

Responsible Wood

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE 08

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

V 1.0 /2017



Document Properties

File Name:	SD Proc 08–Complaints and Grievance
Web File Name:	CM PROC-08-Complaints_and_Grievance.pdf
File Location (Responsible Wood Management System\)	C:\Data\SDProcess\03-Released Masters Backups\03a Process Documentation\03a-ii Procedures\SD-Standard Development\CM PROC-08-Complaints and Grievance V1.0docx
Document Status:	Approved
Status Date:	October, 2017
File Format Master:	Word
File Format published:	PDF
Publication Authorisation:	Responsible Wood Board
Document replaced:	CM PROC-08-Complaints and Grievance _V6 Oct -15.doc
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File included on Responsible Wood Web Documents	Yes

Comments/Abstract

This procedure documents the steps to be taken when a complaint or grievance against the organisation, the standard, or the certification process is received including internal complaints.

Revision Control

Revision No.	Edited by	Date
1.1	Alan Snow Consulting – amendments adding the three streams	27/04/2010
2	Alan Snow Consulting – amendment and addition of annexes	6/5/2010
3	Kayt Watts – amendment and changes to content	11/05/2010
3.1	Alan Snow Consulting – amendment and refinement of flow diagrams	22/5/2010
4.9	Kayt Watts – amendment and refinement Stream workflow and instructions	10/03/2011
4.1	Alan Snow Consulting – Amendments to procedure	08/09/2011
4.2	Alan Snow Consulting – amend procedures and add flowcharts	21/09/2011
4.4	Alan Snow Consulting – include links to other files and filing areas	20/10/2011
5.0	Simon Dorries- amended standard response for Stream 3 and added flow chart of the certification process	17/7/2015
6.0	Added documentation relevant to New Zealand	22/10/15
1.0 (Renumbered)	Changed company name to Responsible Wood	November 2017

1 Purpose

Responsible Wood recognises that disagreements may arise in the management of the company, the standards, or the management and implementation of 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 to ensure that they are dealt effectively and within a timely fashion.

2 Scope

This procedure is used for all Complaints, Appeals, or Grievances within the Responsible Wood scheme and is applicable to activities in both Australia and New Zealand.

Complaints, Appeals or grievances arising from differences of opinion or disagreements can be received from any source

- Internal complaint or appeal
- External complaint or appeal

The three streams for complaints are:

1. Complaint, Appeal or grievance against the Responsible Wood Organisation. This can include operations in New Zealand covered by the New Zealand Forest Certification Association. (Stream 1)
2. Complaint, Appeal or grievance against the Responsible Wood Standard. (Stream 2)
3. Complaint, Appeal or grievance against the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme. (Stream 3)

3 Definitions

- Complaints may be either of a substantive (technical) or procedural nature.
- Appeals are procedural in nature, and are launched as a result of decisions which the appellant considers to be procedurally in error.
- Procedural appeals can include whether a technical issue was afforded due process.

4 Supporting Documents

- Responsible Wood Complaints Register.
- Records and correspondence related to complaints.

5 Resolving a Complaint, Appeal or Grievance

Responsible Wood is committed to effective and efficient complaints and grievance handling which contribute to continual improvement of the RWCS.

