

## **The Australian Ecolabel Program** **Good Environmental Choice Australia Standard**

# **Furniture and Fittings (Level B)**

(2006 Standard modified 2010)



## Use of GECA Standards

This standard identifies environmental, quality, regulatory and social criteria that the top products sold in the Australian marketplace can meet in order to be recognised by GECA as “environmentally preferable”.

This standard seeks to set the benchmark for environmentally preferable products. The Australian Ecolabel Program is based on the international standard ISO 14024: "Environmental Labels and Declarations - Guiding Principles" which requires environmental labelling specifications to include criteria that are objective, reasonable and verifiable.

This standard may be used by GECA-approved environmental auditors to verify whether a product fully conforms to the criteria set by this standard. Where a product is certified for the Australian Ecolabel Program, it may display the GECA Ecolabel (the “Environmental Choice Australia Mark”) to show that the product has been independently audited and demonstrates conformance with the environmental and social criteria detailed in this standard.

The purpose of voluntary environmental labels and declarations is the communication of verifiable and accurate information for the numerous environmental aspects of goods and services. As required by the Trade Practices Act the information cannot be misleading. Such information encourages the demand for, and supply of, those products that cause less harm to the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement. Where a company has a product certified as conforming to this standard, it may gain a marketing advantage in government and business procurement programs, as well as greater market recognition in general because of its independently verified environmental attributes.

The principles of Life-Cycle Analysis have been used to set these criteria to address relevant environmental loads typical in a product category. As such, this standard may also offer guidance for Australian producers to reduce the environmentally harmful impacts of their product(s). Producers may use the environmental criteria in this standard to design and refine the processing, manufacturing and delivery of their product(s). In addition producers may find other environmental issues and more measures along the product’s life cycle, which are beyond the content of this standard. Producers are encouraged to include and adapt improvements in their environment programs and designs to aim for even better environmental results where technically possible. GECA welcomes feedback where this has been achieved.

While all GECA standards are voluntary, they contain criteria that address compliance with specific laws. In addition, a GECA standard may recognise specific Australian Standards. A prerequisite for certification under the GECA Ecolabel is to satisfy the relevant Australian or International Standard, where it is required by law. However Australian Standards typically define “fit-for-purpose” criteria and usually do not provide assurance of environmental preferability. GECA standards go beyond Australian Standards and define an environmental benchmark for the product category.

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**GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICE AUSTRALIA STANDARD**


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## Furniture and Fittings

### Document History

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2.0	December 2006	Revision
2.1	December 2010	Modified
2.1i	5 August 2014	Update: Standard No updated; Addition of 'Level B' on front cover.
2.1ii	06 July 2017	Update: Alignment with GHS in relevant criteria; "Definitions and Acronyms"; Inclusion of notes in 'How to apply for GECA Certification' and 'Social and Legal Compliance' sections.

### Abstract

This Standard specifies environmental performance requirements of indoor furniture and fittings products for the Australian Ecolabel Program. This standard *does not* include recreational outdoor furniture. The Australian Ecolabel Program complies with ISO 14024: "Environmental labels and declarations - Guiding principles" which requires environmental labelling specifications to include criteria that are objective, reasonable and verifiable.

### Definitions

**Alloy:** A combination of two or more elements, one of which is a metal. This includes binary, tertiary and quaternary alloys (two, three and four elements, respectively). The result is a metallic substance with properties different from those of its components.

**Edge Glued Panels:** Glued processed timbers, such as small lumbered wood or wood layers, that are formed and pressed into sheet form in the direction of fibre, paralleled each other and bonded with resin. These panels are often known as veneer panels.

**Fibre Boards:** Boards composed of plant fibres, such as timbers or chaffs. According to the density, they are categorized 'into insulation boards (IB)', 'medium density fibre boards (MDF)' and 'hard boards (HB)'.

