

**Australian Forestry Standard Limited**

# **CORPORATE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE 08**

## **PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

V4.0-03/2011



[Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFSL) has developed two Australian Standards® within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme which address wood production from sustainable forest management and the tracking of certified products in the wood and forest products supply chain by a chain of custody mechanism. These Australian Standards® were developed by and are maintained by AFSL Technical Committees which comprise of representatives of nominating organisations/associations and individuals with a nominated Chair and secretariat support from AFSL.]

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## 1 Purpose

Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFSL) recognises that disagreements may arise in the management of the Standards and the Certification Scheme. The purpose of this procedure is to outline the type of grievances and complaints which may occur and the steps required to resolve them.

## 2 Scope

There are three categories of complaints where differences of opinion or disagreements could become the subject of a complaint or a grievance.

The three streams are:

1. Complaint or grievance against the organisation
2. Complaint or grievance against the standard, the standard setting process, the SRC.
3. Complaint or grievance against certified organisations, certification bodies, etc

## 3 Supporting Documents

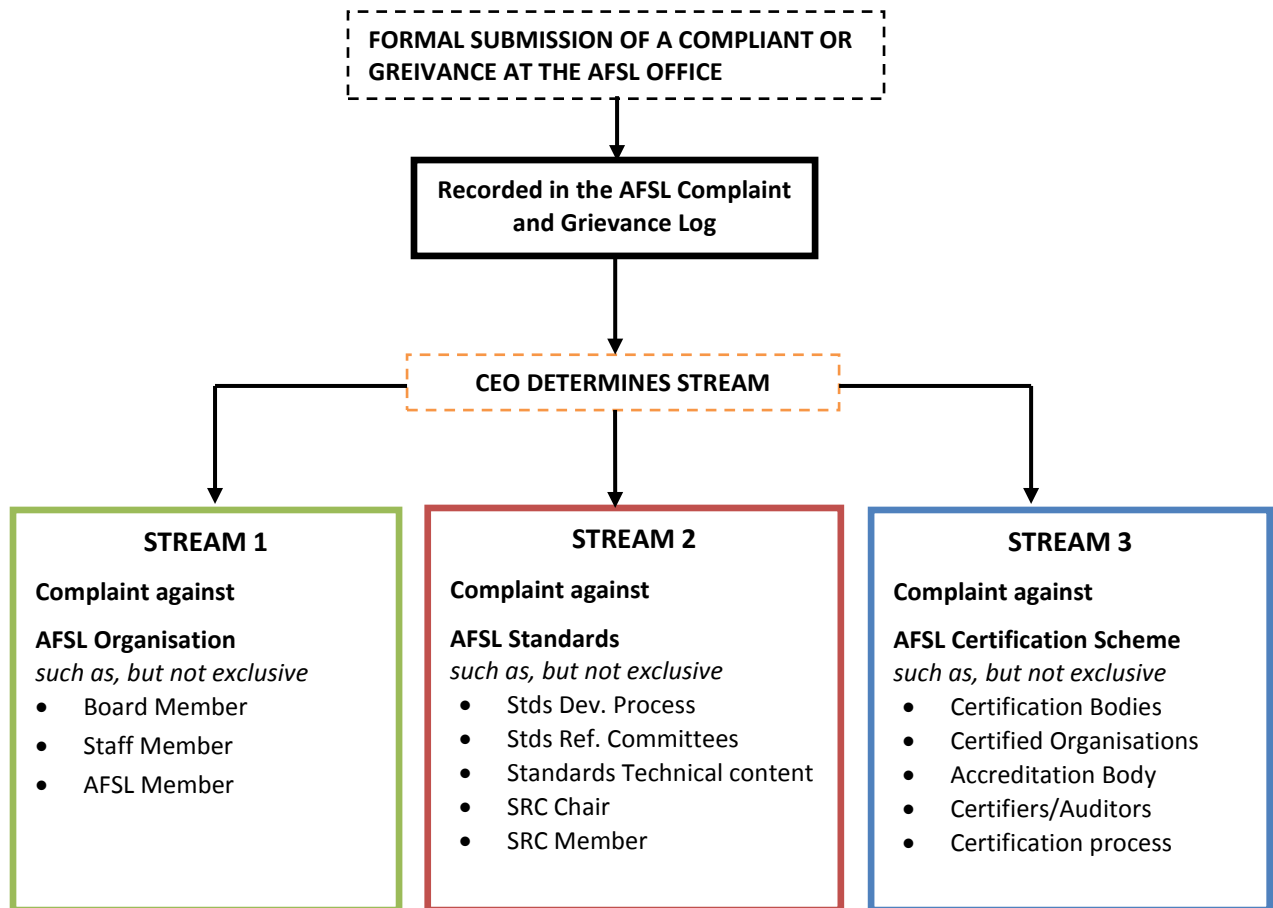
- AFSL Complaints Register

## 4 Resolving a Complaint or Grievance

AFSL is committed to effective and efficient complaints and grievance handling which contribute to continual improvement of the AFCS.

1. All complaints or grievances will be dealt with fairly, transparently and in a timely manner;
2. The complaint or grievance should provide sufficient objective information to substantiate the complaint or grievance so that assessment and investigation can be undertaken. Complaints or grievances based on hearsay will not be considered as a complaint or grievance;
3. The complaint or grievance should identify the correspondent and the correspondent's contacts details;
4. Correspondents' names will be published on the Grievance and Complaints Register unless they request anonymity;
5. Complaints will be acknowledged within five (5) business days of it being lodged;
6. After receipt of the complaint or grievance, it will be assessed in regards to the particulars of the complaint or grievance and allocated to one of the Complaints and Grievance Streams for action. Advice will be provided to the complainant should the complaint or grievance need to be referred to another entity;
7. Following the assessment, if it is a matter for AFSL, the complaint will be investigated;
  - a. After the investigation any decision or action will be communicated within twenty (20) business days from the date of acknowledgement, where appropriate;
