CARPET INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

Version 1.4

Rules for the operation of

The Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Incorporating the Environmental Certification Scheme

July 2026

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RULES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CARPET CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Approved By
V1.0	July-2009	Initial release.	Allan Firth – Executive Director
V1.1	July-2010	Minor updates.	Allan Firth – Executive Director
V1.2	May-2023	Incorporation of initial ECS elements.	Allan Firth – Executive Director
V1.3	Aug-2024	Current version prior to ACCC response.	Andy Martin – Executive Director
V1.4	10 March - 2026	Incorporated ECS-specific policies (e.g., Document Review Process, Conflict Resolution Policy, Environmental Claim Guidelines, Standardised Checklist). Added Revision History, expanded definitions, and targeted amendments to sections including 7, 9, 11, 14, 17, 19, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30, 40, 43, 44.	Andy Martin – Executive Director

1. Title

The title of the Scheme shall be the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme.

2.Scope

The Australian Carpet Classification Scheme is a scheme by which floor covering products, manufactured in, or imported for use within Australia, are classified in accordance with the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Technical Guidelines as amended from time to time by the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Panel. Floor covering products comprise machine made and hand-made textile floor coverings, soft underlay for textile and resilient floor coverings, resilient floor coverings, floor installation adhesives, artificial turf and acoustic panels.

3.Definitions and Construction

3.1 In these Rules and in any schedule hereto the following terms shall have the respective meanings set

out below:-

3.1.1 "ACCS" shall mean the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme;

3.1.2 "Appeal" shall mean an appeal to the Registrar of Trade Marks;

3.1.3 CIAL" shall mean the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited;

3.1.4 "Certification Mark" shall mean Registered Trademark No. C309,403 in the name of the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited of Level 1, 493 St. Kilda Road 3004, Melbourne which comprises a "shuttle" symbol and the words "AUSTRALIAN CARPET MARK" set out in Schedule 1;

3.1.5 "Classified Floor Covering" shall mean:

i. a machine-made and hand-made textile floor covering having a pile use surface classified under the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme in accordance with the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Technical Guidelines and ACCS Rug Certification Technical Guidelines, as amended from time to time by the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Panel;

ii. a machine-made underlay in accordance with the ACCS ECS Underlay Technical Guidelines as amended from time to time by the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Panel;

iii. adhesive classified in accordance with the ACCS ECS Adhesive Technical Guidelines as amended from time to time by the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Panel;

iv. machine made artificial turf classified under the ACCS ECS Artificial Turf Technical Guidelines as amended from time to time by the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Panel;

v. Machine-made acoustic panels and tiles classified under the ACCS ECS Acoustic Panel Technical Guidelines

vi. machine made resilient flooring classified under the ACCs ECS Resilient Technical Guidelines as amended from time to time by the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Panel;

3.1.6 "Committee" shall mean the Committee of the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited appointed in accordance with the Articles of Association of that company;

3.1.7 ECS Carpet Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Carpet Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Carpet Level 3 means the third assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Carpet Level 4 means the fourth assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Carpet Level 4+ means the fifth assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Resilient Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Resilient Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Resilient Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Adhesive Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Adhesive Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Underlay Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Underlay Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Underlay Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Artificial Turf Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Acoustic Panels Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Artificial Turf Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Artificial Turf Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Acoustic Panels Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Acoustic Panels Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification.

ECS Low VOC means the environmental certification for products that meet defined volatile organic compound emission limits.

ECS Carbon Neutral means the environmental certification for products that have achieved net-zero embodied carbon across their manufacturing scope.

3.1.8 "Label" shall mean any one of the labels set out in Schedule 2 bearing the Certification Mark as varied from time to time by notice in writing given to the Licensee by the Licensor and any other Label brought within the scope of this Agreement from time to time by notice in writing given to the Licensee by the Licensor;

3.1.9 "Licence" shall mean a licence to use the Certification Mark and the Labels on or in relation to Classified Floor Coverings and submit Floor Coverings to the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited for classification by the Panel in accordance with the Rules as amended from time to time with the consent of the Registrar;

3.1.10 "Licence Number" shall mean the licence number issued to a Licensee upon registration of a granted License;

3.1.11 "Licensee" shall mean a person holding a valid Licence and may include both members and non-members of the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited;

3.1.12 "Person" shall include companies, bodies corporate and other legal entities;

3.1.13 "Panel" shall mean the classification panel of the CIAL appointed in accordance with Rules 8 and 9;

3.1.14 President" shall mean the president of the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited appointed in accordance with the Articles of Association of that company;

3.1.15 "Register" shall mean the General Register in accordance with Rule 14;

3.1.16 "Registered Number" shall mean the exclusive number allotted to each floor covering under the ACCS as recorded by the ACCS General Register;

3.1.17 "Registered Office" shall mean Level 1, 493 St. Kilda Road 3004, Melbourne Victoria 3004

3.1.18 "Registered Specification" shall mean the nominal and tested specification of a Classified Floor Covering as recorded by the ACCS General Register;

3.1.19 "Rules" shall mean the rules herein prescribed as amended from time to time;

3.1.20 "Standard Tolerance" shall mean standard manufacturing process variation as described in ACCS ECS Carpet Technical Specifications (Textile Floor Coverings - Metric Units and Commercial Tolerances for Measurement);

3.1.21 "Technical Specifications" shall mean the:

i. ACCS ECS Carpet Technical Specifications
ii. ACCS ECS Resilient Technical Specifications
iii. ACCS ECS Underlay Technical Specifications
iv. ACCS ECS Adhesive Technical Specifications
v. ACCS ECS Artificial Turf Technical Specifications
vi. ACCS ECS Acoustic Panel Technical Specifications
vii. ACCS Rug Certification Technical Specifications
viii. ACS ECS Low Toxicity VOC Technical Specifications
ix. ACCS ECS Carbon Neutral Technical Specifications

As amended from time to time containing the details of the technical standards and other standards and specifications prescribed for classification by the Panel.

3.1.22 "Testing Laboratory" shall mean a testing laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities or international equivalent; and

3.1.23 "Floor Covering" shall mean a textile floor covering having a pile use surface of a particular combination of construction, pile fibre, composition, pile weight, pile height, and other technical considerations set out in the

ACCS ECS Carpet Technical Specifications and the ACCS Rug Certification Technical Specifications, as amended from time to time and any other such textile floor coverings as determined by the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme Panel from time to time.

3.2 In these Rules and in any schedules hereto words in the singular include the plural and vice-versa and words in one gender include the other genders.

3.3 The headings in these Rules are for ease of reference only and shall not affect the construction or meaning of these Rules or any provision thereof.

3.4 Conflict Resolution Policy: The policy outlining processes for addressing disputes related to ECS standards, certification, or labels, as appended or referenced in these Rules.

3.5 Document Review Process: The process for creating, reviewing, and maintaining ECS documentation in alignment with GBCA standards, as appended or referenced in these Rules.

3.6 Environmental Claim Guidelines: Guidelines ensuring environmental claims for ECS-certified products are truthful, substantiated, and compliant with Australian Consumer Law, as appended or referenced in these Rules.

3.7 Independent Assessor: An impartial expert responsible for reviews and audits using the Standardised Checklist.

3.8 Standardised Checklist: The tool for objective evaluation of ECS certifications, claims, and processes, as appended or referenced in these Rules.

3.9 Technical Committee: The committee comprising industry experts responsible for ECS document development and reviews, as defined in the Document Review Process.

4. Funding and Administration

The ACCS shall be sponsored by the CIAL and vested in the CIAL and administered by the CIAL.

The ACCS shall be part funded by ACCS Licensees in the form of Licence fees and any other fees charged in relation to the classification of Floor Coverings and part funded by the CIAL in the form of technical, marketing, administrative and other support services provided over and above remuneration set out in Rule 38.

5. Accounts and Business Records

The accounts and business records of ACCS shall be kept separately by the CIAL, but these accounts and records shall be subsumed under the CIAL for taxation and other related purposes. The CIAL and the ACCS shall use the same auditor, but all ACCS funds shall be accounted for separately.

6. Certification Mark

The Certification Mark may only be used on and in relation to Floor Coverings classified under the ACCS in accordance with the Technical Specifications and these Rules.

7. Panel

The Panel shall be responsible for classifying Floor Coverings submitted by the CIAL for classification under the ACCS in accordance with the Technical Specifications.

7.1 **Establishment and Role**: The Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) shall establish a Panel to oversee the administration of the ACCS and ECS, including reviewing applications (Section 20), classifications (Section 17), quality assurance (Section 28), and disputes (Section 24). The Panel shall ensure compliance with Technical Guidelines, these Rules, and relevant standards (e.g., GBCA Green Star).

7.2 **Requirement for Technical Committee Involvement in ECS Matters**: For all ECS-related matters (e.g., environmental certifications, claim verifications, or amendments involving ECS levels), the Panel must include or consult the Technical Committee as defined in the Document Review Process. This includes:

- Inclusion Option: Appointing Technical Committee members directly to the Panel for ECS deliberations.
- Consultation Option: Seeking formal input from the Technical Committee on technical accuracy, GBCA alignment, and environmental integrity, with documented recommendations incorporated into Panel decisions.

7.3 **Rationale and Benefits**: This involvement leverages the Technical Committee's expertise in ECS documentation, stakeholder input, and periodic reviews (e.g., triennial updates), ensuring competent assessments and reducing risks of misleading claims.

7.4 **Integration with Other Processes**: Panel decisions involving the Technical Committee shall align with the Conflict Resolution Policy (Section 24) for disputes and the Environmental Claim Guidelines for claim substantiation. Records of consultations shall be retained for five years.