**GHS:** Global Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals

**Label** means the Environmental Choice Australia Label.

**Organic Tin Catalysts:** Organic Tin Catalysts are a prime essential ingredient in the production of flexible polyurethane foam in Australia. The Tin catalyst gives the polyurethane foam its flexible characteristics including shape memory, density. The main Organic Tin Catalysts that are used in the

production of polyurethane are;

- Dibutyl Tin Dilaurate – DBTDL  $(C_4H_9)_2Sn(OOC(CH_2)_{10}CH_3)_2/C_{32}H_{64}O_4Sn$
- Stannous Octoate - Tin 2-Ethylhexanoate  $[CH_3(CH_2)_3CH(C_2H_5)COO]_2Sn$

The impact of both of these catalysts occurs in a residual form during the production stage, i.e. it is left as a residue in machines used in the production of PU flexible foam.

**Particle Boards:** Boards made from wood fragments (chips or shavings) which are formed and pressed into sheet form and bonded together with resin.

**Recycled Content** includes:

**Post-Consumer:** Material generated by households, or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product, which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of material from the distribution chain.

**Pre-Consumer:** Material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process. Excluded is reutilisation of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

**SDS:** Safety Data Sheet formally Material Safety Data Sheet – MSDS). Contains information relating to the composition, classification and risk assessment of the product. To qualify as suitable, the SDS and information therein must not be more than 5-years old.

**STEL (Exposure Standard - Short Term Exposure Limit):** A 15 minute TWA exposure which should not be exceeded at any time during a working day even if the eight-hour TWA average is within the TWA exposure standard. Exposures at the STEL should not be longer than 15 minutes and should not be repeated more than four times per day. There should be at least 60 minutes between successive exposures at the STEL according to the GHS.

**Timber / Wood:** Includes wood sourced from raw (virgin) forest timbers, timbers sourced from sustainable forestry, or waste wood materials including particle boards, fibre boards and edge-glued panels. Also includes used timber/wood.

**TWA (Exposure Standard - Time-Weighted Average):** The average airborne concentration of a particular substance when calculated over a normal eight-hour working day, for a five-day working week according to the GHS.

**Used Timber / Wood:** Also known as salvaged or reclaimed timber/wood. Includes materials sourced from old (pre-loved) furniture, demolitions, and other relevant sources.

**Veneer Panels:** See *Edge-Glued Panels*.

**Waste Wood:** Residual products generated by thinning out timbers, cutting out branches and processing timber and to withdrawn timbers after use, excluding withered or dead trees.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose

This Standard seeks to define good environmental performance benchmarks for indoor furniture and fitting products. The voluntary environmental labelling standard implemented by Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) as part of the Australian ecolabel program specifies environmental performance criteria for furniture designed for indoor use including tables, chairs, workstations, storage units and office partitions. This standard stipulates the environmental load of such products throughout the major aspects of their life cycle.

## 1.2 Background

This Standard seeks to define good environmental performance benchmarks for home and office furniture and fittings. The voluntary environmental labelling standard implemented by the Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) specifies environmental performance criteria for home and office furniture including chairs, sofas, couches, recliners, stools, computer chairs, tables, coffee tables, computer desks, desks, office desks and variations thereof including fittings. Home/office furniture and fitting products form a significant proportion of items manufactured for use within residential, commercial and government environments and form a major manufacturing sector in Australia. This standard stipulates the environmental load of home/office furniture and fitting products throughout their entire life cycle.

Home/office furniture and fitting products pose a significant environmental burden during their manufacture, use and disposal. These environmental impacts include but are not limited to the raw materials used for their manufacture, coatings (paints, lacquers, and varnishes), textiles, adhesives, joinery, hazardous treatments, energy and water use during production and their disposal, among others. Developments in timber, alloy and metal (steel, aluminium) and plastic recycling have encouraged innovation in furniture and fitting design and manufacture, encouraging the production of products that both readily incorporate recycled materials, and those with constituents that can be recycled into new products at end of life. These products often equal and surpass traditional products in all aspects of strength, durability and consumer expectation.

The primary purpose of this standard is to define environmental performance criteria for a broad range of home/office furniture and fitting products. Home/office furniture and fitting products made from recycled materials or those sourced from sustainable resources are environmentally preferable because they reduce the demand for virgin timber, raw steel/aluminium/alloy materials and virgin plastics and when recycled, reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The standard refers to the manufacture of the products and their constituent materials, the period of actual use and disposal, and packaging materials used for their transport.