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 complainant and the complainant's contacts details;
4. Complainant's names will be published on the Grievance and Complaints Register unless they request anonymity;
5. Complaints will be acknowledged within the timeframes outlined in this procedure
6. Upon receipt of the complaint or grievance, it will be assessed and allocated to one of the Complaints and Grievance Streams for action.
7. Advice will be provided to the complainant should the complaint or grievance need to be referred to another entity;
8. Following the assessment, if it is a matter for Responsible Wood, the complaint will be investigated;
 - a. After the investigation any decision or action will be communicated within the timeframe as per this schedule;
 - b. If the proposed decision or action is not accepted, the complainant will be informed of any alternative forms of recourse available.
9. All complainants have the right of appeal should they not be satisfied with the investigation and findings relating to their complaint. The appeals handling process is identical to that for complaints except that investigations and decisions shall be handled by individuals or organisations not involved with the original investigation and decision making processes. The independent appeals committee shall review the original investigation and decision making processes. Note that complaints relating to certification activities are outside the responsibility of Responsible Wood and will be investigated by independent Certification Bodies and if necessary JAS-ANZ.
10. At times, complaints may be of a serious nature with legal or significant commercial implications. Such as issues may relate to fraud, illegal activity, false and misleading statements, improper conduct, malicious activities, misuse of Logos or Certificates or actions, statements or deeds with potential to bring the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme or the organisation into disrepute. Such issues being of a serious nature, in addition to the Complaints and Grievances procedures shall also be subject to policies and procedures set down in the "Responsible Wood Improper Conduct and Logo Misuse, Guidelines and Procedures for Investigations Manual".

6 Recording Complaints/ Appeals/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
Item # No/YY	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
Date of Register	Dd/mm/yy
Initiator Name and Contact Details	All details available
Issue Summary	Key points of the complaint or grievance
Response Date	dd/mm/yy
Allocation Stream	1, 2, or 3
Ongoing or Closed	Ongoing or Closed