8. Panel Composition

8.1 The Panel shall initially be appointed by the Committee of the CIAL. The Panel shall comprise a maximum of 13 members or such other number as determined by the CIAL from time to time and shall be selected from representatives of carpet and other flooring manufacturers, whether members of the CIAL or not, and other persons having relevant technical experience relating to the manufacture of Floor Coverings or other experience which in the view of the CIAL shall be of assistance to the operations of the Panel.

8.2 A minimum of five Panel members must be present before gradings can be awarded at any classification meeting.

9. Appointment of Members of the Panel

The Panel may appoint new members to the Panel or remove existing members from the Panel on a decision of the majority of the members of the Panel subject to the new members being selected from nominees nominated by the Committee.

9.1 **Appointment Process**: Members of the Panel shall be appointed by the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) based on nominations from stakeholders, industry representatives, or self-nominations. Appointments shall be for fixed terms (e.g., three years, renewable), with consideration for diversity, independence, and balance per Section 8 (Panel Composition).

9.2 **Criteria for Member Qualifications**: Appointees must demonstrate relevant qualifications and expertise to ensure competent oversight of the ACCS and ECS. Minimum criteria include:

- Professional experience in relevant fields (e.g., carpet manufacturing, environmental science, sustainability standards, or consumer protection). Specific expertise for ECS matters, such as knowledge of Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) Green Star standards, lifecycle assessments

(e.g., ISO 14040), environmental impact metrics, or Australian Consumer Law (ACL) compliance (e.g., principles against misleading claims).
- Independence from conflicts of interest (e.g., no direct financial ties to applicants), with declarations required annually.

CIAL shall verify qualifications through CVs, references, or certifications prior to appointment.

9.3 **Mandate for Annual Training**: All Panel members shall undergo mandatory annual training to maintain and update their expertise. Training shall cover:
- Updates to ECS standards, Technical Guidelines, and regulatory changes (e.g., ACL amendments, GBCA revisions).
- Best practices in environmental certification, claim substantiation per the Environmental Claim Guidelines, and use of tools like the Standardised Checklist.
- Topics on fairness, transparency, and avoidance of restrictive practices.

9.4 **Integration with ECS Governance**: For ECS-specific appointments or consultations (per Section 7), priority shall be given to members with demonstrated environmental expertise. Appointments shall align with the Document Review Process for ongoing competence.

9.5 **Records and Transparency**: Appointment records, including qualification verifications and training logs, shall be retained for five years and available for review during audits (Section 28) or disputes (Section 24).

10. Maintain Copy of Technical Specifications

10.1 The CIAL shall maintain at the Registered Office a copy of the Rules and a copy of the Technical Specifications. The Rules and Technical Specifications shall be available to the public for inspection during the normal business hours of the Registered Office.

10.2 CIAL shall submit a copy of the Technical Specifications to the Registrar of Trademarks upon request.

11. Licenses

11.1 **Granting of Licences**: Upon successful consideration of an application (Section 20), the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) may grant a licence to use the Certification Mark for certified floor coverings that meet ACCS and ECS standards. Licences are non-exclusive, time-limited (e.g., renewable annually), and subject to ongoing compliance.

11.2 **Mandate for Compliance with Environmental Claim Guidelines**: For ECS-certified products, licensees must comply with the Environmental Claim Guidelines at all times. This includes:
- Ensuring all environmental claims (e.g., related to raw materials, manufacturing impacts, or product stewardship) are accurate, substantiated with evidence (e.g., lifecycle assessments), and qualified to avoid misleading consumers (e.g., disclosing conditions or trade-offs).
- Prohibiting vague or unqualified terms (e.g., "green" or "sustainable") without specifics and verification.
- Integrating qualifiers and evidence links (e.g., QR codes to Digital Product Passports) on labels and marketing materials per Section 19.

Compliance shall be verified during application evaluation (Section 20), quality assurance (Section 28), and testing (Section 30).

11.3 **Conditions and Obligations: Licensees agree to**:

- Submit all proposed claims and materials for pre-approval via the ACCS and ECS online portal.
- Maintain records of claim substantiation for at least five years, accessible upon request.
- Adhere to all ECS levels and updates from triennial reviews (Section 28).

11.4 **Monitoring and Enforcement**: CIAL may audit compliance through the Independent Assessor. Violations of the Environmental Claim Guidelines shall be treated as breaches, investigated per the Conflict Resolution Policy (Section 24), and may result in penalties including warnings, suspensions, or cancellations (Section 33).

11.5 **Appeals and Records**: Decisions on licence conditions or breaches may be appealed per Section 43. Compliance records shall be summarised in the annual ECS report for transparency.

12. Issue of License Number

The CIAL shall issue to each applicant who, in the opinion of the Panel, complies with the conditions set out in Rule 11, a Licence Number, provided always that the Panel may, subject to an appeal to the Registrar, in its absolute discretion refuse to grant a Licence to any applicant. The Panel shall provide the applicant with reasons for any such refusal to grant a Licence.

13. Scope to Make Further Applications for Licence

Nothing in Rule 12 shall preclude an applicant submitting a further application for a Licence.

14. Register

14.1 **Maintenance of Register**: The Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) shall maintain a register of all licences, certifications, and classifications under the ACCS and ECS. The register shall include details such as licensee names, product descriptions, assigned classifications (Section 17), ECS levels, licence numbers (Section 12), and status (e.g., active, suspended).

14.2 **Public Access to ECS Compliance Records**: To promote transparency, the register shall provide public access to non-sensitive ECS compliance records via the CIAL website or a dedicated ECS portal. Accessible information includes:

- Summaries of certifications and ECS levels achieved (e.g., verification dates, key environmental metrics like recycled content or emissions reductions).
- Audit outcomes from triennial reviews (Section 28) and Independent Assessor evaluations (e.g., using the Standardised Checklist).
- Resolved disputes or complaints related to environmental claims (per Section 24), excluding confidential details.
- Links to substantiating evidence (e.g., Digital Product Passports or lifecycle assessment summaries).

Public access shall be user-friendly, with searchable features (e.g., by product or licensee). Sensitive information (e.g., proprietary data, ongoing investigations) shall be redacted or restricted to authorised parties.

14.3 **Updates and Notifications**: The register shall be updated promptly upon changes (e.g., new classifications per Section 21, cancellations per Section 33). Licensees shall be notified of entries affecting them.

14.4 **Compliance and Oversight**: Public records must align with the Environmental Claim Guidelines to ensure accuracy and avoid misleading representations. The Independent Assessor may review register entries during annual audits (Section 28). Disputes over register content shall be handled per the Conflict Resolution Policy (Section 24).

14.5 **Records Retention**: All register data shall be retained for at least five years, with annual summaries included in the ECS report for continuous improvement.

15. Entitlement

Subject to the Licence, the Technical Specifications and the Rules, upon being issued with a Licence Number, the Licensee shall be entitled to submit Floor Coverings to the CIAL for classification under the ACCS and use the Certification Mark and the Labels on and in relation to Classified Floor Coverings.

16. Fees

Each Licensee shall pay to the CIAL the annual subscription payable in advance of such amounts in accordance with the Licence and on such terms and conditions as may, from time to time, be prescribed by the Panel. The Licensee shall also pay to the CIAL any further or other fees the Panel may at its discretion prescribe for the promotion and running of the ACCS.

17. Classification

An application for classification of a Floor Covering under the ACCS shall be in the form from time to time prescribed by the CIAL. Each application shall be accompanied by as many samples of the Floor Covering as are from time to time prescribed by the Panel and included in the Technical Specifications, as published by the ACCS from time to time. Each application shall also be accompanied by the prescribed fee as determined by the Panel from time to time. A prescribed fee will, in addition, be payable for each Floor Covering registered for each calendar year or part thereof. A Licensee who voluntarily withdraws a Floor Covering submitted for classification under the ACCS in accordance with the Rules and the Technical Specifications, shall be liable to pay the fee from time to time prescribed for the whole of the calendar year in which the withdrawal takes place. Fees may, from time to time, be prescribed by the Panel on the recommendation of the CIAL.

17.1 **Classification**: General Classification Process: Floor coverings shall be classified based on performance tests (Section 30), quality assurance results (Section 28), and compliance with Technical Guidelines. Classifications indicate suitability for use and, for ECS-certified products, environmental performance across defined levels.

17.2 **Incorporation of ECS Levels**: For products seeking ECS certification, classifications must explicitly align with one or more of the following levels (Section 18), verified through evidence of environmental metrics (e.g., lifecycle assessments, emissions reductions).

Products may achieve multiple levels progressively, with classifications reflecting the highest verified level.

17.3 **Requirement for ACCS Panel Review Using Checklist**: All ECS classifications shall undergo review by the ACCS Panel using the Standardised Checklist. This includes:

- Evaluating substantiation of environmental claims via the Environmental Claim Guidelines (e.g., accuracy, qualifications).
- Verifying compliance with ECS criteria, transparency, and avoidance of misleading elements.
- Assessing certifier competence and fairness (e.g., no restrictive barriers).

The ACCS Panel report, including ratings and recommendations, must be completed before the final classification assignment.

17.4 **Notification and Integration**: Classifications shall be notified per Section 21, with ECS levels prominently displayed on labels (Section 19). Disputes over classifications may be raised per Section 24, and re-assessments triggered per Section 32.

17.5 **Records and Transparency**: Classification records, including Checklist reviews, shall be retained for five years and summarised in the annual ECS report.