  - b. If the proposed decision or action is not accepted, the complainant will be informed of any alternative forms of recourse available.

## 5 The Complaints Streams



Complaints or grievances should in the first instance be directed to that entity which has responsibility for the particular issue. In order to help correspondents make contact with the responsible entity, refer to the following tables and annexes.

Examples of Complaints and Streams and actions

Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3
The AFSL Office: Email: <a href="mailto:feedback@forestrystandard.org.au">feedback@forestrystandard.org.au</a> or mail to: PO Box 7031 Yarralumla, ACT 2600 Attention: AFSL CEO	The AFSL: Email: <a href="mailto:standards-revision@forestrystandard.org.au">standards-revision@forestrystandard.org.au</a> or mail to: PO Box 7031 Yarralumla, ACT 2600 Attention: AFSL CEO	In the first instance to: The certified organisation that the complaint is about and to their Certification Body. Refer to AFSL Registers on <a href="http://www.forestrystandard.org.au">www.forestrystandard.org.au</a> If response is unsatisfactory then contact: The Manager Accreditation Services of JAS-ANZ mail to: <a href="mailto:admin@jas-anz.com.au">admin@jas-anz.com.au</a> Calls made to AFSL will be directed to the certified organisation, its certification body or/and JAS-ANZ
<b>See Annex 1</b>	<b>See Annex 2</b>	<b>See Annex 3</b>

## 6 Recording Complaints/Grievances in the Register

Issues will be recorded in the Grievance and Complaints Log and Registers in the following format

Last Updated/Reviewed: Date of last review

Field Name	Comments
<b>Item # No/YY</b>	Issue number recorded in the format Sx-nnyy Sx = S1, S2, or S3 for Streams 1, 2, or 3 nn = ascending number for that year, numbering starts at 01 in next calendar year yy = Year
<b>Date of Register</b>	Dd/mm/yy
<b>Initiator Name and Contact Details</b>	All details available
<b>Issue Summary</b>	Key points of the complaint or grievance
<b>Response Date</b>	dd/mm/yy
<b>Allocation Stream</b>	1, 2, or 3
<b>Ongoing or Closed</b>	Ongoing or Closed

## **Annex 1 - Resolving a complaint against AFSL, the Directors and Management**

### **STREAM 1**

#### **Complaint against the organisation**

1. In relation to management issues, the CEO will convene, on a temporary basis, a Complaints Panel.
2. The Complaints Panel will comprise the Chairperson, or acting delegated Director in the case where the complaint is about the Chair, the CEO one and two (2) other Directors of the company, of whom must come from the sector from which the complaint originated but who does not have a direct or proprietary interest in the complaint.
3. The Complaints Panel will be provided with the substance of the complaint or grievance, convene to consider and discuss the issue to provide a consensus outcome on resolving the complaint or grievance following necessary discussions with the complainant.
4. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of AFSL for a decision on any recommendation from the Complaints Panel. A formal response will be forwarded to the complainant following the Board's decision.