7 Complaints Work Flow

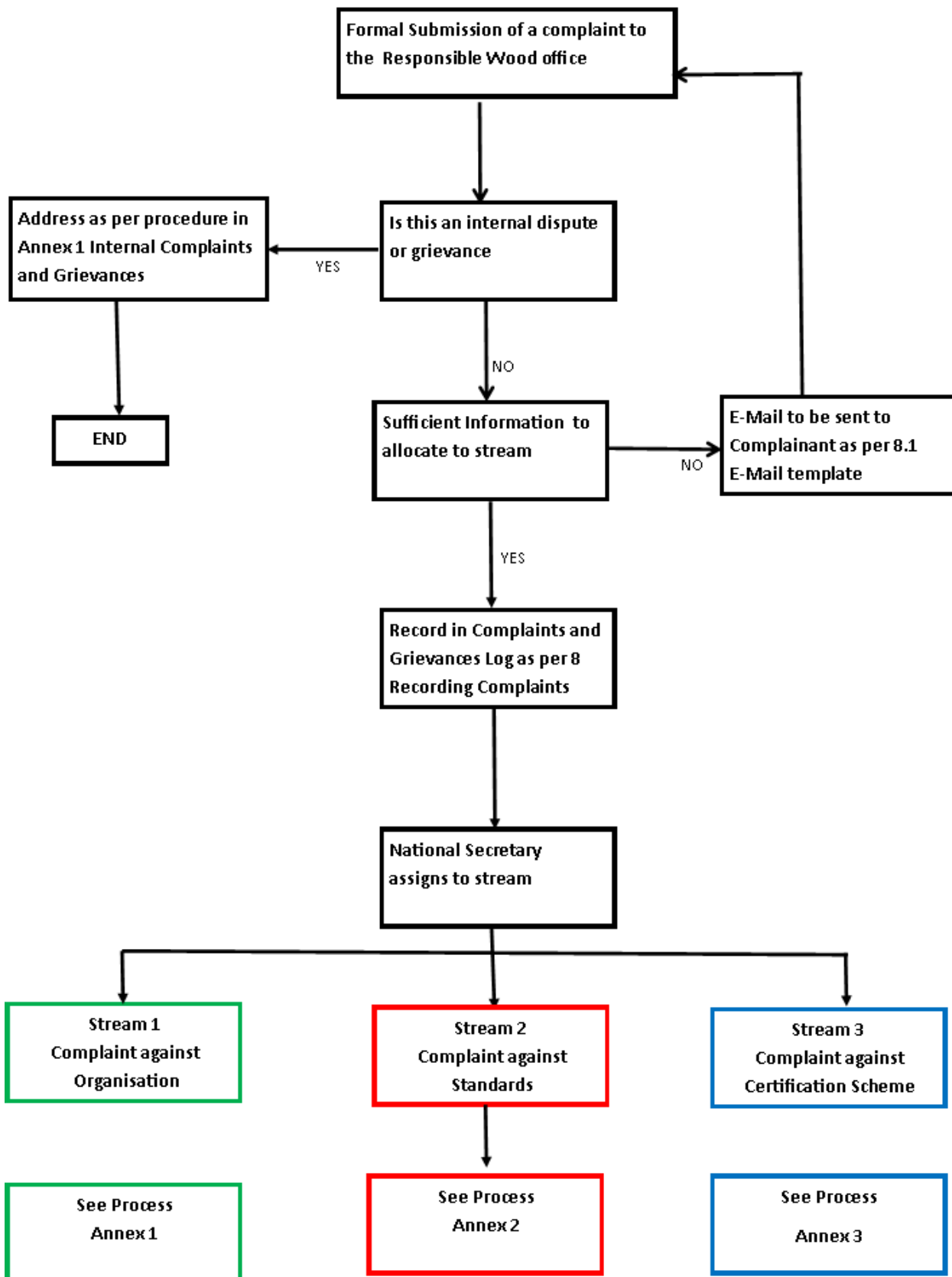


Figure One: Complaints Flow Chart

8 The Complaints Streams

Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3
<p>Complaint against the Responsible Wood Organisation</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Member • Staff Member • Responsible Wood Member 	<p>Complaint against the Standards</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stds Dev. Process • Stds Ref. Committees • Standards Technical content • SRB Chair • SRB Member 	<p>Complaint against the Certification Schemes</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification Bodies • Certified Organisations • Accreditation Body • Certifiers/Auditors • Certification process

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
<p>The Responsible Wood Office:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>info@responsiblewood.org.au</p> <p>or mail to:</p> <p>30 Boothby St, Kedron, QLD 4031</p> <p>Attention: Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood</p>	<p>In Australia The Australian Forestry Standard:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>standards-revision@forestrystandard.org.au</p> <p>or mail to:</p> <p>30 Boothby Street, Kedron, QLD 4031</p> <p>Attention: Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood</p> <p>In New Zealand via the NZFCA on the following email address:</p> <p>admin@nzfca.org.nz</p>	<p>In the first instance to:</p> <p>The certified organisation that the complaint is about and to their Certification Body. Refer to Responsible Wood Registers on www.responsiblewood.org.au</p> <p>If response is unsatisfactory then contact:</p> <p>The Manager Accreditation Services of JAS-ANZ mail to: admin@jas-anz.com.au</p> <p>Calls made to Responsible Wood will be directed to the certified organisation, its certification body or/and JAS-ANZ</p>
<p>Annex 1 - Resolving a complaint against Responsible Wood, NZFCA, the Directors and Management</p>	<p>Annex 2 - Resolving a Technical Complaint about a Standard, its' content and/or the Standards Development Process</p>	<p>Annex 3 – Resolving a Complaint against the Responsible Wood Certification.</p>

9 Standard e-Mail Templates

9.1 Initial Email Template

Purpose

To be used when an enquiry is received from a person or organisation who wishes to lodge a complaint where it is not possible to initially assign to a Complaints Stream.

Text of e-mail to be sent

Dear <name>

Thanks you for your correspondence of <insert date>.

Responsible Wood recognises that disagreements may arise from time to time in the management of the Australian Forestry Standards and the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme.

We are committed to effective and efficient complaints and grievance handling procedures which contribute to the continual improvement of Responsible Wood and the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme.

The purpose for this email is to ensure that your complaint or grievance is handled through the proper channels in an effective and efficient manner.

You should document your complaint or grievance as succinctly as possible and submit via the following channels.