18. Categories

The categories prescribed by the Technical Specifications shall be:

ACCS Location Guidance Classification:

Residential Light Duty	(1 star rating)
Residential Medium Duty	(2 star rating)
Residential Heavy Duty (lower to mid-range)	(3 star rating)
Residential Heavy Duty (mid to higher range)	(4 star rating)
Residential Extra Heavy Duty (lower to mid-range)	(5 star rating)
Residential Extra Heavy Duty (mid to higher range)	(6 star rating)
Contract Light Duty	(1 star rating)
Contract Medium Duty	(2 star rating)
Contract Heavy Duty	(3 star rating)
Contract Extra Heavy Duty	(4 star rating)

ACCS/ECS Grading and Environmental Classification:

Environmentally Certified

ECS Carpet Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Carpet Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Carpet Level 3 means the third assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Carpet Level 4 means the fourth assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Carpet Level 4+ means the fifth assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Resilient Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Resilient Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Resilient Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Adhesive Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Adhesive Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Underlay Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Underlay Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Underlay Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Artificial Turf Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Artificial Turf Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Artificial Turf Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Acoustic Panels Level 1 means the initial assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Acoustic Panels Level 2 means the second assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Acoustic Panels Level 2+ means the third assessment level of environmental certification
ECS Low VOC means the environmental certification for products that meet defined volatile organic compound emission limits.
ECS Carbon Neutral means the environmental certification for products that have achieved net-zero embodied carbon across their manufacturing scope.

19. Labels

19.1 **General Label Requirements**: Labels bearing the Certification Mark shall be affixed to certified floor coverings or their packaging in a prominent, durable manner. Labels must accurately reflect the assigned classification (Section 17) and ECS level (e.g., Level 1: Entry; Level 4+: Extra Performance), including performance ratings and any relevant categories (Section 18).

19.2 **Inclusion of Qualifiers per Environmental Claim Guidelines**: For ECS-certified products, labels must include qualifiers to ensure claims are specific, truthful, and non-misleading, in accordance with the Environmental Claim Guidelines. This includes:

- Clear explanations of conditions or limitations.
- Disclosure of trade-offs (e.g., "Low VOC emissions during use, but consider end-of-life impacts").

All qualifiers must be prominently displayed in easy-to-understand language, with no omissions that could deceive consumers regarding environmental impacts.

- **Evidence Linking (e.g., QR Codes and Digital Product Passports)**:
- QR codes or unique identifiers directing to a secure, publicly accessible digital platform (e.g., the Carpet Institute website or a dedicated ECS portal) containing detailed documentation (e.g., lifecycle assessments per ISO 14040, test reports, supplier audits).
- To enhance transparency and consumer understanding, the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) provides a Digital Product Passport (DPP) for every product graded under the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme (ACCS) and certified under the Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS). As an Institute policy, an updated label format is available, incorporating the Certification Trademarks (CTMs, including the needle and thread graphic), the ACCS grading, the ECS level of attainment, and a QR code linking directly to the product's DPP. This QR code shall provide instant access to comprehensive details on the product's environmental standards, lifecycle assessments, compliance evidence, and specific ECS benchmarks achieved, thereby enabling consumers to easily verify and comprehend the scope of certification without ambiguity.
- The ECS shall operate as a multi-level certification framework (Levels 1 to 4+), cumulatively assessing products across lifecycle stages—including raw materials, manufacturing, stewardship, and end-of-life—against verifiable benchmarks detailed in the ECS Technical Specifications. The Certification shall require independent, third-party evidence (not self-certification) to substantiate all claims. For example, environmental impacts shall be evaluated through declarations on toxicity, emissions, and efficiencies, supported by accredited laboratory reports and relevant standards (e.g., ISO 14001). The CTMs shall clearly indicate the achieved ECS level, ensuring consumers understand the scope of certification without overstatement.
- The ECS Portal shall facilitate formal application submission, document upload, and tracking for all licensees, ensuring all claims are auditable and transparent. This open-access portal shall mandate public disclosure of key data (e.g., Product Health Declarations at Level 2 and above), thereby mitigating risks of deception, preventing greenwashing, and enabling informed consumer choices.

Evidence must be retained for at least five years and updated as needed (e.g., via triennial reviews per Section 28).

19.3 **Monitoring and Compliance**: Label designs must be pre-approved by the Technical Committee and ACCS Panel to verify alignment with Guidelines.

19.4 **Records and Transparency**: Licensees shall maintain records of label usage and evidence links. Summaries of label compliance may be included in the annual ECS report.

20. Consideration of Application

The Panel shall consider each application submitted to it for classification of a Floor Covering and evaluate whether the Floor Covering the subject of the application falls within the category applied for by the Licensee under the Technical Specifications given the technical data provided by the Licensee, the results of tests conducted by Testing Laboratories and such other evaluations as required by the Panel.

20.1 **Submission Requirements**: Applications for licences or certifications under the ACCS and ECS shall be submitted to the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) with all required documentation, including product specifications, test reports, evidence of environmental metrics (e.g., lifecycle assessments).

20.2 **Initial Review**: The Administration Team shall conduct an initial review to confirm completeness and preliminary compliance with Technical Guidelines, classification categories (Section 18), and ECS levels.

Panel shall evaluate the application. This step includes:

- Verifying substantiation of environmental claims per the Environmental Claim Guidelines (e.g., accuracy, evidence for recycled content or emissions reductions).
- Assessing compliance with ECS criteria, including lifecycle impacts, transparency, and avoidance of misleading elements.
- Checking for fairness and inclusivity (e.g., no restrictive barriers).

Non-compliant applications may require revisions or additional evidence.

20.3 **Final Consideration and Decision**: The ACCS Panel shall consider the application alongside other factors (e.g., testing results per Section 30). Decisions shall be notified per Section 21, with reasons provided. Rejections may be appealed per Section 43.

20.4 **Timelines and Records**: The entire consideration process shall be completed within 30 business days of submission (extendable for complex cases). All records, including Checklist evaluations, shall be retained for five years and summarised in the annual ECS report for transparency.

21. Notification of Classification

The CIAL shall advise the Licensee of the classification allocated by the Panel to the Floor Covering submitted for classification. The classification shall be entered in the Register. Each registration shall be made in such a manner as to enable each Floor Covering recorded in the Register to be identified individually by reference to a Registered Number.

22. Index of Carpet Quality Names

The CIAL shall in addition to the Register maintains an Index of Carpet Quality Names governed by the Index of Carpet Quality Names Rules containing:

22.1 the registered name of each Textile Floor Covering whether or not classified under the ACCS;

22.2 the name of the company requesting the name of a particular Textile Floor Covering be registered;

22.3 the date of registration;

22.4 if the Textile Floor Covering is classified under the ACCS, the classification and Registration Number allotted to that Classified Textile Floor Covering; and

22.5 such other details as the CIAL may require to be recorded from time to time.

23. Quality Names

It shall be possible for a Floor Covering to be registered under more than one quality name provided that an entry of a Classified Floor Covering shall state the classification and Registered Number of that Classified Floor Covering to clearly identify that one particular Floor Covering has been registered under alternate names.

24. Dispute

In the event of a dispute between a Licensee and the Panel as to the correct classification of the Floor Covering, the following appeal process will apply:

The Licensee shall inform the Panel in writing that they dispute or wish to have reviewed the classification assigned by the Panel to a particular carpet quality. In requesting a review, the Licensee shall state in writing the reasons why the review is sought and supply technical documentation, the results of further testing or any other information necessary to support the case for re-classification of carpet quality. The Panel shall review the classification at the first available opportunity. The Licensee shall be required to pay any charges associated with re-classification of carpet quality.

If, after such review, a dispute still exists between the Licensee and the Panel as to the classification of a Floor Covering an Appeals Committee comprising two Carpet Industry Arbitration Service Arbitrators and the Executive Director of the CIAL shall decide upon the correct classification for the Floor Covering. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding on all parties. The costs for arbitration shall be born by the licence.

24.1 **Scope of Disputes**:
Any Licensee, applicant, stakeholder (including manufacturers, importers, distributors, consumers, or interest groups), or party affected by the ACCS or ECS may raise a dispute regarding:

- Certification decisions, classifications, or re-assessments (Sections 17, 20, 32).
- Use of the Certification Mark or environmental claims (Sections 26-27).
- Testing or quality assurance outcomes (Sections 28-31).
- Amendments to Rules or Technical Guidelines (Sections 40-42).
- Allegations of misleading representations or non-compliance with ECS criteria.

24.2 **Cross-Reference to Conflict Resolution Policy**: All disputes shall be resolved in accordance with the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) Conflict Resolution Policy (as amended from time to time), which applies to ECS matters and is guided by principles of transparency, fairness, accessibility, timeliness, and continuous improvement. The Policy ensures impartial review and documentation of outcomes.

24.3 **Dispute Resolution Process and Timelines**:

- **Step 1**: Submission: Submit a written complaint to CIAL via info@carpetoz.com.au, including the complainant's name, contact details, affiliation, a clear description of the dispute, and supporting evidence. Anonymous submissions may be considered at CIAL's discretion.
- **Step 2**: Acknowledgment: The ECS Administration Team shall acknowledge receipt within 5 business days and confirm if the dispute falls within scope.
- **Step 3**: Investigation: The Technical Committee, in consultation with the ACCS Panel, shall investigate the dispute within 30 business days (extendable by 15 days for complex cases). This includes gathering evidence, interviewing parties, and assessing compliance with ECS standards, Environmental Claim Guidelines, and Australian Consumer Law (ACL.
- **Step 4**: Resolution: A written decision shall be issued, including reasons, any corrective actions (e.g., claim modifications, re-testing), and implementation timelines. Outcomes shall be documented for continuous improvement.

24.4 **Appeals**: If dissatisfied with the resolution, the complainant may appeal in writing within 14 days. Appeals shall escalate to an independent appeals panel per the Conflict Resolution Policy and Section 43 of these Rules, consisting of at least three external experts (no conflicts of interest). The panel shall review de novo within 45 business days, with a final, binding decision.

24.5 **Costs and Confidentiality**: Reasonable costs (e.g., expert fees) may be allocated to the unsuccessful party. Proceedings shall be confidential, with records retained for five years. Non-sensitive summaries may be published in the annual ECS report for transparency.

