



**Forest & Wood
Products Australia**

Procedures Manual for the Development and Maintenance of Timber Products and Related Standards

Version 4.0
August 2025

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About FWPA

Forest & Wood Products Australia Limited (FWPA) is a not-for-profit company that provides national, integrated research and development services to the Australian forest and wood products industry.

We are committed to helping the forest and wood products industry to be collaborative, innovative, sustainable and competitive against other industries and products available in the marketplace.

How we are funded

Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is one of 15 Australian rural research and development corporations (RDCs) and is the nominated industry-owned services company under the Forestry Research and Development and Marketing Act 2007.

The Australian Government levies qualifying industry participants to fund FWPA in accordance with a Statutory Funding Agreement (SFA). FWPA's levy payers are wood processors, forest growers, and Australian importers of forest products. Additionally, eligible expenditure on research, development, and extension (RD&E) expenditure by FWPA receives matching funds from the Commonwealth.

Diversity & Inclusion

FWPA seeks to have a diverse staff and Board that reflects contemporary Australian society through our [Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

Supporting Innovation & Sustainability

We support research and development that promotes internationally competitive and environmentally sustainable practices. We promote activities that enhance employment opportunities and contribute to growing Australia's reputation as an innovative producer of high-quality forest and wood products.

Background

The Procedures in this Manual have been written with the intention that:

- 1) They are compatible with the intent and procedures adopted by National and International Standards writing bodies for the development and production of Standards, Handbooks, Guides, and related documents (Standards).
- 2) These Procedures will facilitate the production of Standards that will be adopted as Industry Standards and, where developed and written following the appropriate ABCB Protocols and National Cabinet guidelines, may become referenced documents in the National Construction Code (NCC).
- 3) Documents developed using these Procedures may be adopted by Standards Australia (if that body so chooses) to become an Australian Standard or may be adopted by that body as a document to form the basis of an Australian Standard or included in an existing standard.
- 4) These Procedures would form the basis of documentation and Procedures required for accreditation by Standards Australia as a Standards Development Organisation (SDO).
- 5) Where appropriate, International Standards may be referenced or adopted subject to agreements with Standards Australia and National Cabinet guidelines as necessary.
- 6) The general procedures contained in this document reflect current practice adopted by Standards writing organisations around the world and should minimise potential liabilities to FWPA, staff, consultants, and committee members.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Document

This Manual details FWPA policies and procedures in developing and maintaining Australian Timber Products and Related Standards within its scope of operation. Standards within the meaning of this Manual includes Standards, Handbooks and Guides, and other related documents. Documents produced within the scope of this Manual may be forwarded to Standards Australia for publication as Australian Standards and may be developed using the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) National Construction Code (NCC) "*Protocol for the Development of National Construction Code Referenced Documents*" for referencing as an NCC referenced document.

1.2 Scope

This Manual defines the policies and procedures for:

- Operation of a Standards Reference Panel (SRP), including Terms of Reference.
- Operation of Standards Writing Committees (SWC), Sub-Committees, Working Panels, and the like, including Terms of Reference.
- Operation of Consultants and subcontractors as required.
- Development of new Standards, revision, and other work items related to Timber Products and related Standards.

Existing FWPA policies and procedures may be referenced and will become part of this Procedures Manual.

A standards development project may be:

- To develop a new standard in areas that are not covered by an existing standard.
- To develop a new standard to complement or to support existing standards.
- To revise or amend an existing standard, where the content may not be current or appropriate.
- To adopt certain categories of Australian, industry, or international standards or guidelines.

This Manual shall apply to:

- FWPA Board and staff (including contractors/consultants).
- Members of the Standards Reference Panel (SRP) and of a Standards Writing Committees (SWC).
- Other people and organisations with an interest in the Australian Timber Products and related Standards including Consultants and Sub-contractors.

1.3 Distribution and Maintenance

This Manual is maintained through a regular cycle of reviews and is controlled in accordance with the FWPA document control policies. The current released version is held on the FWPA server and published on the FWPA Web Site www.fwpa.com.au.

1.4 Amending this Procedure

The FWPA Board may approve amendments to this or related Procedures. The Board will liaise with the National Codes and Standards Manager to consult the SRP and any relevant Standards Writing Committee on any proposed amendments.