1 - Complaint against the Responsible Wood Organisation

If you have a complaint against Responsible Wood (e.g. a Board Member, Staff Member or Responsible Wood Member), your first point of contact should be to the Responsible Wood Office

By email:

info@responsiblewood.org.au

or by mail to:

30 Boothby Street, Kedron, QLD 4031

Attention: Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood

2 - Complaint against the Responsible Wood Standards, the standard setting process, or an SRB.

If you have a complaint against the Australian Forestry Standards or associated processes (e.g. the Standards Development processes, technical content of the standards, the operations of the Standards Reference Body, the Chair or individual members of the Standards Reference Body) your first point of contact should be to the Responsible Wood Office

By email:

info@responsiblewood.org.au

or by mail to:

30 Boothby Street, Kedron, QLD 4031

Attention: Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood

3 - Complaint against certified organisations, certification bodies, etc

If you have a complaint against the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme (e.g. Certification Bodies, Certified Organisations, an Accreditation Body, Certifiers or Auditors, the Certification process), your first point of contact should be to the certified organisation that the complaint is about and to their Certification Body (See Responsible Wood Registers on www.responsiblewood.org.au)

If the response you receive is unsatisfactory then contact: The Manager Accreditation Services of JAS-ANZ (www.jas-anz.com.au/)

By email:

admin@jas-anz.com.au

or by mail to:

*The Manager
Accreditation Services of JAS-ANZ
GPO Box 170, Canberra, ACT 2601*

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood

9.2 Formal Response Template

Purpose

To be sent to complainant when the Complaints panel is not able to provide a formal response within 20 working days

Text of e-mail to be sent

Dear <name>

Thanks you for your correspondence of <insert date>.

Responsible Wood does treat all complaints and grievances seriously and immediately formed a complaints panel which is currently investigating the matter.

Our aim is to provide a formal response to all complaints and grievances received within 20 working days.

In this case, further time a further 7 working days is needed to complete the investigations and provide a response.

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood

10 Complaints and Grievance Milestones

Timeframe	Actions Taken	
	Initial receipt of a complaint or Grievance at Responsible Wood office	
Within 5 working days	Complaint or grievance recorded in the Complaints Register	
Within 5 working days of allocation and registration of complaint	Standard e-mail response sent to complainant as per Section 6 unless further information is required	
	Stream 1 - Complaint or grievance against the organisation	Stream 1 e-mail template
	Stream 2 - Complaint or grievance against the standard, the standard setting process, the SRB.	Stream 2 e-mail template
	Stream 3 - Complaint or grievance against certified organisations, certification bodies, etc	Stream 3 e-mail template
	Complaint where it is not possible to initially assign to a stream	Initial e-mail template
Within 20 working days after response to complainant	Formal response to complainant unless still unresolved (Except where complaint is managed externally)	
	Email to complainant informing of time extension	formal response template
Appeals	Within 60 working days of when the appeal was lodged.	

Annex 1 - Resolving a complaint against Responsible Wood, the Directors and Management

STREAM 1

Internal Complaints and Grievances

Internal Responsible Wood complaints or grievances can include but not be limited to:

- Complaints against management
- Conditions of Employment
- Work environment grievances etc
- Appeal against a decision taken by Responsible Wood

Complaints and grievances will normally be addressed through existing processes

- All Responsible Wood employees have access to a Complaints and Grievances handling process as part of their award conditions
- A disputes resolution procedures included in some employee contracts

Complaint against the organisation

1. In relation to management issues, the Chief Executive Officer 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 Chief Executive Officer or delegate and one or 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. In cases, where the Chief Executive Officer complains about the activities of a Board Member or the Chair, the role of the Chief Executive Officer on committees will be replaced by a delegate.
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 Responsible Wood for a decision on any recommendation from the Complaints Panel. A formal response will be forwarded to the complainant following the Board's decision.

Note: Where a complaint relates to activities in New Zealand, it may be appropriate to include representatives of New Zealand based organisations such as the New Zealand Forest Certification Association on the Complaints Panel.