24.6 **Integration with Other Sections**: Disputes may trigger quality assurance reviews (Section 28), licence actions (Section 33), or Rule amendments (Section 40). Feedback from disputes shall inform triennial reviews per the Document Review Process.

25. Property of Certification Mark

The Certification Mark is the absolute property of the CIAL and shall not be used by any persons except as permitted under the Licence.

26. Use of the Certification Mark

26.1 **Permitted Uses**: The Certification Mark may be used by Licensees only on or in relation to certified floor coverings that comply with ACCS and ECS standards, including classifications (Section 17) and quality assurance requirements (Section 28). Uses must be accurate, non-misleading, and limited to indicating certification (e.g., on labels, packaging, advertising, or promotional materials).

26.2 **Prohibition of Violating Uses**:
The Certification Mark must not be used in any manner that violates the Environmental Claim Guidelines, including but not limited to:

- Making unsubstantiated, exaggerated, vague, or misleading environmental claims (e.g., "eco-friendly" without qualification or evidence).
- Omitting important information, such as limitations on recyclability or lifecycle impacts.
- Using broad terms without specifics (e.g., "sustainable" unless quantified against ECS metrics like reduced emissions or recycled content).
- Any representation that could deceive consumers regarding the environmental impact of the product, per ACL principles.

26.3 **Monitoring and Enforcement**: CIAL and the ACCS Panel may monitor uses of the Certification Mark through audits, stakeholder feedback, or quality assurance programs. Violations shall be investigated per the Conflict Resolution Policy (Section 24).

26.4 **Penalties for Violations**:
Non-compliance with this Section or the Environmental Claim Guidelines may result in the following penalties, determined by severity and intent:

- **Warning**: For minor or first-time violations, requiring immediate corrective action (e.g., claim amendments) within 14 days.
- **Suspension**: Temporary suspension of licence rights to use the Mark for up to 90 days, with mandatory re-verification.
- **Cancellation**: Permanent cancellation of the licence (per Section 33), including requirements to discontinue use (Section 36) and withdraw non-compliant products from the market.

26.5 **Appeals and Records**: Penalties may be appealed per Section 43. All violations, investigations, and outcomes shall be recorded and retained for five years, with summaries included in the annual ECS report for transparency.

27. Display of the Certification Mark and Labels

27.1 The Certification Mark shall be used on a Label and shall be applied to any and all Samples of the Classified Floor Coverings in a position which is visible to the consumer.

27.2 Whenever the Certification Mark accompanies Floor Coverings it shall not be represented in a manner that would deceive a consumer into believing that those Floor Coverings had been manufactured in a place other than the place of their true origin.

27.3 If a Classified Floor Covering is described in brochures or other literature, it is the responsibility of the Licensee to ensure that any mention of that Classified Floor Covering shall be clearly identified by its quality name, registration number and its classification according to either:

27.4 the standard ACCS lettered abbreviations for each of the grading categories (printed on the registration certificate) or the full description of the classification category.

27.5 Whenever the specifications of a Classified Floor Covering is listed, or otherwise referred to, the classification of the Floor Covering must be associated with the Registered Number.

27.6 Whenever the Certification Mark is used on or in relation to a Sample of the Classified Floor Covering, the Floor Covering itself or in any literature, the Licensee shall specify the Registration Number of the Classified Floor Covering and such other details required by the Licensor to be represented from time to time.

28. Quality Assurance Program

28.1 **Program Overview**: The Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) shall administer a Quality Assurance Program to monitor ongoing compliance of licensed floor coverings with ACCS and ECS standards. This may include random sampling, testing, and verification of certifications across ECS levels (e.g., raw materials, manufacturing, product stewardship).

28.2 **Triennial Reviews per Document Review Process**: All ECS-related aspects of the Quality Assurance Program, including Technical Guidelines, testing protocols, and compliance metrics, shall undergo mandatory triennial reviews in accordance with the CIAL Document Review Process (as amended from time to time). This ensures alignment with GBCA Green Star guidelines, regulatory changes, and stakeholder feedback.

Key elements include:

- **Scope**: Review for technical accuracy, environmental relevance (e.g., updates to lifecycle assessment methods), and prevention of misleading claims.
- **Process**: Led by the ACCS Panel, with stakeholder consultation (e.g., manufacturers, consumers) and internal audits to identify non-compliance or improvement opportunities.
- **Outcomes**: Documented revisions, corrective actions, and public archiving on the CIAL website. Reviews shall occur every three years or sooner if triggered by amendments (per Section 40).

28.3 **Audits by Independent Assessor**:

The Independent Assessor shall conduct audits of the Quality Assurance Program to verify its effectiveness and impartiality. Audits shall use the Standardised Checklist and focus on:

- Certifier competence and adherence to ECS criteria.
- Substantiation of environmental claims per the Environmental Claim Guidelines.
- Risks of unfair practices, such as misleading representations or restrictive access.

Audits shall be completed within 60 days of the fiscal year-end, with reports submitted to the Technical Committee and Executive Director. Findings may lead to immediate corrective actions, program enhancements, or escalation via the Conflict Resolution Policy.

28.4 **Integration with Other Processes**: Quality Assurance results shall inform re-assessments (Section 32), disputes (Section 24), and appeals (Section 43). Licensees must cooperate with reviews and audits, providing access to records and samples.

28.5 **Records and Reporting**: All review and audit records shall be retained for at least five years. Summaries of outcomes, including any non-compliances and resolutions, shall be included in the annual ECS report for transparency and continuous improvement.

29. Selection and Collection of Samples for Random Testing

29.1 The staff of the CIAL may at any time randomly select one or more Classified Floor Coverings from the ACCS General Register in order to collect Classified Floor Coverings for testing to confirm quality assurance.

29.2 The staff of the CIAL or their representative may collect samples of the randomly selected Classified Floor Coverings from either point of manufacture (the premises of the manufacturer or distributor) or point of sale (the retailer or supplier).

29.3 In the event that the Classified Floor Covering is collected at the point of sale, the Licensee shall be immediately notified in writing of such a collection and if requested, the CIAL will provide the Licensee copies of any documents relating to the purchase of the sample(s).

29.4 The Licensee shall reimburse direct costs incurred by the CIAL in the collection or purchase of samples obtained at point of sale for quality assurance testing.

29.5 Prior to quality assurance testing of samples collected at the point of sale, the Licensee shall have the option of inspecting the sample to confirm that the product collected is as described.

30. Testing Procedures for ACCS Grade Classified Floor Coverings

30.1 **General Testing Requirements**: Testing of floor coverings under the ACCS and ECS shall be conducted by accredited laboratories or approved certifiers, following established protocols in the Technical Guidelines. This includes physical performance tests (e.g., durability, appearance) and, for ECS-certified products, environmental metrics to verify compliance with certification levels.

30.2 **Inclusion of Environmental Metrics**: For ECS-related certifications, testing may incorporate relevant environmental metrics, such as:

- Lifecycle assessments (LCA) per ISO 14040/14044 standards, evaluating impacts from raw materials sourcing to end-of-life (e.g., carbon footprint, water usage, waste generation).
- Volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions testing.
- Recycled content verification and supply chain audits.
- Energy efficiency and emissions reductions in manufacturing.
- Product stewardship assessments (e.g., recyclability, take-back programs).
- Acoustic Reports
- Thermal Reports
- Health Product Declarations

These metrics shall be quantified against baselines (e.g., industry averages or prior benchmarks) and aligned with GBCA Green Star criteria where applicable.

30.3 **Verification via Standardised Checklist**: All testing results, including environmental metrics, shall be verified by the panel. Verification steps include:

- Reviewing evidence for accuracy and substantiation (e.g., third-party lab reports, chain-of-custody documents).
- Assessing risks of misleading claims (e.g., ensuring qualifications per Environmental Claim Guidelines).
- Confirming compliance with ECS levels and avoidance of unfair practices.
- Non-compliant results shall trigger re-testing or corrective actions.

30.4 **Integration with Quality Assurance**: Testing procedures shall support the Quality Assurance Program (Section 28), with results informing interpretations (Section 31), re-assessments (Section 32), and disputes (Section 24). Licensees must provide samples and data promptly.

30.5 **Records and Transparency**: Testing records, including raw data and verification reports, shall be retained for at least five years. Summaries may be published in the annual ECS report, with public access to non-sensitive information upon request.

31. Interpretation of Quality Assurance Results and Compliance

31.1 The results of all quality assurance testing will be presented to the ACCS Panel in regular session. Following consideration by the Panel, the CIAL will notify the Licensee of the results of quality assurance tests conducted on Classified Floor Coverings that are registered to the Licensee.

31.2 In the event that the test results of the Classified Floor Covering are outside standard manufacturing tolerances, (with reference to AS1385) of the Registered Specification of the Classified Floor Covering, a follow up and compliance procedure will commence as described in this clause:

31.3 the Licensee shall be notified in writing that the Classified Floor Covering as tested does not meet the requirements of its Registered Specification.

31.4 the Licensee shall within 14 days of receipt of the notification give notice in writing that: -

31.5 it challenges the results of test results and agrees to undertake further testing at its expense as directed by the Panel and within 21 days of receipt of notification; and/or

31.6 agrees to re-develop the Classified Floor Covering to meet the requirements of its Registered Specification and to so do within 45 days of receipt of notification; and/or

31.7 agrees to withdraw all samples and documentation containing reference to the ACCS and the Classified Floor Covering in question from the market within 14 days of receipt of the notification.

32. Re-assessment of Classification Assigned to Floor Coverings

32.1 The Panel may at any time and at its discretion re-assess any of the Classified Floor Coverings on the Register.

32.2 The Panel shall upon deciding that it will re-assess a particular Classified Floor Covering notify the Licensee in writing of such a decision and provide reasons for such a decision.

32.3 Upon such a notification, the Licensee must supply to the CIAL samples of the Classified Floor Covering and other documentation so required in order to re-assess the Classified Floor Covering.

