

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS IT DOES NOT PREFERENCE GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICE AUSTRALIA (GECA) CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

The Hon. Lindsay Tanner MP, Minister for Finance and Deregulation confirmed that the Australian Government does not preference products certified by GECA.

PRESS RELEASE 8th October, 2010

Minister confirms the Australian Government does not preference Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) certified products.

On the 31st May, 2010 Instyle wrote to the Hon. Craig Emerson MP, Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs, and expressed concern that the Australian Government procurement policy was giving preference to GECA certified products.

In Instyle's letter it was pointed out that GECA and its programs and the quality of its standards are not regulated and that GECA's exclusive certifier, Environmental Assurance, is not JAZ-ANZ accredited.

It also highlighted that GECA claims it operates its eco-labelling program in compliance with ISO14024, but this has not been independently certified. Instyle believes GECA is not meeting ISO 14024 in a significant way.

Further, specifying GECA certified products does not guarantee the product is environmentally preferable. For example, the GECA Textile Standard is not whole of lifecycle based, as it allows for certification of non-environmental fabrics such as PVC vinyl, virgin polyester, polypropylene, acrylic and nylon. These products are derivatives of the petroleum industry, are finite resources and contain numerous hazardous substances including benzene, chromium, arsenic and formaldehyde.

In a letter of response dated 12th July, 2010 The Hon. Lindsay Tanner MP, Minister for Finance and Deregulation confirmed that the Australian Government does not preference products certified by GECA.

The Minister stated "the core principle underpinning Australian Government procurement is value for money, as established by the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPG's). The CPGs require non-discriminatory procurement processes that do not preference particular suppliers or products. Accordingly, I can assure you that Commonwealth procurement policy does not preference products certified by GECA"

The Minister went further stating "Should you have evidence that Australian Government departments are incorrectly preferencing GECA-certified products, I would be grateful for your earliest advice to the Australian Government's Procurement Coordinator. Details of the Procurement Coordinator can be found at <http://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/procurement-coordinator/index.html>".

To view a copy of the complete Instyle Letter and the Minister's response go to www.instyle.com.au
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Background: INSTYLE is a commercial interior textile supplier with a proactive, holistic approach to sustainability. As a result, the company has won numerous Sustainability Awards, including:

2010 WINNER - Sustainability Green Globe Awards – Small Business Sustainability

2010 WINNER - United Nations' World Environment Day Award – Business Environmental Best Practice Program

2009 WINNER - Sustainability Green Globe Awards - Business Sustainability Award

2009 FINALIST - United Nations' World Environment Day Award – Best Specific Environmental Initiative 2008 WINNER - United Nations' World Environment Day Award - Business Sustainability Award 2008 WINNER - Sustainability Green Globe Awards – Premier's Sustainability Excellence

Award2008 WINNER - Sustainability Green Globe Awards - Industry Environmental Sustainability2008 WINNER - Sustainability Green Globe Awards
- Small Business Environmental Sustainability2007 FINALIST - Banksia Environmental Award – Sustainability2006 FINALIST - Banksia Environmental
Award - Sustainability

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