This standard also specifies requirements for the finishing restrictions of certain treatment or coatings that would restrict further recycling and the provision of plastic type information to allow for further post-consumer recycling.

**Note:** GECA reserves the right to refuse, suspend or postpone an application if (a) the organisation does not meet minimum compliance with Environmental Law, Labour Law, Fair Pay, Work, Health and Safety, Lawful behaviour (e.g. pending or ongoing lawsuits) (b) the organisation does not have transparent reporting that is available/accessible on request (c) the core mission of the organisation and/or product is in conflict with GECA's mission and/or is perceived by GECA to pose a risk to the GECA brand or reputation.

## 2 STANDARD CATEGORY SCOPE

This standard is applicable to the following categories of home and office furniture products:

### 2.1 Office Chairs

Final ready-to-use commercial indoor contract chairs and seats including computer chairs, stools, school chairs, footrests and variations thereof;

### 2.2 Office Desks & Tables

Final ready-to-use commercial indoor desks and tables including computer desks, boardroom tables, office coffee tables, free-standing cabinets and shelving units, coat-racks, and variations thereof;

### 2.3 Domestic Chairs

Final ready-to-use recreational indoor chairs and seats including computer chairs, collapsible / foldable chairs, stools, recliners, couches, sofas, footrests and variations thereof. This excludes mattresses;

### 2.4 Domestic Desks & Tables

Final ready-to-use indoor recreational desks and tables including kitchen tables, coffee tables, computer desks, dining tables, bedside tables, free-standing wardrobes, lamp-tables, free-standing cabinets and shelving units, and variations thereof;

### 2.5 Bedroom Furniture

Final ready-to-use indoor bedroom furniture including bed-frames, free-standing wardrobes, bedside-tables and variations thereof, excluding bedding and mattresses.

### 2.6 White Furniture

Furniture that is complete in all respects, with only the upholstering fabric and subsequent fabric treatments still to be specified and applied.

### 2.7 Fittings

Partitions, window fittings, shelving, and wall furniture.

### 2.8 Ceilings

Ceiling linings and ceiling panel products.

NOTE – This standard excludes recreational outdoor furniture.

Other environmentally innovative furniture and fittings products that do not fit the above categories may be considered for certification provided the product fulfils the requirements of any relevant sections of this Standard. Other categories may be added at a later date.

### **3 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

#### **3.1 Fitness for Purpose**

Certified products should be good performers in their intended application. Certain standards of quality and durability are implicit in the Label. The manufacturer must ensure that the product is fit for its intended purpose and:

##### **3.1.1 Applicable Standards**

The product meets or exceeds the requirements of the relevant Australian Standard, or the product meets the applicable and accepted standard in its target market if it is to be exported.

Relevant Australian Furniture Standards include, but are not limited to:

- AS 4442:1997 Office Desks
- AS 4443:1997 Office panel systems – workstations
- AS 4438:1997 Height adjustable swivel chairs
- AS 4688:2000 Fixed height chairs
- AS 5079:2003 Filing cabinets

Or,

##### **3.1.2 Demonstrated Performance**

If there is no relevant Australian Standard, the product can demonstrate sufficient quality by providing testing reports from an independent organisation or case studies from installations demonstrating market suitability and quality, and

##### **3.1.3 Warranty**

The manufacturer shall offer a commercial guarantee of five years on the quality of the product provided the product is used according to its intended use. The guarantee shall be valid from the date of delivery to the consumer.

### **3.2 Material Requirements**

#### **3.2.1 Timber and Other Natural Materials**

##### **3.2.1.1 Controversial Sources**

Fibre may be sourced from any combination of FSC or AFS certified fibre, plantation wood fibre, cellulose fibre, return fibre, cotton fibre, crop residue or other waste fibre. Any sources that are not certified under a recognised certification scheme (e.g., FSC) as being sustainably managed shall not originate from:

a. *Illegal harvesting*

Illegally harvested wood and natural materials are those that are harvested, traded or transported in a way that is in breach with applicable national regulations (such regulations can for example address CITES species, money laundering, corruption and bribery, and other relevant national regulations).