32.4 In order to re-assess the Classified Floor Covering, the full ACCS testing requirements shall be carried out in accordance with the Technical Specifications.

32.5 The cost of QA re-assessment under Rule 32 will be borne by the ACCS.

32.6 The Panel shall notify the Licensee in writing of the outcome of the re-assessment.

32.7 If the Panel decides to re-classify the Floor Covering to a lower classification category than currently assigned and provided that test results are within standard tolerances of Registered Specification, the Panel shall allow the Licensee a period of 12 months to withdraw the product from the market and/or re-develop the product to meet the requirements of the original classification.

32.8 If the Panel decides to re-classify the Floor Covering to a lower classification category than currently assigned and the test results are outside the standard tolerances of Registered Specification, the compliance procedure outlined in Rule 31 shall apply.

33. Cancellation of Licenses

A Licence may, subject to an Appeal to the Registrar, be cancelled by the Panel if a majority of the members of the Panel are reasonably satisfied that the Licensee has:

33.1 used the Certification Mark or any part thereof and/or the Registered Number allotted to any or all Floor Coverings registered in his name in the Register in an unauthorised or improper manner;

33.2 used a Label in an unauthorised or improper manner;

33.3 used information in relation to any allocated category, registration and other such information under the ACCS in an unauthorised or improper manner;

33.4 failed to pay to the CIAL any fee due and payable as a result of his obligations as a Licensee under the ACCS within 60 days of the same becoming due;

33.5 died, had an administrator appointed, become bankrupt or made any assignment or composition for the benefit of his creditors;

33.6 in the case of a company, had a receiver appointed, been made the subject of winding up proceedings (whether voluntary or compulsory) otherwise than for the purpose of reconstruction;

33.7 failed to address the requirements of rule 31.2

34. Voluntary Withdrawal

Any Licensee wishing to voluntarily withdraw a Floor Covering from the Register may do so by notifying the CIAL in writing who will in turn notify the Panel.

35. Procedure for Withdrawal

Any Licensee desiring to withdraw from the ACCS shall give the CIAL six months' notice in writing and at the time of giving such notice, the Licensee must pay in full any fee which is then due under the ACCS.

36. Discontinue Use of Certification Mark

If any of the events defined by Rules 31.2, 32 and 33 occur, the Licensee shall immediately discontinue the use of the Certification Mark or any part thereof or any similar words or representations and/or all Registered Numbers allotted to Classified Floor Coverings on or in relation to any Floor Covering, immediately pay all fees then due under the ACCS and within 7 days of such occurrence return to the CIAL all Labels issued under the ACCS in respect of the Classified Floor Coverings.

37. Indemnity

37.1 The CIAL, the Panel and/or any member or office bearer of the CIAL shall not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from cancellation of a Licence and the Licensee shall indemnify those parties against any such loss or damage.

37.2 The Licensee shall further indemnify the CIAL for all damage or loss suffered by the CIAL as a result of any breach of any provisions of the Rules.

38. Remuneration to Carpet Institute of Australia Limited

The ACCS shall pay by equal quarterly instalments to the CIAL a fee for the administration and other services of not less than $30,000.00 per annum. Such a fee will be re-negotiated in January of each year and will be set for that calendar year at a level agreed upon between the Panel and the Committee. In the event of a disagreement with respect to that fee, the matter shall be arbitrated by an Arbitrator for the time being employed by the Carpet Industry Arbitration Service who is not a member of the Panel.

39. Termination of the ACCS

Upon the termination of the ACCS, all money paid by Licensees pursuant to Rule 16 and held by the CIAL on behalf of the ACCS shall be paid by the CIAL to all Licensees on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the respective Licensee's subscriptions and other fees paid for that calendar year.

40. Amendment of Technical Specifications

The Panel may, on the decision of a majority of the members of the Panel, amend the provisions or specifications of the Technical Specifications. A copy of any proposed amendment shall be sent to each Licensee under the ACCS together with a notice advising each Licensee that unless objection to such amendment is received within 30 days of the date of that notice, the amendment will come into force at the expiration of that time period.

40.1 **Initiation of Amendments**: The Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL), the Technical Committee, or the Panel may propose amendments to the Technical Guidelines to reflect technological advancements, regulatory changes (e.g., updates to GBCA Green Star requirements or Australian Consumer Law), environmental best practices, or feedback from quality assurance programs and disputes.

40.2 **Alignment with Document Review Process**:

All amendments shall be conducted in accordance with the CIAL Document Review Process (as amended from time to time), which applies to ECS-related documentation and ensures compliance, clarity, and efficiency. Key elements include:

- **Identification of Needs**: Review current Guidelines against GBCA standards, stakeholder feedback, and ECS performance metrics to determine amendment requirements.
- **Drafting**: The Technical Committee shall prepare draft amendments, incorporating input from relevant experts (e.g., Panel members, Independent Assessor).

Consultation methods may include public calls for submissions via the CIAL website, surveys, workshops, or targeted outreach. A minimum 30-day consultation period shall apply, with extensions if complex issues arise. All feedback must be documented and considered.

40.3 **Review and Approval**:

- **Internal Review**: Drafts shall be reviewed by the Technical Committee for technical accuracy, ECS level alignment (e.g., raw materials, manufacturing, product stewardship), and compliance with principles of transparency and avoidance of misleading claims.
- **Final Approval**: The Executive Director and Chairman of the Technical Committee shall approve the amendments, with ratification by the Panel if required. Approved changes shall be published on the CIAL website and notified to all Licensees within 14 days.

40.4 **Implementation and Transition**: Amendments take effect on a specified date (no less than 60 days after approval to allow compliance). Existing certifications remain valid unless re-assessment is mandated (per Section 32). Transitional guidance shall be provided to minimise disruption.

40.5 **Objections and Appeals**: Stakeholders may object to proposed amendments during consultation (per Section 41). Post-approval disputes shall be handled via the Conflict Resolution Policy and Appeal process (Section 43).

40.6 **Records and Continuous Improvement**: All amendment processes, consultations, and outcomes shall be archived and publicly summarised in the annual ECS report. Feedback shall inform future reviews, with triennial audits per the Document Review Process.

41. Objection of Amendment of Technical Guidelines

In the event of any objection being received from any Licensee within the prescribed time period to any proposed amendment, such amendment will not come into force until the first day of January in the next year provided that if the first day of January in the next year shall fall before the expiration of the 30-day period in respect of any alteration to which objection is received, such alteration shall not commence until 6 months after the expiration of the prescribed time period for objection.

42. Amendment of Rules

The CIAL may from time to time apply to the Registrar for an amendment to the Rules and any schedules hereto or to substitute new Rules therefore in accordance with Section 87 of the Trade Marks Act 1955 provided that, unless the Registrar otherwise deems, no such amendment or substitution as the case may be shall affect the use of the Certification Mark by any Licensee unless and until the Licensee has received two months' notice in writing of such amendment or substitution.

43. Appeal

Any person who is aggrieved by any refusal by the Panel to issue a Licence or to classify a Floor Covering under the ACCS or by any decision of the Panel to cancel a Licence may appeal to the Registrar of Trade Marks, who, after hearing the parties, shall decide whether the said grievance should be redressed and if so, upon what terms.

43.1 **Right to Appeal**:

Any Licensee, applicant, or stakeholder (including manufacturers, importers, distributors, consumers, or interest groups) may appeal a decision under these Rules, including but not limited to:

- Classification or re-assessment outcomes (Sections 17, 32).
- Licence issuance, cancellation, or withdrawal (Sections 11, 33-35).
- Quality assurance or testing interpretations (Sections 28-31).
- Disputes regarding the use of the Certification Mark or environmental claims (Sections 24, 26).
- Amendments to Technical Guidelines or Rules (Sections 40-42).
- Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) via info@carpetoz.com.au within 21 days of the decision notification, including the appellant's details, grounds for appeal, and supporting evidence.

43.2 **Alignment with Conflict Resolution Policy**:

All appeals shall be processed in accordance with the CIAL Conflict Resolution Policy (as amended from time to time), which applies to ECS-related matters and ensures transparency, fairness, accessibility, timeliness, and continuous improvement. Key elements include:

- Initial Acknowledgment: The ECS Administration Team will acknowledge the appeal within 5 business days.
- Investigation: The Technical Committee will review the appeal within 30 business days, gathering evidence, interviewing relevant parties, and assessing compliance with ECS criteria, ACCS Rules, GBCA standards, and Australian Consumer Law (ACL).
- Decision: A written outcome will be provided, including reasons and any corrective actions (e.g., reversal of decision, amendments to claims, or re-testing).

43.3 **Costs and Remedies**: Reasonable costs of the appeal (e.g., independent testing) may be borne by the unsuccessful party. Remedies may include upholding the original decision, modifying classifications, suspending licences, or recommending Rule amendments.

43.4 **Continuous Improvement**: Feedback from appeals will be reviewed quarterly by the Technical Committee to refine ECS processes, according to the Conflict Resolution Policy's principles.

43.5 **Confidentiality and Records**: All appeal proceedings shall be confidential, with records retained for at least five years. Public summaries will exclude sensitive information.

44. Licensee Responsible for Complaints

Each Licensee will be individually responsible for any complaints arising from any statement made by him in relation to the ACCS and undertakes to indemnify the CIAL, the Panel, members, office bearers and staff of the CIAL against any claims that might arise in connection with the ACCS.

44.1 **Licensee Obligations**:

Each Licensee is responsible for addressing and resolving complaints related to their use of the Certification Mark, ECS-certified products, or environmental claims, including those from consumers, stakeholders, or regulatory bodies. Complaints may involve allegations of misleading representations (e.g., unsubstantiated

environmental benefits), non-compliance with ECS levels, or other issues under these Rules.

