archives of Design Research, 28(2), 5-25.
12. Terrapin Bright Green (2023) [The Economics of Biophilia, Second Edition](#). Terrapin Bright Green.
13. Australian Building Codes Board (2022) [Indoor Air Quality Handbook](#). Canberra: ABCB.
14. Getty Images (2023) VisualGPS: [Visualizing Sustainability](#). Getty Images.
15. The Greater Group (2021) [Future of Retail: The Top Trends Shaping the Post-COVID Retail Environment](#). The Greater Group.
16. Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (2025) [ACCC's Compliance and Enforcement Priorities Update 2025–26](#). ACCC.