- b. *Genetically modified organisms*  
Wood and natural materials from genetically modified organisms are those which have been induced by various means to include genetic structural changes (for a definition of genetically modified, please refer to the European Union Directive 2001/18/EC on the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms in the environment). Traditional breeding programs do not constitute genetic modification.
- c. *Recently established plantations impacting primary ecosystems*  
The plantation or agricultural land use must have been established prior to 2000 and not have impacted primary ecosystems at the time of establishment. Establishment includes the logging or destruction of primary forest followed by the establishment of the plantation.
- d. *Uncertified high conservation value communities*  
High Conservation Value communities are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:
- Communities containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia); and/or large landscape level communities, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.
  - Communities that are in [constitute] or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.
  - Communities fundamental to meeting basic needs of locally indigenous human populations (e.g. subsistence, health) and/or critical to these people's traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

For materials sourced from within Australia, please refer to the following:

The EPBC Act List of Threatened Fauna at  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=fauna> The EPBC Act List of Threatened Flora at  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=flora> The EPBC Act List of Threatened Ecological Communities  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publiclookupcommunities.pl>  
The Australian Heritage Database (for listings of areas of cultural significance) at  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl>

For materials sourced from outside Australia, please refer to credible lists detailing threatened species, threatened communities and areas of cultural significance in the respective countries.

### 3.2.1.2 Salvaged & Reclaimed Timbers

Salvaged or reclaimed timbers may be used in certified furniture. Salvaged and reclaimed timbers include timbers legally sourced as pre-cut waste timber or deadwood from cityscape, urban and rural gardens, demolition sites, and waste wood from certified tree loppers / doctors.

Salvaged and reclaimed timbers must be certified by the Good Environmental Choice Label or satisfy the requirements of the GECA Standard No. 32 – Recycled and Reclaimed Timber.

### 3.2.1.3 Treatment

Wood and natural materials used in furniture products must not be treated or impregnated with fungicides and insecticides that are classified due to their hazardous nature by the IARC as Type 1 or 2A. Refer to:

<http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Classification/index.php>

### 3.2.1.4 Glues in Plywood and Laminated Wood

The content of free formaldehyde in glues for plywood or other engineered wood products must not exceed 1.0 % w/w.

### 3.2.1.5 Air Emissions

Products made from wood and other natural products that contain formaldehyde-based additives, shall be subject to the following air emission limits for formaldehyde and volatile organic compound emissions as measured using the acceptable test methods described below. Raw timber and natural materials is exempt from this criterion.

Particleboard, MDF, plywood or timber veneer must conform to formaldehyde testing outlined in Australian Standard - AS 1859. This requires particleboard and MDF panels to be tested using the Desiccator method which follows Australian Standard – AS/NZS 4266.16 (2004) “Method 16: Formaldehyde emission-Desiccator method”. These panels shall demonstrate a level below 1.0 mg/L. Veneer and plywood must be tested following Australian Standard – AS/NZS 2098.11 (2005) “Method 11: Methods of test for veneer and plywood”. These panels shall demonstrate a level below 1.0 ppm (mg/L).

Other internationally accepted test methods may be accepted as outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Limit values for formaldehyde emissions from wood components.