44.2 **Reference to Conflict Resolution Policy**:

All complaints shall be managed in accordance with the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited (CIAL) Conflict Resolution Policy (as amended from time to time), which applies to ECS-related disputes and ensures transparency, fairness, accessibility, timeliness, and continuous improvement. Licensees must:

- Direct complainants to submit written details to CIAL via info@carpetoz.com.au, including the complainant's name, contact details, affiliation, and a clear description of the concern (e.g., referencing specific ECS criteria or claims).
- Cooperate fully with CIAL's investigation, providing evidence (e.g., test reports, substantiation for claims) within specified timelines.

44.3 **Handling Process**:

- **Initial Response**: The Licensee shall acknowledge any direct complaint within 5 business days and notify CIAL immediately to initiate the Policy process.
- **Investigation and Resolution**: CIAL's ECS Administration Team, in consultation with the Technical Committee will investigate within 30 business days, assessing compliance with ECS standards, Environmental Claim Guidelines, and Australian Consumer Law (ACL). The Licensee must participate in and implement any required corrective actions (e.g., claim amendments, label withdrawals).
- **Appeals**: Unsatisfied parties may escalate to an independent appeals panel by Policy and Section 43 of these Rules.

44.4 **Consequences of Non-Compliance**: Failure to address complaints responsibly may result in licence suspension or cancellation (per Section 33), with records used for continuous improvement of the ECS.

44.5 **Records and Reporting**: Licensees shall retain complaint records for at least five years. Summaries of resolved complaints may be included in the annual ECS report for transparency, excluding sensitive information.

Schedule 1

MARK 1:

Registered Trademark No. 309403 in class 27 in the name of Carpet Institute of Australia Limited.

Representation of mark:

AUSTRALIAN CARPET MARK

MARK 2:

Registered Trademark No. 1751101 in classes 1,27 in the name of Carpet Institute of Australia Limited.

Representation of mark:

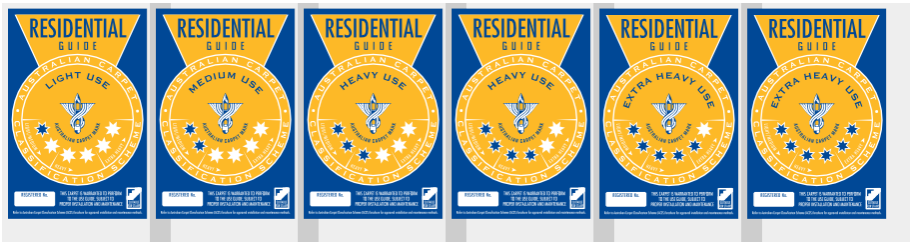
Schedule 2

ACCS Location Guidance Classifications

ACCS

Residential Carpet

Light use	1 star
Medium Use	2 star
Heavy Use	3 star
Heavy Use	4 star
Extra Heavy Use	5 star
Extra Heavy Use	6 star



ACCS

Contract Carpet

Light use	1 star
Medium Use	2 star
Heavy Use	3 star
Extra Heavy Use	4 star

ACCS Environmental Certification

ECS

Carpet

ECS Carpet Level 1
ECS Carpet Level 2
ECS Carpet Level 3
ECS Carpet Level 4
ECS Carpet Level 4+

ECS

Resilient Flooring

ECS Carpet Level 1
ECS Carpet Level 2
ECS Carpet Level 3

ECS Adhesive

ECS Carpet Level 1
ECS Carpet Level 2

ECS Underlay

ECS Underlay Level 1
ECS Underlay Level 2
ECS Underlay Level 2+

ECS Artificial Turf

ECS Artificial Turf Level 1
ECS Artificial Turf Level 2
ECS Artificial turf Level 2+

ECS Acoustic Panels

ECS Acoustic Panels Level 1
ECS Acoustic Panels Level 2
ECS Acoustic Panels Level 2+

ECS Carbon Neutral Certification

ECS Low VOC Certification

Appendices

- **Appendix A**: Document Review Process (Version 1.0, July 15, 2025)
- **Appendix B**: Conflict Resolution Policy (Effective 1 August 2025)
- **Appendix C**: Environmental Claim Guidelines (Effective March 2026)
- **Appendix D**: Guidelines for Panel Assessment Review (Effective March 2026)
- **Appendix E**: Standardised Checklist for Independent Assessor Review (Effective March 2026)

Appendix A: Document Review Process (Version 1.0, July 15, 2025)

Version 1.0

ACCS ECS

Standard Development Process Document for Environmental Control System (ECS) Documentation

July 15, 2025

Administered by the Carpet Institute of Australia Limited Approved

by: Andy Martin – Executive Director

This document outlines the process for creating, reviewing, and maintaining ECS documentation in alignment with GBCA standards, ensuring clarity, compliance, and efficiency.

1. Purpose

This document outlines the standard process for developing, reviewing, and maintaining Environmental Control System (ECS) documentation to ensure compliance with the ACCS requirements, specifically mandating a review of ECS documents every three years.

2. Scope

This process applies to all ECS-related documentation created or maintained by the Carpet Institute of Australia for projects seeking GBCA certification (e.g., Green Star rating). It covers document creation, approval, periodic review, updates, and archiving.

3. Responsibilities

Document Owner: Technical Committee is responsible for creating, updating, and ensuring compliance of ECS documents.

Review Team – Technical Committee:
Alison Attenborough – Chairwoman Interface
Dr. John Cumming – Deputy Chairman Technical Committee
Jim Cullen - Independent and ACCS Panel Chairman
John Dupree - Victoria Carpets and ACCS Panel Deputy Chairman
Paul Roberts - Tarkett and ACCS Panel Member
Brendon Dacre - Beaulieu and ACCS Panel Member
Terence Akroyd - Bremworth and ACCS Panel Member
Dr. Zulfiqar Khan - Milliken and ACCS Panel Member
Mic Boode - Godfrey Hirst Australia and ACCS Panel Member
Damian Tang – Armstrong Flooring
Terry Brown – Independent
Charles Szakiel – Independent
Andy Martin - CIAL Secretary

Approval Authority: Executive Director and Chairman of the Technical Committee approves final documents and revisions.
GBCA Liaison: Executive Director ensures alignment with GBCA requirements.

4. Development Process Document Creation

Identify Requirements: Review GBCA Green Star guidelines to determine ECS documentation needs.
Draft Document: Create ECS documents including system specifications, performance metrics, and maintenance protocols.
Stakeholder Input: Consult with the Carpet Institute Technical Committee to ensure accuracy and completeness.
Internal Review: Drafts are reviewed by the Technical Committee for technical accuracy and GBCA compliance.

1. Approval: Submit the draft to the Technical Committee for final sign-off.
2. Document Format: Use a standardised template including: - Title, version, and date Purpose and scope
3. Technical details (e.g., system design, energy efficiency metrics)
4. Compliance references to GBCA standards
5. Revision history

Submission to GBCA - Submit ECS documents to GBCA as part of the Green Star certification process.

5. Review and Update Process

Triennial Review Requirement

Frequency: All ECS documents must be reviewed every three years from the date of creation or last review to comply with GBCA standards.

Purpose: Ensure documents reflect current system performance, technological advancements, and updated GBCA requirements.

Review Process

Schedule Review: The Document Owner schedules a review within 90 days before the three-year anniversary of the document's creation or last review.

Assessment: - Verify system performance against documented metrics. - Check for updates to GBCA Green Star criteria. - Identify technological or regulatory changes affecting ECS.

Stakeholder Feedback: Engage the Review Team and relevant stakeholders (e.g., facilities team) to provide input.

Update Document: Revise the document to address findings, incorporating new data, system upgrades, or GBCA requirements.

Approval: Submit the revised document to the Approval Authority for sign-off.

Non-Compliance

If a review identifies non-compliance with standards, the Document Owner must: Document the issue.
Propose corrective actions (e.g., system upgrades, revised documentation). Submit an action plan to the Approval Authority within 30 days.

6. Archiving and Access

Storage: Store ECS documents in a secure, centralised repository via the Carpet Institute website Environment Section

Access: Restrict access to authorised personnel – through password protection Archiving: Retain previous versions of ECS documents for at least 7 years.

7. Compliance with GBCA

Alignment: Ensure ECS documentation meets GBCA Green Star requirements, particularly for credits related to energy efficiency, indoor environmental quality, and sustainable operations.

Audit Readiness: Maintain records of all reviews, updates, and approvals to demonstrate compliance during GBCA assessments.

Updates: Monitor GBCA announcements for changes to Green Star criteria and adjust the review process as needed.

8. Training and Awareness

Train relevant staff (Carpet Institute staff and Technical Committee) on this process and GBCA requirements annually. Communicate updates to the process to all stakeholders via Technical Committee Minutes.

9. Document Control

Version History:

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author
1.0	3-8-2025	Initial Draft	[enter name]

Review Date: This process document will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in GBCA standards.

ECS Documents:

1. ACCS ECS Carpet Technical Specifications V2.2 – Review 3 May 2026
2. ACCS ECS Carpet Guidance Manual V2.2 – Review 3 May 2026
3. ACCS ECS Resilient Flooring Technical Specifications V.1– Review 3 May 2026
4. ACCS ECS Resilient Flooring Guidance Manual V.1 – Review 3 May 2026
5. ACCS ECS Underlay Technical Specifications V.1 – Review 27 July 2026
6. ACCS ECS Underlay Guidance Manual V.1 – Review 27 July 2026
7. ACCS ECS Adhesives Technical Specifications V.1 – Review 25 October 2026
8. ACCS ECS Adhesives Guidance Manual V.1 – Review 25 October 2026
9. ACCS ECS Artificial Turf Technical Specifications V.1 – Review 20 March 2027
10. ACCS ECS Artificial Turf Guidance Manual V.1 – Review 20 March 2027
11. ACCS ECS Acoustic Panels Technical Specifications V.1 – Review 1 March 2027
12. ACCS ECS Acoustic Panels guidance Manual V.1 – Review 1 March 2027
13. ACCS ECS VOC Indoor Air Quality Technical Specifications V.1 – Review 1 August 2028
14. ACCS ECS Carbon Neutral Technical Specifications V.1 – Review 1 September 2025

Appendix B: Conflict Resolution Policy (Effective 1 August 2025)

Conflict Resolution Policy

Carpet Institute of Australia – Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS)

Effective Date: 1 August 2025

1. Purpose

The Carpet Institute of Australia (CIA) is committed to maintaining the integrity, transparency, and credibility of the Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS). This Conflict Resolution Policy outlines a clear, fair, and accessible process for addressing disputes or concerns related to the ECS standards, their development, application, or certification processes. The policy aims to resolve conflicts efficiently while ensuring stakeholder input is considered and documented.