1.5 Abbreviations and Definitions

ABCB	The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) is a standards writing body responsible for the National Construction Code, WaterMark and CodeMark Certification Schemes, and regulatory reform in the construction industry. The ABCB is a joint initiative of the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments, together with the building and plumbing industries.
Australian Standard	Standards developed by Standards Australia or an Standards Reference Body
BCA	Building Code of Australia A subset of the NCC excluding plumbing codes
Chairperson or Chair	Person nominated to Chair Committee meetings and work with Project Manager and NCSM to achieve completed Standards
FWPA	Forest and Wood Products Australia
NCC	National Construction Code
CSM	National Codes & Standards Manager
Project Manager	Manages development project for a standard being developed. May be the NCSM or other person.
SDO	Standards Development Organisation A body accredited by Standards Australia to write Australian standards
SRP	Standards Reference Panel
Standards Australia	Standards Australia is Australia's peak non-government, not-for-profit standards organisation
SWC	Standards Writing Committee

1.6 Informative References

Relevant documentation	Link
Australian Government Privacy Act	The Privacy Act OAIC
Preparing Standards Standardisation Guide 001	SG 001 Preparing Standards
Structure and Operation of standardisation Committees Standardisation Guide 002	SG 002 Structure and Operation of Standardisation Committees
Standards and Other Publications Standardisation Guide 003	SG 003 Standards and Other Publications v1 12
Roles & Responsibilities of Standardisation Standardisation Guide 004	SG 004 Roles and Responsibilities in Standardisation
Technical Governance and Advisory Structures for the Standards Development Process Standardization Guide 005	SG 005 Technical Governance and Advisory Structures for the Standards
Rules for the Structure and Drafting of Australian Standards Standardisation Guide 006	SG 006 Rules for the Structure and Drafting of Australian Standards
Adoption Of International Standards Standardisation Guide 007	SG 007 Adoption of International Standards
Committee Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Standardisation Guide 008	SDAC 008 Guide to International Standardisation for Accredited SDOs
Preparation of Standards for Legislative Adoption Standardization Guide 009	SG 009 Preparation of Standards for Legislative Adoption
Australian Involvement in International Standardisation Standardization Guide 015	SG 015 Australian Involvement in International Standardisation
Participation by Consumers in Standardization Standardisation Guide 020	SG 020 Participation by consumers in standardisation
Guide to Net Benefit	Guide to Net Benefit GU 103
Protocol for the development of national construction code referenced	PROTOCOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NCC REFERENCED DOCUMENTS (abcb.gov.au)
ABCB Guideline for preparing a Proposal for Change	Guideline Preparing PFC ABCB

Relevant documentation	Link
Regulatory impact analysis guide for ministers meeting and national standard setting bodies	Regulatory Impact Analysis Guide for Ministers' Meetings and National Standard Setting Bodies The Office of Impact Analysis (pmc.gov.au)
Standards Australia Technical Group and Committee Member Code of Conduct	Committee Member Code of Conduct

2.0 Resources for Standards Development

2.1 FWPA Resources Policy

The FWPA shall:

- Have a structure and resources to support and maintain its Standards development operations. Resources shall include adequate ongoing funding, facilities, and staff.
- Develop and maintain a future program for the development and maintenance of standards.
- Have sufficient and competent staff to manage and support its Standards activities.
- Appoint a person, usually the National Codes and Standards Manager (CSM), who is responsible for managing each standard being developed. This person shall be provided with the necessary authority and resources to enable the project to be completed within the agreed timeframes.
- Ensure that the Project Management role is separated from any technical representation FWPA may have on Standards Writing Committees.

2.2 FWPA Resources for Standards Development

FWPA maintains the capacity and resources to develop and maintain standards within its scope of operation. All FWPA activities consume resources in the form of:

- Human resources
- Financial resources, and
- Information

These resources are managed effectively and efficiently to produce the best outcome for FWPA's Staff and the Wood Products Industry.

2.2.1 Human Resources

FWPA maintains a core staff and co-opts specialist staff as required on either a casual or a contractual basis. FWPA undertakes a selection process to ensure that specialist staff are involved in the development or ongoing management and review of Standards within its area of accreditation. All personnel working in areas affecting the quality of FWPA's standards development and management operations shall be competent based on appropriate education, training, skills, and experience, or work under the close and direct supervision of a competent supervisor.

