

## **The Australian Ecolabel Program**

### **Good Environmental Choice Australia Standard**

## **Panel Boards**



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## Use of This Standard

This voluntary environmental labelling standard may be used by competent environmental assessors to establish product compliance to the Australian Ecolabel Program. Products that are certified with the mark of conformity, the “Good Environmental Choice Label” have been independently tested and demonstrate compliance to the environmental and social performance criteria detailed in this standard. The overall goal of environmental labels and declarations is the communication of verifiable and accurate information, which is not misleading, on environmental aspects of products and services. This encourages the demand for, and supply of, those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement.

This standard identifies environmental, quality, regulatory and social performance criteria that products sold on the Australian market can meet in order to be considered as good “environment practice”. Products that have been certified as complying to this standard may gain greater market recognition and a marketing advantage in government and business procurement programs, as well as broad consumer preference.

This standard can be used by Australian producers to guide their designs for environment programs by using the environmental criteria as key performance benchmarks to reduce the environmental loads of their product. The standard is necessarily restricted in its identification of environmental loads from the product life-cycle. Producers should consider other environmental measures along the product cycle, which are not included in this standard, in their environment program designs for and aim for even higher levels of environmental performance where technically possible.

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## GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICE AUSTRALIA STANDARD

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### Panel Boards

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#### Abstract

This Standard specifies environmental performance requirements of panel board products for the Australian Ecolabel Program. 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, at least 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.

**COD** is the Chemical Oxidation Demand, the equivalent mass of oxygen required to oxidise dissolved and suspended organic matter under defined conditions, typically using dichromate or permanganate as the oxidising agent.

**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, parallel to each other and bonded with resin. These panels are often known as veneer panels.

**EPBC** is an acronym for the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

**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)'.

**IARC** is the acronym for the International Agency for Research on Cancer

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

**Organic Tin Catalysts (OTC):** Organic Tin Catalysts are an ingredient in the production of flexible polyurethane foam in Australia. The tin catalyst gives the polyurethane foam its flexible characteristics including shape memory and density. The two principle OTCs in common use 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  $[CH_3(CH_2)_3CH(C_2H_5)COO]_2Sn$

**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 both pre- and post-consumer recycled content. Post-Consumer is defined as 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 is defined as material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process. Excluded is re-utilisation of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

**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.

**TOC** is the Total Organic Content, defined as the total amount of organic substances dissolved in a water sample.

**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.*

**VOC** means any organic compound having a vapour pressure of 0.01 kPa or more, at 20 °C, or having a corresponding volatility under the particular conditions of use.

**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 a broad range of panel board 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 panel boards consisting of timber, gypsum, plastics, metals and alloys and engineered wood products. This standard stipulates the environmental load of such products throughout the major aspects of their life cycle.

### **1.2 Background**

Panel boards are used largely as a means of cladding in construction. However panel boards are also used in a number of other uses such as interior screens and parts of furniture. A variety of materials are used in the production of panel boards, such as timber, gypsum, plastics, aluminium, steel, fibre cement and engineered wood products. The primary purpose of this standard is to define environmental performance criteria for the most harmful environmental and human hazards of panel boards and to use these criteria as indicators of general environmental performance of the product.

In Australia approximately 30% by weight of resources disposed of in landfills is construction and demolition waste. A large proportion of this waste is panel boards. Due to this fact an emphasis will be placed on the destination of waste products from construction scrap and the post-use phase. Improvements to this waste cycle help the conservation of resources and reduce demand for virgin resources. This in turn reduces impacts of mining and related processing.

This standard will produce environmental benefits through the reduction of hazardous chemicals, conserving resources, reducing the amount of waste disposed of in landfills and encouraging the use of environmentally preferable materials. Life cycle review is an ongoing process and as information becomes available and technologies change, product category requirements will be reviewed and updated.

## **2 STANDARD CATEGORY SCOPE**

This standard is applicable to a range of panel board products, generally for indoor use such as interior panelling as well as use in further processed products such as furniture. Some of the materials specifically addressed in this standard are:

- Timber
- Gypsum and other minerals
- Plastics
- Glasses (excluding fibreglass products)
- Aluminium
- Steel
- Engineered Wood and Natural Fibre Products

This Standard does not cover exterior siding or cladding, or materials with a structural function in buildings. Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs) are not covered under this standard.

### 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, 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 suitability and quality,

#### 3.2 Material Requirements

The following requirements apply for each type of material contained in the finished product.

##### 3.2.1 Timber and Other Natural Materials

###### 3.2.1.1 Fibre Sources

The geographical origin of pre-consumer recycled and virgin fibre material must be documented, allowing confirmation of origin throughout the supply chain.