Personal complaint or grievance against a staff member – the Chief Executive Officer

1. In relation to a complaint against the Chief Executive Officer, the Responsible Wood 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 Chief Executive Officer.
4. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of Responsible Wood for a decision on any recommendation from the Complaints Panel. A formal response will be forwarded to the complainant following the Board's decision.

Internal complaint against the organisation, management, staff etc.

1. Depending on the complainant and the nature of the complaint, a Complaints Panel will be formed as per the following table

Complainant	Complaint against	Complaints Panel
Staff member	Chief Executive Officer	Chairperson, or acting delegated Director, and two (2) other Directors of the company
Staff Member	Chair or Board member	Chief Executive Officer or delegate and two (2) other Directors of the company
Chief Executive Officer	Staff member	Chairperson, or acting delegated Director, and two (2) other Directors of the company
Chief Executive Officer	Chair or Board Member	
Chair or Board Member	Chief Executive Officer	Chairperson, or acting delegated Director, and two (2) other Directors of the company
Chair or Board Member	Staff member	Chief Executive Officer and two (2) other Directors of the company

2. 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.
3. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of Responsible Wood for a decision on any recommendation from the Complaints Panel. A formal response will be forwarded to the complainant following the Board's decision.

E-mail template

Purpose

To be used where a complaint or grievance is received against the organisation (Stream 1)

Text of e-mail to be sent

Dear <name>

Thank you for your correspondence of <insert date>.

Responsible Wood recognises that disagreements may arise from time to time in the management and operations of Responsible Wood Standards.

We are committed to effective and efficient complaints and grievance handling procedures which contribute to the continual improvement of Responsible Wood and the standards development processes.

A Complaints Panel has been formed to investigate this issue. Following these investigations, you will receive a formal response within 20 working days unless further investigations are required.

You may be invited to submit additional information by the Complaints Panel during this time.

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood

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

Note: This procedure is applicable only to Standards developed by the Accredited Standards Development Organisation (Australian Forestry Standard Ltd).. For Standards developed by other bodies such a Standards New Zealand i.e NZAS 4708, such complaints must be referred to Standards New Zealand or the New Zealand Forest Certification association.

STREAM 2

Complaint against the Standard setting procedures

Complaint against a decision taken during the development of the standard

1. In terms of the technical content of the AFS or CoC Standard, the Australian Forestry Standard Ltd will convene, on a temporary basis, a Complaints Committee which will be comprised of a member of the Responsible Wood Standards Reference Body (SRB) as appropriate, from each of the four main sectors represented on the AFS SRB. The Complaints Committee will be chaired by the relevant SRB 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 Responsible Wood (the Australian Forestry Standard Ltd) for comment on any recommendation from the Complaints Committee.
4. The Board will make a final decision on behalf of Responsible Wood (the Australian Forestry Standard Ltd) 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 Body at the next review of the standard.

Complaint against a Standards Reference Body, SRB Member, SRB operations or decisions, the SRB Chair.

Complaint against a decision taken by the SRB, a member, or the chair

1. In terms of the Standards Reference Body activities and actions, the Standards Development Organisation (AFSL) will convene, on a temporary basis, an independent Complaints Committee which will be comprised of a member of the Standards Development Organisation Board as appropriate, and will be chaired by the Standards Development Organisation 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 Standards Development Organisation for a comment on any recommendation from the Complaints Committee.
4. The Board will make a final decision on behalf of Standards Development Organisation 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 Body at the next meeting of the SRB.

E-mail Template

Purpose

To be used where a complaint or grievance is received against the standard, the standard setting process, or the Standards Reference Body (Stream 2)

Text of e-mail to be sent

Dear <name>

Thank you for your correspondence of <insert date>.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFSL) as an accredited Standards Development Organisation Wood recognises that disagreements may arise from time to time in the management of the Australian Forestry Standards and the standards development processes.

We are committed to effective and efficient complaints and grievance handling procedures which contribute to the continual improvement of our standards development processes.

A Complaints Panel has been formed to investigate this issue and make recommendations for actions to be taken.