2. Scope

This policy applies to disputes or concerns raised by stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- Industry stakeholders (manufacturers, importers, distributors)
- Members of the public Interest groups or organisations
- Consumers
- Other parties impacted by or involved in the ECS standards and certification processes

Disputes may include concerns about the ECS standards' criteria, certification decisions, stakeholder engagement processes, or the application of ECS labels.

3. Principles

The conflict resolution process is guided by the following principles:

- **Transparency**: All steps in the process are clearly communicated, and outcomes are documented.
- **Fairness**: All parties are given an opportunity to present their concerns and receive an impartial review.
- **Accessibility**: The process is available to all stakeholders, with clear instructions for submitting complaints.
- **Timeliness**: Disputes are addressed promptly within defined timeframes.
- **Continuous Improvement**: Feedback from disputes is used to refine ECS standards and processes.

4. Conflict Resolution Process

Step1: Submission of Complain

Stakeholders with a concern or dispute must submit a written complaint to the Carpet Institute of Australia via info@carpetoz.com.au. The complaint should include:

- The complainant's name, contact details, and affiliation (if applicable).
- A clear description of the issue, including specific details about the ECS standard, certification, or process in question.
- Any supporting documentation or evidence.
- Anonymous complaints may be considered at the discretion of the CIA, but complainants are encouraged to provide contact details for follow-up.

Step 2: Acknowledgment of Complaint

- The CIA will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 business days via email or written correspondence.
- The acknowledgment will include a reference number, an estimated timeline for resolution, and contact details for further inquiries.

Step 3: Initial Review

- The complaint will be reviewed by the ECS Administration Team, which includes a designated member of the CIA staff and, where applicable, the Independent Assessor (e.g., Mr. Charles Szakiel or their successor).

The review will assess:

- The validity of the complaint.
- Whether the issue falls within the scope of the ECS standards or certification process.
- Any immediate actions required to address urgent concerns (e.g., product safety or compliance issues).
- If the complaint is deemed outside the scope of this policy, the complainant will be notified with an explanation within 10 business days.

Step 4: Investigation and Stakeholder Engagement

For valid complaints, the ECS Administration Team will investigate, which may include:

- Consulting with relevant stakeholders (e.g., manufacturers, Technical Committee members, or other parties involved in the ECS standard).
- Reviewing relevant documentation, including ECS standards, Guidance Manuals, and certification records.
- Engaging the Technical Committee or a subcommittee for technical input, if necessary.
- The complainant may be invited to provide additional information or participate in discussions, either verbally or in writing, to clarify the issue.
- This step will be completed within 20 business days of the initial acknowledgment, unless additional time is required (in which case the complainant will be notified).

Step 5: Resolution and Response

The ECS Administration Team, in consultation with the Technical Committee (if required), will propose a resolution. Possible outcomes include:

- Clarification or amendment of the ECS standard or certification process.
- Rejection of the complaint with a detailed explanation.
- Recommendations for further stakeholder consultation or standard revision.
- The complainant will receive a written response outlining the findings, resolution, and any actions taken within 30 business days of the complaint's submission.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request an appeal (see Step 6).

Step 6: Appeal Process

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, they may submit a written appeal to the CIA within 10 business days of receiving the response.
- The appeal will be reviewed by an independent panel, which may include the Independent Assessor and/or an external expert not previously involved in the case.
- The panel will review the original complaint, investigation findings, and any new evidence provided by the complainant.
- A final decision will be communicated to the complainant within 20 business days of receiving the appeal. This decision is final.

5. Documentation and Transparency

- All complaints, investigations, and resolutions will be documented and maintained by the CIA.
- A summary of complaints and their outcomes will be included in the ECS Annual Report, published on the Carpet Institute website ([insert website link]) to ensure transparency.
- Confidential or commercially sensitive information will be redacted from public summaries to protect stakeholder privacy.
- Drafts of ECS standards and related documents are available on the ECS web page.

6. Continuous Improvement

- Feedback from complaints and disputes will be reviewed by the Technical Committee during its quarterly meetings to identify potential improvements to the ECS standards, certification processes, or stakeholder engagement practices.
- Updates to the ECS standards or Guidance Manuals will be communicated to stakeholders and made publicly available on the CIA website.

Appendix C: Environmental Claim Guidelines (Effective March 2026)

Environmental Claim Guidelines for the Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS)

Carpet Institute of Australia – Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS)

Effective date: May 2026

Version: 1.0

Prepared by: Technical Committee (Pending)

Approved by: Andy Martin – Executive Director

Review Frequency: Every three years, in alignment with the ECS Document Review Process

1. Purpose

These guidelines outline the principles and requirements for making environmental claims related to products certified under the Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS), which is part of the Australian Carpet Classification Scheme (ACCS). The aim is to ensure all claims are truthful, substantiated, specific, and not misleading to consumers, in compliance with the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) and to support the integrity of ECS certification levels. By adhering to these guidelines, manufacturers, importers, suppliers, and retailers can avoid "greenwashing" – false or exaggerated environmental representations – and build consumer trust. Claims must reflect genuine environmental benefits based on ECS criteria, such as reduced resource use, lower emissions, or improved recyclability. Violations may lead to corrective actions under the ECS Conflict Resolution Policy.

2. Scope

These guidelines apply to all environmental claims made in marketing, labelling, advertising, or communications about ECS-certified floor covering products. This includes:

- Use of ECS labels or CTMs (if registered).
- Statements about environmental impacts (e.g., "low VOC emissions," "recycled content," "carbon neutral manufacturing").
- Claims by licensees, certifiers, or the Carpet Institute itself.
- Alignment with Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) Green Star requirements where applicable.

Exclusions: General business sustainability claims not tied to specific ECS-certified products (though these should still comply with ACL).

3. Principles for Making Trustworthy Environmental Claims

All claims must follow these eight principles, adapted from established ACL guidance. Claims should be reviewed by the Technical Committee or Panel before publication. Evidence must be retained for at least five years and made available upon request (e.g., via QR codes on labels).

Principle 1: Make Accurate and Truthful Claims

- **Requirement**: Claims must represent genuine, verifiable environmental benefits without exaggeration. Avoid overstating the scope, scientific acceptance, or impact. Consider the overall impression, including visuals.
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: For Level 2 (Raw Materials), claim "contains 25% post-consumer recycled content" only if tested and certified; do not say "made from recycled materials" if it's partial or unverified. For Level 3 (Manufacturing), specify "reduces water use by 15% compared to industry baseline" rather than "water-efficient."
- **Best Practice**: Regularly audit suppliers to confirm claims.
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: Claiming "environmentally friendly" for a carpet with low emissions but high landfill impact at

end-of-life.

Principle 2: Have Evidence to Back Up Your Claims

- **Requirement**: Substantiate claims with independent, scientific evidence (e.g., third-party lab tests, audits, or ISO-compliant methodologies). For future-oriented claims (e.g., "aiming for net-zero by 2030"), provide plans, budgets, and progress reports.
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: Use NATA-approved testing. Link to evidence via product datasheets or the Carpet Institute website.
- **Best Practice**: Prioritise certifications from reputable schemes (e.g., GBCA-aligned) and make summaries accessible via the QR code/DPP.
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: Relying on unverified supplier data for "sustainable sourcing" without independent verification.

Principle 3: Do Not Hide or Omit Important Information

- **Requirement**: Provide a complete picture, including any limitations or trade-offs. Disclose full lifecycle impacts (sourcing, production, use, disposal) prominently.
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: If a carpet's recyclability depends on specific facilities, state this upfront.
- **Best Practice**: Use product labels with QR codes/DPP linking to detailed impact reports.
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: Highlighting "biodegradable carpet" without noting it only applies in industrial composting, not landfills.

Principle 4: Explain Any Conditions or Qualifications

- **Requirement**: Clearly state conditions for the claim to be valid (e.g., location, infrastructure, usage). Assume typical Australian consumer scenarios.
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: For carpet at Level 4+, claim "recyclable" only with qualifications like "through approved facilities in major cities; check local availability". For adhesives, specify "low VOC under standard installation conditions (ventilated rooms)."
- **Best Practice**: Include qualifiers in bold on labels or ads (e.g., "Compostable in commercial facilities meeting AS 4736 standards").
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: Claiming "reusable" for underlay without specifying reuse limits or conditions.

Principle 5: Avoid Broad and Unqualified Claims

- **Requirement**: Use specific, quantified terms; avoid vague words like "green," "eco," or "sustainable" without explanation. Qualify scope (e.g., part of product, specific impact).
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: Instead of "sustainable carpet," say "Level 3 certified: 20% reduction in manufacturing emissions per square meter, verified by [method]." For acoustic panels, specify "contains 50% recycled fibres from post-industrial waste."
- **Best Practice**: Quantify benefits against baselines (e.g., "Compared to 2019 levels").
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: Using "carbon neutral" without disclosing it's only for manufacturing, not full lifecycle.