Fibre may be sourced from any combination of FSC or AFS 2007 (according to AS 4708-2007) 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. *Uncertified high conservation value habitat 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.deh.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=fauna>

The EPBC Act List of Threatened Flora at

<http://www.deh.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=flora>

The EPBC Act List of Threatened Ecological Communities

<http://www.deh.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publiclookupcommunities.pl>

The Australian Heritage Database (for listings of areas of cultural significance) at

<http://www.deh.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 panel boards. 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 panel board 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>

Wood preservatives must not contain more than 5 % organic solvents by weight, unless the solvent polymerises or adsorbs to the wood and the product has zero solvent emissions. Creosote must not be used as a wood or fibre preservative.

Panel boards that are intended for products that may also be used outdoors (e.g., versatile furniture) use must not contain more than 0.1 % by weight of any substance carrying the following risk phrases:

R50: Very toxic to aquatic organisms

R51: Toxic to aquatic organisms

R52: Harmful to aquatic organisms

R53: May cause long-term adverse effects in the aquatic environment

R56: Toxic to soil organisms

R58: May cause long-term adverse effects in the environment

It is accepted that recycled fibre may have been treated with the above substances during their previous lifecycles.

### 3.2.1.4 Glues in Plywood and Other Engineered Wood Products

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

### 3.2.1.5 Emissions Requirements

Products made from wood and other natural products that contain formaldehyde-based additives, shall be subject to the following air emission limits for formaldehyde as measured using the standard test methods outlined below. Raw timber and natural materials are exempt from this criterion.

Engineered wood products, (e.g., particleboard, MDF, decorative overlaid wood panels) must at minimum conform to formaldehyde limit as outlined in Table 1 when using the measurement method described in the Australian Standard AS/NZS 4266.16 “Method 16: Formaldehyde Emission-Desiccator Method”.

Veneer and plywood must at minimum conform to formaldehyde limits as outlined in Table 1 when using the measurement method described in the Australian Standard AS/NZS 2098.11 “Methods of test for veneer and plywood - Determination of formaldehyde emissions for plywood”.

Internationally accepted test methods beside AS/NZS 4266 and AS/NZS 2098 may be accepted if the product meets the in Table 1 outlined emission limits for these test methods.

**Table 1:** Formaldehyde emission limits for Panel Boards, using internationally accepted test methods

Test Method	Limit Value
AS 2098.11 for plywood	< 1.0 mg / L
AS 4266.16 for Particle and MDF boards	< 1.0 mg / L
JIS A 1460 not applicable to plywood	< 1.0 mg / L
JAS 233 for plywood	< 1.0 mg / L
EN 120 for Particle and MDF boards for plywood	< 9 mg / (100g) < 6 mg / (100g)
DIN EN 717-1	< 0.12 mg / m <sup>3</sup>
DIN EN 717-2 not applicable to MDF	< 3.5 mg / m <sup>2</sup> h

### 3.2.1.6 Paper Processing

Paper must not be bleached with any compounds containing or giving rise to elemental chlorine during the manufacturing process. This includes the in-situ generation of chlorine from chloride.

Where surfactants are used in the paper manufacturing process, these surfactants must be readily biodegradable in accordance with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) guidelines for the testing of chemicals.

Exceptions may be made for laminating paper.

## 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 Additives

- a. CFC, HCFC, HFC, Methylene chloride or other halogenated organic solvents shall not be used in the production of any plastic or foam. Methylene chloride may be used in the cleaning of production equipment if the manufacturer has in place a contract with a licensed and registered hazardous waste disposal company responsible for the correct disposal of the hazardous waste, and can demonstrate measures to minimise use and emissions (including evaporation) of the solvent. Manufacturers making use of this exemption must undertake not to procure new equipment that requires the use of methylene chloride.

It is accepted that recycled content may have been treated or produced with the above substances during their previous lifecycle. This exception does not apply to the following substances in this section.

- b. Aniline based amines, and pigments, catalysts or stabilisers containing mercury, lead, cadmium, tin or chromium must not be added to any plastic component. Organic tin catalysts may be used in the production of flexible polyurethane if the manufacturer has in place a contract with a licensed and registered hazardous waste disposal company responsible for the correct disposal of the hazardous waste.
- c. If 1,3 butadiene is used in latex, rubber or foams its concentration shall be less than 1 mg / kg.
- d. The total discharges to waste water (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.

### 3.2.3 Fabrics

All fabric must be certified by, or satisfy the requirements of, the Good Environmental Choice Label or carry another ISO 14 024 based ecolabel acceptable to GECA.

### 3.2.4 Glass

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

### 3.2.5 Rubber

All rubber used in certified panel boards shall satisfy the materials requirements of GECA Standard 03 – Recycled Rubber Products.

### 3.2.6 Metals and Alloys

Coatings applied to metals or alloys must not contain cadmium, nickel, tin or chromium. 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 will not be granted to parts that are intended to come into frequent contact with skin.