Following these investigations, you will receive a formal response within 20 working days unless further investigations are required.

You may be invited to submit additional information by the Complaints Panel during this time.

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive Officer Australian Forestry Standard

Annex 3 – Resolving a Complaint against Responsible Wood 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 3rd party Process.

Responsible Wood 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 Responsible Wood Office regarding the certification process, certification bodies, and/or certified organisations.

A flow chart outlining the key processes and responsibilities relating to the Standards Writing, Accreditation and Certification Processes is outlined in Annex 4. This is a useful tool and may be provided to complainants to better explain the parties involved and the Certification Processes.

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

E-mail Template

Purpose

To be used where a complaint or grievance is received against certified organisations, certification bodies, etc. (Stream 3)

Text of e-mail to be sent

Dear <name>

Thank you for your correspondence of <insert date> and we thank-you for raising your concerns with us.

Responsible Wood takes all complaints and concerns seriously and we are committed to an effective and efficient complaints and grievance handling procedures to ensure the on-going continual improvement of Responsible Wood and the Australian Forestry Certification Scheme.

Responsible Wood recognises that disagreements may arise from time to time in the management of the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme.

From the information which you have provided, your concerns relate to the operation of the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme i.e. concern relating to Certification Bodies,

Certified Organisations, an Accreditation Body, Certifiers or Auditors, or the Certification process.

Note that as Responsible Wood is not the Accreditation Body, we have limited control or influence over the independent Accreditation and Certification Process however, we have passed your concern directly to the parties involved to ensure they are fully informed and aware of your concerns and can undertake the appropriate review. You should receive a response from them shortly.

As previously stated, Responsible Wood takes all concerns and complaints seriously, so please feel free to contact me directly if you need any further assistance.

Further, you are welcome at any time to lodge a complaint or concern directly with the Certified Organisation or Certification Body, their details are available on the Responsible Wood Website (See Responsible Wood Registers on www.responsiblewood.org.au).

Finally, if the response you receive is unsatisfactory you are encouraged to take this matter up the Accreditation Body (JAS-ANZ). Concerns can be raised via: The JAS-ANZ website (<http://www.jas-anz.com.au/complaints/>)

By email:

admin@jas-anz.com.au

or by mail to:

The Manager

Accreditation Services of JAS-ANZ

GPO Box 170, Canberra, ACT 2601

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive Officer Responsible Wood

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

Refer to the Responsible Wood Website, www.responsiblewood.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

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

JAS-ANZ is the Accreditation Body for Australian Certification Bodies

Annex 4 – Resolving Appeals

4.1 General

All complainants have the right of appeal should they not be satisfied with the investigation and findings relating to their complaint. The appeals handling process shall be handled by individuals or organisations not involved with the original investigation and decision making processes.

The independent appeals committee shall review the original investigation and decision making processes.

Note that complaints relating to certification activities are outside the responsibility of Responsible Wood and will be investigated by independent Certification Bodies and if necessary JAS-ANZ.

4.2 Appeals Against Activities from Stream 1 and 2

Where an appeal is lodged against processes and decisions made in accordance with Annex 1 and 2, an Appeals Committee will be established. The Appeals Committee shall represent as closely as possible the structure of the Complaints Committees detailed in Annex 1 and 2, except that representatives shall not have served on the original Complaints Committee. This at times may require expertise to be co-opted from outside Responsible Wood.

The Appeals Committee shall review the investigations and decision making processes related to the original complaint.

The appellant shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal.

4.3 Appeals Against Activities from Stream 3

Activities allocated under Stream 3 are outside the responsibility of Responsible Wood. Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint lodged with the relevant Certification Body or JAS-ANZ, Responsible Wood is unable to directly influence the outcome. However, Responsible Wood welcomes feedback and will endeavour to raise the concerns of the complainant directly with the relevant body.

Annex 5 – Flow Chart of the Certification Process, Organisations Involved and Responsibilities for Complaints.