Test Protocol	Emission limit
AS/NZS 2269:2004, testing procedure AS/NZS 2098.11:2005 method 10 for Plywood	≤1mg/ L
AS/NZS 1859.1:2004 - Particle Board, with use of testing procedure AS/NZS 4266.16:2004 method 16	≤1.0 mg/L
AS/NZS 1859.2:2004 - MDF, with use of testing procedure AS/NZS 4266.16:2004 method 16	≤1mg/ L
JIS A 5908:2003- Particle Board and Plywood, with use of testing procedure JIS A 1460 (This test protocol is known as F**** [F4Star])	≤1mg/ L
JIS A 5905:2003 - MDF, with use of testing Procedure JIS A 1460	≤1mg/ L
JIS A1901 (not applicable to Plywood)	≤1mg/ L
ASTM D5116	≤0.1 (+/- 0.0005) mg/m <sup>2</sup> h
ISO 16000 part 9, 10 and 11 (also known as EN 13419)	≤0.1 (+/- 0.0005) mg/m <sup>2</sup> h at 3 days
ASTM D6007	≤0.12mg/m <sup>3</sup> **
ASTM E1333	≤0.12mg/m <sup>3</sup> ***
EN 717-1 (also known as DIN EN 717-1)	≤0.12mg/m <sup>3</sup>
EN 717-2 (also known as DIN EN 717-2)	≤3.5mg/m <sup>2</sup> h
* mg/m <sup>2</sup> /hr may also be represented as mg/m <sup>2</sup> /hr	
** The test report must confirm that the conditions of Table 1 comply for the particular wood product type, the final results must be presented in EN 717-1 equivalent (as presented in the table) using the correlation ratio of 0.98.	
*** The final results must be presented in EN 717-1 equivalent (as presented in the table), using the correlation ratio of 0.98.	

Compliance to this criterion can be demonstrated in one of two ways: either by testing the overall emissions of the whole product using the Air Chamber, Desiccator or Perforator test methods, or by testing the emissions of each component material and calculating the total emissions of the whole product based on the quantity of individual components in the respective product. If the latter option is selected, testing should be conducted based on methods outlined in ASTM-D51-16: Small Scale Environment Chamber determination of organic emissions from indoor materials/products is recommended.

## 3.2.2 Plastics

### 3.2.2.1 Resin Identification Codes

Certified products must mark each individual plastic product or component weighing greater than 100g with an appropriate resin identification code promulgated by the Plastics and Chemical Industry Association.

<http://www.pacia.org.au>

Exemptions may be made for products where the nature of the manufacturing process or the size and shape of the product restrict the application of the plastics resin identification code on the product. Exempt products will ensure that appropriate information describing disposal methods for the product, including the relevant resin identification code, are provided at the time of sale of the product to encourage further recycling.

### **3.2.2.2 Padding Material**

Latex containing 1.3 butadiene shall be at levels  $\leq 1$  mg/kg latex.

The total amount of discharges ( measured as COD or TOC) from the production of foam rubber shall be treated and decreased by 90% in on-site or external sewage treatment works prior to emissions into waterways.

### **3.2.2.3 Polyurethane Padding Requirements**

CFC, HCFC, HFC or Methylene Chloride shall not be used.

Aniline based amines, and pigments and catalysis based on mercury, lead, cadmium, and chromium must not be added to the padding material.

Where Organic Tin Catalysts are used in the production of flexible polyurethane, the manufacturer must have in place a contract with a licensed or registered hazardous waste disposal company who is responsible for the correct disposal of the hazardous waste.

### **3.2.3 Fabrics**

Fabric must be certified by the Good Environmental Choice Label, the Environmental Choice New Zealand ecolabel, the EU Flower ecolabel or the Nordic Swan ecolabel or satisfy the requirements of GECA Standard No. 19: Textiles.

This criterion does not apply to white furniture as fabrics are added after certification.

### **3.2.4 Glass**

Lead glazing, crystal glass, mirror glass, wire reinforced glass or laminated glass must not be used in furniture or fittings. Colouring agents or other additives containing lead, cadmium, mercury, chromium, arsenic or selenium must not be used.

### **3.2.5 Adhesives**

With the exception of Section 3.2.1.4, adhesives must be certified by the Environmental Choice Australia Ecolabel, or the Nordic Swan ecolabel or satisfy the requirements of GECA Standard No. 1: Adhesives.

## **3.3 Hazardous Materials**

The requirements in this section apply to all materials in the product regardless of weight.