Coatings applied to metals or alloys must not prevent recycling at the end of the normal life of the product (see Section 3.2.9) Metal fittings such as screws and bolts are exempt from this requirement where the coating serves to protect the product from staining due to corrosion. Coatings on any metal part must conform to the applicable Australian or international standard, if such a standard exists.

### 3.2.7 Gypsum

Gypsum plasterboard shall not be formulated or manufactured with phosphogypsum.

### 3.2.8 Adhesives

With the exception of Section 3.2.1.4, adhesives or other treatments used in the manufacture of certified products or packaging must be certified by, or satisfy the requirements of, the Good Environmental Choice Label or carry another ISO 14 024 based ecolabel acceptable to GECA.

### 3.2.9 Coatings and Treatments

No product or component may be impregnated, labelled, coated or otherwise treated in a manner which would prevent post consumer recycling. Exemptions may be made for products with a long product life where a coating or treatment would further extend the useful life of the product.

Paints and waterproofing treatments used in or on certified panel boards must be certified by, or satisfy the requirements of, the Good Environmental Choice Label or carry another ISO 14 024 based ecolabel acceptable to GECA.

## 3.3 Hazardous Materials

### 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, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, tin, mercury or antimony
- Elemental fluorine or chlorine
- Pentachlorophenol (PCP)
- Tar oils (benzo ( $\alpha$ )pyrene)

Mercury, arsenic, chromium or cadmium contaminant concentration shall be less than 1 mg/kg.

Lead contaminant concentration shall be less than 10 mg/kg.

Other contaminants mentioned above must be below detection limit of a suitable ICP-AAS or ICP-MS technique.

### 3.3.2 Prohibited Substances

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

- Halogenated organic solvents or binding agents.
- Fluoropolymer additives.
- Aniline based amines.
- The phthalates DEHP, DBP, DAP, BBP, DMP, DMT, DEP, DMEP and DIBP.
- Aziridine or polyaziridines.
- Pigments and additives that contain lead, tin, arsenic, cadmium, mercury or their compounds.
- Polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or short-chain ( $\leq 13$  C) chlorinated organic flame retardants.

### 3.3.3 Possible Radioactive Sources

This criterion applies to panel boards intended for indoor use that contain greater than 75% by mass:

- Granites, pegmatites or gypsum,

Slag, clinker, or other waste from smelting, or  
Ash from coal or peat.

Radioactive safety may be demonstrated in *either* of the following ways:

*a. Direct physical measurement*

When the crushed material is measured by gamma spectrometry, the following must hold true:

$$C_K / 3000 + C_{Ra} / 300 + C_{Th} / 200 < 1$$

and

$$C_{Ra} < 1$$

Where  $C_K$ ,  $C_{Ra}$  and  $C_{Th}$  are the effective concentrations of  $K_{40}$ ,  $Ra_{226}$  and  $Th_{232}$ , respectively, measured in units of Bq / kg.

*b. Chemical composition*

The finished product must not contain more than:

U	8 mg / kg,
Th	15 mg / kg and
K	5 % by mass.

Measurement by a strong acid digest ICP-AAS method is recommended.

### 3.4 Manufacturing Requirements

#### 3.4.1 Recycled Content Requirements

Certified products containing the following materials shall meet the minimum resource efficiency requirements:

##### 3.4.1.1 Aluminium

All aluminium products or parts shall contain at least 35 % recycled content.

##### 3.4.1.2 Stainless Steel

Stainless steel comprising greater than 5 % of the total weight of the product shall contain at least 20 % recycled content. Stainless steel panels must carry a minimum warranty of 40 years.

##### 3.4.1.3 Plastics

Plastics comprising greater than 10 % of the weight of the product shall contain at least 50 % by weight recycled content, or at least 50 % by weight polymers based on non-petrochemical derived polyols.

##### 3.4.1.4 Gypsum and Other Minerals

Gypsum or other mineral panels greater than 5 % of the weight of the product must contain a minimum of 10% recycled content.

#### 3.4.2 Waste Minimisation

The manufacturer must have effective policies and procedures to minimise waste, including measures to recycle waste materials from the production process.

### 3.5 Post Consumption Recycling and Labelling

#### 3.5.1 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 that will divert the majority of recovered material from landfill. Exceptions may apply to material contaminated by the user (e.g., medical, nuclear). Normal dust and other environmental accumulations do not qualify for this exemption.

Demonstration of an acceptable product stewardship program may include documentation outlining the proposed material flows for panel boards collected at end of life or internal documentation confirming the establishment and function of a take back research program where final disposal arrangements are not currently in place.

### **3.5.2 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.

### **3.5.3 Product Information**

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

- The intended use of the product.
- Instructions for correct storage, installation and use so as to maximise the product lifetime.
- Maintenance instructions, if required. Maintenance instructions must not specify nor require the use of any chemical or coating limited by any part of this standard.
- Recycling instructions for the product end-of-life.

#### **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.

## **6 EVIDENCE OF CONFORMANCE**

### **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 19 011.

### **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.