#### **Personal complaint or grievance against a staff member – the Chief Executive officer**

1. In relation to a complaint against the CEO, the AFSL Chairperson will convene, on a temporary basis, a Complaints Panel.
2. The Complaints Panel will comprise the Chairperson, or acting delegated Director, and two (2) other Directors of the company, one of whom must come from the sector from which the complaint originated but who does not have a direct or proprietary interest in the complaint.
3. The Complaints Panel will be provided with the substance of the complaint or grievance, convene to consider and discuss the issue to provide a consensus outcome on resolving the complaint or grievance following necessary discussions with the CEO.
4. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of AFSL for a decision on any recommendation from the Complaints Panel. A formal response will be forwarded to the complainant following the Board's decision.

## **Annex 2 - Resolving a Technical Complaint about a Standard, its' content or/and the Standards Development Process**

### **STREAM 2**

#### **Complaint against the Standard setting procedures**

1. In terms of the technical content of the AFS or CoC Standard, AFSL will convene, on a temporary basis, a Complaints Committee which will be comprised of a member of the AFSL Standards Reference Committee (SRC) as appropriate, from each of the four main sectors represented on the AFS SRC. The Complaints Committee will be chaired by the relevant SRC Chairperson.
2. The Complaints Committee will be provided with the substance of the complaint or grievance, convene to consider and discuss whether the issue should be referred to the next full review of the standard, or requires the development of an interim interpretation of the Standard.
3. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of AFSL for comment on any recommendation from the Complaints Committee.
4. The Board will make a final decision on behalf of AFSL and a formal response will be forwarded to the complainant.
5. All matters raised in this context will be registered and referred to the full Standards Reference Committee at the next review of the standard.

#### **Complaint against a Standard Reference Committee, SRC Member, SRC operations or decisions, the SRC Chair.**

1. In terms of the Standard Reference Committee activities and actions, AFSL will convene, on a temporary basis, an independent Complaints Committee which will be comprised of a member of the AFSL Board as appropriate, and will be chaired by the AFSL Chairperson.
2. The Complaints Committee will be provided with the substance of the complaint or grievances and convene to consider and discuss whether the issue should be referred to the next Board meeting, or requires an action.
3. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of AFSL for a comment on any recommendation from the Complaints Committee.
4. The Board will make a final decision on behalf of AFSL and a formal response will be forwarded to the complainant.
5. All matters raised in this context will be registered and referred to the full Standards Reference Committee at the next meeting of the SRC.

## Annex 3 – Resolving a Complaint against the AFSL Certification.

### STREAM 3

#### **Complaints against the certification process, certification bodies, and/or certified organisations.**

Certification against the Australian Standards for Forest Management AS 4708 and Australian Standards for Wood and Wood Products Chain of Custody AS 4707 is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party Process.

AFSL as the Standard setting body has no influence or authority over the process or practices within the Certification Scheme other than monitor the complaints and grievances, and if called for lodge their own complaint via this same procedure.

If a complaint is sent to the AFSL Office regarding the certification process, certification bodies, and/or certified organisations.

The complainant will be advise to lodge their complaint with the

- organisation that the complaint is about, and
- certification body that has issued the certification certificate

If the Complainant has not received satisfactory response from the above they are to then contact the appropriation Accreditation Body for the Certification Body.

Refer to the AFSL Website, [www.forstrystandard.org.au](http://www.forstrystandard.org.au) for the following registers

- List of Certified Organisations and their Certification Bodies
- List of Certification Bodies and their Accreditation Body

For additional information on Accreditation Bodies go to the Internal Accreditation Forum website [www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu)

#### **Joint Accredited System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ).**

JAS-ANZ is the Accreditation Body for Australian Certification Bodies

JAS-ANZ Complaints Procedure number 12 Issue No. 6 September 2005 is published on the JAS-ANZ website<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.jas-anz.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=41&Itemid=1](http://www.jas-anz.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=41&Itemid=1)