### **3.3.1 Overall Loads**

In order to promote the reduction of pollutant hazards in the disposal, landfill and/or incineration of end of life furniture, the following substances shall not be added to eco-labelled products during manufacture:

Arsenic  
 Antimony  
 Cadmium  
 Copper  
 Lead  
 Mercury  
 Fluorine  
 Elemental Chlorine  
 Pentachlorophenol (PCP)  
 Tar oils (benzo (a) pyrene)

### 3.3.2 Prohibited Substances

Furniture or fittings shall not contain carcinogenic substances in categories 1 or 2A as classed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer – <http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Classification>; EU Consolidated list of C/M/R Substances Category 1 and 2; and R phases 45-49. User exposure to substances recognised as carcinogenic shall be less than the No Observable Adverse Effect Level or zero if the NOAEL is unknown.

The following compounds, their functional derivatives or in-situ precursors shall not be added to products, their component parts or be used at any stage of the manufacturing process, including as preparatory agents, cleaners or degreasers in the production facility:

Halogenated organic substances or solvents (e.g., binding agents).  
 Aniline based amines.  
 The phthalates DEHP, DBP, DAP or BBP.  
 Aziridine or polyaziridines.  
 Pigments and additives that contain lead, tin, arsenic, cadmium, mercury or their compounds.  
 Polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or short-chain chlorinated organic flame retardants.

The coating of metal gas lifts may be exempt from this criterion. In exceptional cases, surfaces may be treated with chromium or nickel where this is necessary on the grounds of heavy physical wear or in the case of parts that require particularly tight connections. This exemption does not include parts that are intended to come into frequent contact with skin.

## 3.4 Post Consumption Recycling and Labelling

### 3.4.1 Separability

Certified products shall be easily disassembled to facilitate the recovery and recycling of constituent materials.

The following materials shall be easily separated without the need for special tools or expertise:

- Aluminium, if it composes  $\geq 5\%$  by weight of the product,
- Steel, if it composes  $\geq 10\%$  by weight of the product,
- Glass, if it composes  $\geq 10\%$  by weight of the product,
- Plastic, if it composes  $\geq 20\%$  by weight of the product; and
- All other materials, regardless of weight.

### 3.4.2 Product Custodianship

If the product is not recyclable (or separable into recyclable parts) in mainstream local recycling systems, the manufacturer shall accept their product without additional cost (excluding transportation costs) for further

recycling, or have arrangements with a local recycler to accept the product, or have an established product stewardship program. Products collected under the scheme shall not be disposed of in landfill or by incineration. As a minimum, details relating to the above product stewardship programme requirements and contact details for the programme operator(s) must be publically available from the official company website.

### **3.4.3 Coatings/Treatments**

Furniture and fittings products (or components) must not be impregnated, labelled, coated or otherwise treated in a manner which would prevent post-consumer recycling. Exemption may be made for products with a long product life where a coating or treatment would further extend the useful life of the product.

### **3.4.4 Replacement Parts**

For those parts of a product which are subject to wear (e.g., hinges, locks, table leaves), functionally compatible replacements shall be guaranteed for a period of at least five years. The manufacturer must make individual replacement parts available to consumers.

### **3.4.5 Recycled furniture**

Recycled furniture can be licensed in conformation to this standard providing that the furniture has not been refinished or coated with any materials except for the purpose of cleaning.

### **3.4.6 Recycled Content Requirements**

Ceiling tiles must contain a minimum of 50% by weight recycled content.

### **3.4.7 Packaging Requirements**

Chlorinated or halogenated plastics must not be used in product packaging.

Used packaging shall be able to be recycled by local recycling systems.

### **3.4.8 Product Information**

The manufacturer must provide written information to the consumer clearly stating:

- The intended use of the product.
- Instructions for correct use and storage so as to maximise the product lifetime.
- Maintenance instructions, if required. Maintenance instructions must not specify the use of any chemical or coating limited by any part of this standard.
- Recycling instructions for the product end-of-life.

### **3.4.9 Environmental Claims**

Public claims made by the applicant regarding the products environmental performance that are beyond the scope of this standard (other than GECA certified content) shall be compliant with ISO 14021: Environmental Labels and Declarations - Self Declared Environmental Claims' (Type II Environmental Labelling) requirements. Also refer to the GECA Rules for the Use of the Environmental Choice Australia Mark.

