

**AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY STANDARD LIMITED**

# **CORPORATE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE 11**

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## **HANDLING GENERAL ENQUIRIES**

**V1.0 -07/2010**



[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 Standard Reference Committees which comprise of representatives of nominating organisations/associations and individuals with a nominated Chair and secretariat support from AFSL.]



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## HANDLING OF GENERAL AND SPECIFIC ENQUIRIES

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### 1 BACKGROUND

Australian Forestry Standard Limited has developed 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® are being used by independent, 3<sup>rd</sup>-party certification bodies, which have accreditation under an appropriate JAS-ANZ programme, to certify either forest managers or forest owners or for organisations in the supply chain from primary processors to the end consumer.

As the scope of AFSL's accreditation from ABSDO covers " ... to develop Australian Standards for forest management for wood production and Australian Standards that support the Australian Forest Certification Scheme", this will generate general (mainly public) and specific (mainly users, those influenced or concerned) enquiries addressed to AFSL which will cover the various aspects of AFSL's business.

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### 2 SCOPE

This Procedure applies to the receipt and response to general and specific enquiries on issues within the scope of AFSL's accreditation as a Standards Development Organisation (SDO) or addressed to AFSL in the course of its day to day business.

*NOTE: Complaints and grievances received by AFSL will be dealt with under the Complaints and Grievance Procedure. (Complaints Procedure, 2010)*

## 3 ENQUIRIES

### 3.1 GENERAL ENQUIRIES

- 3.1.1 AFSL staff shall answer all telephone enquiries to provide factual and relevant responses which may be followed up by e-mail information (and attachments, as required) or mail out of hard copy information to the person or organisation making the enquiry;
- 3.1.2 AFSL staff shall monitor incoming e-mail and surface mail enquiries which are classified as general<sup>1</sup> in nature and store in an electronic folder or hard copy file respectively;
- 3.1.3 AFSL staff shall monitor enquiry forms received from the Contact Us page of the AFS web site which are classified as general in nature and store in an electronic folder;
- 3.1.4 AFSL staff shall respond to all such enquiries within five (5) working days by the mode in which the enquiry was provided to AFSL with the provision of a factual and relevant response with further information as deemed appropriate to the enquiry;
- 3.1.5 AFSL staff shall keep a copy of the response in an electronic folder (if received by e-mail) or on a hard copy file (if received by surface mail). Further, AFSL staff shall keep a copy of the incoming and outgoing e-mail enquiry on a hard copy file for audit purposes and a back up to the electronic format.

### 3.2 SPECIFIC ENQUIRIES

- 3.2.1 All enquiries of a specific nature i.e. dealing with technical issues associated with the Australian Standards® or other documentation within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme shall be referred to the Chief Executive Officer
- 3.2.2 If the enquiry is received by telephone, the Chief Executive Officer shall answer all telephone enquiries to provide factual and relevant responses which may be followed up by e-mail information (and attachments, as required) or mail out of hard copy information to the person or organisation making the enquiry;
- 3.2.3 If the enquiry is received by e-mail, surface mail or enquiry form received from the Contact Us page of the AFS web site, the enquiry shall be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer and a copy stored in an electronic folder (if received by e-mail or enquiry form) or on a hard copy file (if received by surface mail);
- 3.2.4 The Chief Executive Officer shall either:
  - a) respond to the enquiry within five (5) working days by the mode<sup>2</sup> of the enquiry with a factual and relevant response; or

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<sup>1</sup> General enquiries could be related to job opportunities; forest types and areas; other certification schemes; certification and accreditation; timber sources, etc which are NOT related to the AFCS or its Australian Standards®

<sup>2</sup> If enquiry is received from the enquiry form on the Contact Us page of the AFS web site, the response will be provided by e-mail to the e-mail address supplied on the enquiry form.

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- b) acknowledge receipt of the enquiry, if it is deemed to be an issue for further evaluation by AFSL or for communication with the relevant Standard Reference committee<sup>3</sup>;
  - 3.2.5 At quarterly intervals, the Chief Executive Officer shall communicate with the appropriate Standard Reference Committee on any enquiries received which are deemed to require a clarification, interpretation or a Ruling process from the Standard Reference Committee (See Standard Setting Procedure);
  - 3.2.6 The provider of the enquiry that is before the Standard Reference committee shall be advised of the expected timeline for the provision of a suitable response from AFSL;
  - 3.2.7 Any enquiries received by the National Standards Office, Standards Australia or the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations within the scope of AFSL's SDO accreditation shall be provided to AFSL. AFSL shall acknowledge receipt of the enquiry and provide a copy of the response from AFSL to the enquiring person/organisation for the information of the National Standards Office, Standards Australia or the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations.

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<sup>3</sup> For AS 4708—2007, it is the AFS Standards Reference Committee, SRC-SFM  
For AS 4707—2006, it is the AFS Standards Reference Committee, SRC-CoC