Principle 6: Use Clear and Easy-to-Understand Language

- **Requirement**: Avoid jargon unless defined; use everyday language. Ensure claims are unambiguous.
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: Define terms like "VOC" as "volatile organic compounds that affect indoor air quality." Say "designed for easy recycling at end-of-life" instead of technical specs.
- **Best Practice**: Test claims with consumer focus groups for clarity.
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: Using "circular economy compliant" without explaining it means take-back programs.

Principle 7: Ensure Visual Elements Do Not Mislead

- **Requirement**: Align images, colours, symbols (e.g., ECS labels) with claims. Explain symbols; avoid implying unverified benefits.
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: Use green colours only for verified claims; include ECS level icons with tooltips (e.g., "Level 2: Focuses on sustainable raw materials – see details"). Do not mimic other certifications without permission.
- **Best Practice**: Provide a legend for all visuals on packaging.
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: A leaf icon suggesting broad "natural" benefits for synthetic carpets.

Principle 8: Be Direct and Open About Sustainability Transitions

- **Requirement**: For ongoing improvements, disclose goals, progress, and challenges transparently. Use KPIs, baselines, and updates.
- **ECS-Specific Guidance**: For products aiming for Level 4+, publish annual reports (e.g., "Reduced emissions by 10% in 2025; target 30% by 2030 via [initiatives]"). Acknowledge industry challenges like supply chain emissions.
- **Best Practice**: Link to progress dashboards on the Carpet Institute website.
- **Pitfall to Avoid**: Vague "committed to sustainability" without measurable steps.

4. Implementation and Enforcement

- **Responsibilities**: Licensees must submit claims for Technical Committee and ACCS Panel review. The

Independent Assessor may verify substantiation.

- **Monitoring**: Annual audits and stakeholder feedback via the Conflict Resolution Policy.
- **Consequences**: Non-compliance may result in certification suspension, as per ECS Rules.
- **Resources**: Refer to ACCC guidance for further details. Contact info@carpetoz.com.au for support.

5. Review and Updates

These guidelines will be reviewed every three years or sooner if ACL or GBCA standards change, per the Document Review Process.

Appendix D: Guidelines for Panel Assessment Review (Effective March 2026)

Guidelines for Independent Assessor Review of the Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS)

Carpet Institute of Australia – Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS)

Effective Date: March 2026

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Andy Martin – Executive Director

Review Frequency: Annually or as needed, in alignment with the ECS Document Review Process

1. Purpose

These guidelines provide a clear, structured framework for the Independent Assessor to conduct impartial reviews of the ECS, ensuring compliance with ACCS standards, GBCA Green Star requirements, Australian Consumer Law (ACL), and principles of transparency, fairness, and environmental integrity. Reviews may include certification decisions, standards application, dispute investigations, or periodic audits to mitigate risks of misleading claims or restrictive practices.

2. Scope

Applies to all ECS-related reviews, including:

- Certification assessments for products (e.g., carpets, resilient floors).
- Investigations under the Conflict Resolution Policy.
- Triennial document reviews or ad-hoc audits.
- Evaluation of environmental claims against ECS levels (1-4+).

The Assessor must remain independent, avoiding conflicts of interest (e.g., no financial ties to applicants).

Responsibilities of the Independent Assessor

- Conduct objective, evidence-based reviews.
- Verify compliance with ECS criteria (e.g., raw materials, manufacturing impacts, product stewardship).
- Assess for potential misleading environmental representations.
- Provide recommendations for improvements or corrective actions.
- Document findings confidentially, sharing only with authorised parties (e.g., Technical Committee, Executive Director).
- Escalate unresolved issues to an independent appeals panel if needed.

Review Process

Follow these steps for each review:

Step 1: Preparation

- Receive review request from ECS Administration Team, including scope, timelines (e.g., complete within 20 business days), and relevant documents (e.g., application forms, test reports, ECS Rules).
- Declare any potential conflicts; recuse if necessary.
- Familiarise with current ECS standards, GBCA guidelines, and ACL principles (e.g., no unsubstantiated claims).

Step 2: Evidence Collection and Analysis

- Review selected materials: Lab tests, supplier audits, performance metrics.
- Conduct independent verification: Cross-check data sources, interview stakeholders if required (e.g., manufacturers), or request additional evidence.
- Evaluate against ECS levels: Ensure claims are specific, quantified, and qualified.
- Check for risks: Misleading impacts, certifier competence, or anti-competitive elements.

Step 3: Reporting and Follow-Up

- Submit a written report to the ECS Administration Team within the timeline, including evidence summaries and recommendations.
- Participate in discussions or appeals if requested.
- Ensure confidentiality; retain records for five years.
- Provide feedback on ECS processes for continuous improvement.

Key Principles

- **Impartiality**: Base decisions on facts, not opinions.
- **Thoroughness**: Use scientific methods and best practices.
- **Timeliness**: Adhere to deadlines to support efficient certification.
- **Accountability**: Reports may be audited; violations of these guidelines could lead to reassignment.

For questions, contact info@carpetoz.com.au. These guidelines align with the ECS Conflict Resolution and Document Review Policies.

Appendix E: Standardised Checklist for Independent Assessor Review (Effective March 2026)

Standardised Checklist for ACCS Panel Review of the Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS)

Carpet Institute of Australia – Environmental Certification Scheme (ECS)

Effective Date: March 2026

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Andy Martin – Executive Director

Review Frequency: Annually or as needed, in alignment with the ECS Document Review Process

1. Purpose

This standardised checklist provides a consistent, objective tool for the ACCS Grading Panel to evaluate individual product submissions for ECS certification. It focuses on assessing the product's compliance with ECS criteria, including environmental performance, claims substantiation, and alignment with Australian Consumer Law (ACL) and Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) Green Star requirements. The checklist emphasises product-specific attributes, such as materials, testing, and labeling, to ensure transparency, accuracy, and suitability for certification. It must be completed for every product review, with evidence referenced and rationale provided for each item. Findings will inform the Panel's report, including an overall rating (Compliant, Partially Compliant, or Non-Compliant) and recommendations for the product.

2. Scope

Applies to ACCS Grading Panel reviews of:

- Individual product submissions for ECS certification across all levels.
- Product-specific environmental claims and labeling.
- Any product-related audits or investigations for compliance risks.

Instructions for Use:

- Completion: The ACCS Grading Panel Chairman marks each item as Yes, No, or N/A. Provide rationale, evidence (e.g., document references, test results), and any product-specific recommendations.
- Evidence Standards: Rely on verifiable, product-specific sources (e.g., AS/ISO-compliant tests, supplier declarations, lifecycle assessments for the submitted product).
- Documentation: Attach supporting files related to the product; retain for five years.
- Independence: Declare conflicts before starting; maintain impartiality throughout the product assessment.

3. Standardised Checklist

Section A: Product-Specific General Compliance

1. Does the product meet the core ECS certification requirements for the claimed level (e.g., raw material sourcing, manufacturing processes, and performance benchmarks)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Reference ECS Rules section for level-specific criteria, such as recycled content thresholds for Level 3, verified by product test reports.)
   Recommendations:
2. Is the product aligned with ACCS and GBCA Green Star guidelines for its category (e.g., VOC emissions, durability integration)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Check product data against current GBCA credits for indoor air quality and material impacts.)
   Recommendations:

3. Are all required product documents submitted and complete (e.g., test reports, lifecycle assessments, chain-of-custody for materials)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Verify ISO 14040 compliance for the product's LCA and completeness of fiber-specific declarations.)
   Recommendations:

Section B: Product Environmental Claim Accuracy and Substantiation

1. Are the product's environmental benefits (e.g., reduced emissions, recycled content, energy efficiency) accurately represented and quantified?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Claims like "30% post-consumer recycled yarn" backed by third-party audits and product batch records.)
   Recommendations:
2. Is there independent, scientific evidence substantiating all product claims (e.g., lab tests for VOC levels, material composition analysis)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Cross-check supplier data with NATA-accredited test results specific to the product sample.)
   Recommendations:

Section C: Product Transparency and Avoidance of Misleading Elements

1. Are any product limitations, trade-offs, or usage conditions clearly disclosed (e.g., end-of-life recyclability dependent on local facilities, performance in specific climates)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Review product labels and datasheets for qualifiers on claims like "low-VOC in standard installation conditions.")
   Recommendations:
2. Does the product's overall presentation avoid broad or vague terms (e.g., "sustainable" without specific metrics tied to the product's attributes)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Ensure claims are benchmarked against product baselines, per Environmental Claim Guidelines, with details on fiber type and manufacturing impacts.)
   Recommendations:

Section D: Product Certifier and Assessment Competence

1. Do the product's certifiers or assessors demonstrate relevant expertise for this submission (e.g., qualifications in environmental testing for carpet materials)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Review bios and credentials of those who conducted product-specific tests or audits.)
   Recommendations:
2. Are the product's internal controls and verification processes effective (e.g., batch testing, quality assurance for environmental attributes)?
   Yes/No/N/A
   Rationale/Evidence: (e.g., Evidence of product-specific audits or reviews to confirm integrity of claims.)
   Recommendations:

Overall Assessment

Total Yes Responses: [Count] / 9
Overall Rating: Compliant / Partially Compliant (specify conditions) / Non-Compliant Key Strengths: (e.g., Strong evidence for recycled content in the product.)
Key Weaknesses/Risks: (e.g., Incomplete VOC testing for the specific fibre blend.)
Recommendations/Actions: (e.g., Require additional product re-testing; Amend labeling for clarity.)
Panel Chairman Signature/Date:

Review and Updates

This checklist will be reviewed annually or following regulatory changes (e.g., ACL updates), with input from the Technical Committee. For support, contact info@carpetoz.com.au. Aligns with ECS Guidelines for Panel Review, Environmental Claim Guidelines, Conflict Resolution Policy, and Document Review Process

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