## 4 COMPLIANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS

The applicant is required to comply with relevant environmental legislation and government orders at the Local, State, and Commonwealth levels, if these have been issued. An applicant's compliance with these criteria may be established by undertaking a series of random checks; and/or by gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents from approved assessors as evidence to support compliance during the verification. Where an applicant is from an overseas jurisdiction, that jurisdiction's environmental regulations apply. Where the applicant is subject to a guilty verdict by a legally constituted court in the last 24 months on the basis of a breach of any environmental legislation or permits, there must be evidence of corrective action.

## 5 COMPLIANCE TO LABOUR, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

An applicant shall demonstrate that all employees are covered by a Federal or State award or a certified industrial agreement or a registered workplace agreement as determined by the Industrial Relations Commission, the Employment Advocate or a State or Territory Workplace Relations Agency or a workplace agreement in compliance with Workplace Relations Act 1996 Part 7 – The Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard.

An applicant shall demonstrate general compliance to the terms of State or Territory Legislation concerning Occupational, Health and Safety and/or the *Commonwealth Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, where applicable. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency, or a guilty verdict by an Australian Court within the last 24 months, on the basis of a breach of State, Territory or Commonwealth Occupational, Health and Safety Legislation, there must be evidence of corrective action.

The applicant shall demonstrate general compliance to the requirements of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999, and complementary State Legislation. Applicants cannot be in the list of 'named' or non-compliant employers under the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency, or a guilty verdict by an Australian Court in the last 24 months on the basis of a breach of these Acts, there must be evidence of corrective action.

Where an applicant is from an overseas jurisdiction, the applicant shall demonstrate general compliance to that jurisdiction's anti-discrimination, occupational health and safety, and workers' compensations regulations. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency, or a guilty verdict by a legal court in their respective country within the last 24 months on the basis of a the breach of anti-discrimination, occupational health and safety, and workers' compensation regulations, there must be evidence of corrective action.

An applicant's compliance with these criteria may be established by undertaking a series of random checks; gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents from approved assessors; and/or by providing a self-declaration document signed by an executive officer of the applicant organisation as evidence to support compliance during verification.

**Note:** *In cases where there is a conflict between GECA requirements in this section and relevant legislation or regulations introduced by governments and agencies, national legislation overrides state legislation and state legislation overrides regulations and standards issued by GECA.*

## **6 COMPLIANCE TESTING**

### **6.1 Audit Methodology**

Conformance with this standard shall be demonstrated by undertaking an assessment under the above criteria by an approved assessor, following the certification and verification procedures detailed in the Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd Documented Quality Management System, which generally follows the environmental auditing requirements of ISO 14 011 and 14 012.

### **6.2 Assessor Competency**

The Australian Ecolabel Program classifies approved assessors as:

- a. Assessors registered by Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd as environmental professionals that hold expertise relevant for an assessment, and who have undertaken training in the procedures of the Australian Ecolabel Program; or
- b. Environmental auditors accredited with the RABQSA.

### **6.3 Suitable Sources**

Audit evidence should be of such a quality and quantity that competent environmental auditors, working independently of each other, will reach similar audit findings from evaluation of the same audit evidence against the same audit criteria.

Suitable sources of information to establish compliance may be, but are not limited to:

- a. Technical specification of the product.
- b. Obvious characteristics of the product under examination.
- c. Scientific test results and reports.
- d. Environmental management system and audit reports and results.
- e. Life-cycle assessment of each stage of the product life-cycle via a physical audit and examination.
- f. Life-cycle assessment via scientific testing.
- g. A statement of confirmation by an executive officer.
- h. An assessment of company or government records.
- i. Other material that can be considered objective evidence.

### **6.4 Laboratory Testing**

New testing shall be undertaken by a laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), or similar overseas accreditation agents who can conduct the relevant tests and/or provide documentation detailing environmental performance against the criteria of this standard. The test results should be presented on NATA-endorsed reports or from a laboratory acceptable to Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd.

If test results or environmental auditing results are not available, and/or there is insufficient data to establish full compliance with the criteria required by this standard, then certification cannot be awarded.