

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 organizations
- 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

Step 1: Submission of Complaint

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 conduct an investigation, 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 pages

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.

7. Contact Information

For inquiries or to submit a complaint:

Email: info@carpetoz.com.au

Website: www.carpetinstitute.com.au

Postal Address: Carpet Institute of Australia, P.O. Box 7171 St Kilda Road Melbourne VIC 3004

Phone: +61 3 98045559

8. Availability of Policy

This Conflict Resolution Policy is publicly available on the Carpet Institute website (www.carpetinstitute.com.au)

9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Technical Committee to ensure it remains effective and aligned with best practices. Any updates will be published on the CIA website and communicated to stakeholders.