

## INDEPENDENT APPOINTMENT PANEL TOR

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### BACKGROUND

*Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) runs Australia's only independent, not-for-profit, multi-sector ecolabelling program and is the only Australian member of the Global Ecolabelling Network. As part of this program, GECA works with assurance providers who assess products and services against the GECA Standards in accordance with the scheme rules. The Independent Appointment Panel appoints and has the oversight over the assurance providers.*

This charter sets out the committee's objectives, authority, composition and tenure, roles and responsibilities, reporting and administrative arrangements.

### OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the committee is to appoint and oversee the assurance providers of GECA Ecolabel Scheme. The Independent Appointment Panel (IAP) has the delegated responsibility to follow the Assurance Provider Appointment Guidelines to ensure the assurance system of GECA is robust, transparent and credible.

This process involves the appointment, surveillance and reappointment of assurance providers and aims to engage all relevant stakeholders of GECA Certification.

### AUTHORITY

The Board authorises the IAP, within the scope of its role and responsibilities, to:

- Request any information it needs from any employee and/or external party subject to their legal obligation to protect information;
- discuss any matters with external parties subject to confidentiality considerations; and
- request the attendance of any employee, including directors, at committee meetings

### COMPOSITION AND TENURE

The IAP members are selected by GECA Management and approved and appointment by the GECA Board. GECA Management is responsible for the coordination of the IAP.

The IAP shall be made up of:

- One Industry Stakeholder (such as the Green Building Council of Australia or Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia,
- One Individual with auditing experience, excluding any auditors with a relationship to applicant or appointed assurance providers
- One Labelling Scheme Owner (such as FSC, MSC, PEFC or Fairtrade)
- One GECA Director.

The number of IAP members can vary from time to time but the intention is to have at least four members. Other members of the Committee must include persons with relevant

knowledge and expertise to contribute to the appointment, surveillance and reappointment of assurance providers in line with the ISEAL Code of Good Conduct, GENICES requirements and the GECA Scheme Rules.

The IAP Chair shall be elected by the IAP at the first meeting of the panel.

Members will be appointed for an initial period of one year, with the intention to rotate stakeholder engagement annually, where possible.

Observers, including members of management, may attend meetings as determined by the IAP Chair.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The IAP has no executive powers, unless delegated to it by the Board and is directly responsible and accountable to the Board for the exercise of its responsibilities. The responsibilities of the IAP may be revised or expanded in consultation with, or as requested by, the Board from time to time.

The IAP Chair or CEO is responsible for routine administration of the IAP, including reporting the business of the IAP to the GECA Board and supervising progress and performance of the committee. The IAP Chair will be supported by the attending GECA Director to perform these responsibilities.

The IAP's responsibilities are to consider such matters as are directed to it for consideration by the Board, including, but not limited to:

1. Review and Assess applications made to the IAP by assurance providers
2. Ensure that GECA procedures and surveillance of the assurance providers maintain a high international standing through continual alignment with ISEAL Code of Good Conduct and GENICES requirements.
3. Communicating all findings of the assessment and appointment process to GECA Management and the Board in a timely manner.
4. Reporting all major non-conformances raised against assurance providers to GECA immediately, as far as practicable, and investigating any non-conformances brought to the attention of the IAP by GECA.
5. Meet a minimum of twice annually for the appointment and reappointment cycle of assurance providers, acknowledging that some out of session decisions may be required throughout the year.
6. Recommend to the Board the appointment, reappointment or rejection of assurance providers at the completion of the assessment process.
7. Provide insights to latest industry and other developments that impact on the GECA assurance system.
8. Provide advice on improvements and changes GECA could make to increase the effectiveness of its assurance system

9. Provide an Annual Report to the GECA Board
10. Ensure protection of intellectual property associated with GECA

## **REPORTING**

The IAP shall report to the Board following each meeting and, where they are not aligned, each assessment process.

The IAP may, at any time, report to the Board any other matter it deems of sufficient importance to do so. In addition, at any time an individual IAP member may request a meeting with the Chair of the GECA Board.

The Board is responsible for the final approval of Assurance Providers, after receiving a report from the IAP. However, if the Board rejects a recommendation for appointment, a rationale must be submitted to the IAP. The Board shall not overrule a recommendation from the IAP where the recommendation is not to appoint the assurance provider.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

### **MEETINGS**

The committee will meet at least two times per year.

The IAP Chair is required to call a meeting if asked to do so by the Board.

A forward meeting plan, including meeting dates and agenda items, will be agreed by the IAP each year. The forward meeting plan will cover all of the IAPs responsibilities under these terms of reference and the appointment guidelines.

### **ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS AND QUORUMS**

A quorum will consist of three committee members which must include the GECA Director or a representative of GECA Management acting as proxy to the Director. Meetings can be held in person, by telephone or by video conference.

### **SECRETARIAT**

GECA's management will provide secretariat support to the committee. The Secretariat will ensure the agenda for each meeting and supporting papers are circulated, after approval from the IAP Chair, at least one week before the meeting, and ensure the minutes of the meetings are prepared and maintained. Minutes must be approved by the IAP Chair and circulated within two weeks of the meeting to each member.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

IAP members must declare any conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting or before discussion of the relevant agenda item or topic. Details of any conflicts of interest should be appropriately minuted.

Where members or observers at IAP meetings are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest it may be appropriate that they are excused from committee deliberations on the issue where a conflict of interest exists.

**INDUCTION**

New members will receive relevant information, training and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their committee responsibilities.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

All members who are not GECA Board members must sign a confidentiality agreement. GECA Directors are required to comply with the GECA Board confidentiality provisions.

**ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chair of the IAP, in consultation with the Chair of the Board, will initiate a review of the performance of the IAP as part of the annual Board performance review.

**REVIEW OF CHARTER**

At least once every 2 years the IAP will review this charter. This review will include consultation with the Board. Any substantive changes to the charter will be recommended by the IAP and formally approved by the Board.

I \_\_\_\_\_, *(IAP member name)*

Have read and accept the terms set out in the Standards Committee Charter.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_