2.2.2 Financial Resources

FWPA financial processes ensure that funds are available through the budget process. This includes staff costs as well as capital and recurrent costs. FWPA ensures that financial records are retained including all financial forecasts, and progress reports showing actual budget against the forecast.

2.2.3 Information Resources

FWPA develops and maintains information resources with the aim to:

- Identify key knowledge for the organisation
- Catalogue and store this knowledge and make it available to interested parties; and
- Communicate changes to interested parties who have a requirement to utilise the information.

The FWPA has developed an effective Web portal to make information available to interested stakeholders.

The FWPA engages with relevant organisations to ensure that information resources are protected. interested stakeholders. FWPA engages with suitable organisations to ensure that information resources are protected.

2.3 FWPA Commitment to Standards Development and Maintenance

The FWPA is committed to the ongoing maintenance of standards within its scope of operation through ongoing funding for the program.

3.0 General Policies

3.1 IP and Copyright

The FWPA, through the SRP and SWCs, shall ensure that it owns all intellectual property rights in, or is duly licensed to incorporate any third-party material into, the Standard(s) developed by it.

The FWPA shall have a patent policy that restricts the inclusion of patented items in a standard unless the use of a patented item is justifiable for technical reasons and the rights holder agrees to negotiate licenses with interested applicants, wherever located, on reasonable terms and conditions.

When assuming responsibility for standards developed by another Organisation (including an SDO), FWPA shall ensure all existing rights and obligations related to these Standards have been negotiated and agreed with the Organisation.

3.2 Patents

A standard does not confer a monopoly on one section of industry to the detriment of another that can provide an equally satisfactory article. Nonetheless, on exceptional occasions, technical reasons may justify inclusion in the standard of items or services covered by patent rights. Where patented items or materials are included in an FWPA developed standard, FWPA will negotiate appropriate licenses with the rights holder.

3.3 SRP Tenure

SRP membership tenure is for two years, and a member may be re-elected for one more term before retiring.

3.4 Termination Policy

A position on the SRP or SWC may be terminated if, by their actions, they partake in behaviour that is out of line with FWPA company policy.

3.5 Document History

Document details shall be included to illustrate the development history of the document. The following details are to be included as appropriate:

- Version number
- Published date (month/year)
- Revision number and date (Rev. Number; month/year)
- Amendment number and date (Amd. Number; month/year)

4.0 Formation and Constitution of the Standards Reference Panel (SRP)

4.1 General

Forest & Wood Products Australia Limited (FWPA) is a not-for-profit company that provides national, integrated research and development services to the Australian forest and wood products industry. As such, the Standards Reference Panel (SRP) representatives will be drawn from organisations within these industries, and related industries, in Australia, but also representing products that may be imported into Australia. Through the SRP and FWPA's National Codes & Standards Manager, representatives of the Australian Forest and Wood Products Industry will provide guidance on the need for Standards, revision of Standards, and any other related advice on Standards.

The SRP, in conjunction with FWPA's National Codes & Standards Manager, will oversee the establishment of Standards Writing Committees, development and subsequent progress of Standards, and eventual publication. The SRP will consider whether the Standard is intended as an Industry Standard, an Australian Standard or NCC referenced document, and the constitution and operation of Standards Writing Committees (SWCs) will be constituted accordingly.

Advice on Standards development and representatives on the SRP will be sought from the following organisations:

- Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA)
- Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia (EWPA)
- Australian Timber Importers Association (ATIF)
- FWPA, National Codes & Standards Manager and/or other FWPA Representation
- FTMA
- TPAA (product sector)
- Other representative organisation(s) as appropriate for the type of standard

- Academia
- Other experts, for example, State Timber Associations

4.2 Formation of the SRP

FWPA will endeavour to ensure the SRP is represented by a balanced membership of Industry and other interests as appropriate, to demonstrate a clear industry view and guidance of the Standards development processes. The SRP will be managed by the FWPA's National Codes & Standards Manager who will organise a work program and meetings as appropriate in conjunction with the Chairperson.

4.3 Chairperson

The SRP will elect a Chairperson who will work with the FWPA's National Codes & Standards Manager (CSM) to organise meetings, agendas, and work programs. The Chairperson will ensure that the Committee decisions are independent of FWPA; however, they will work with the FWPA Board to convey progress of the SRP in conjunction with the CSM. The CSM, or FWPA-nominated appointee, will produce agendas and meeting minutes as appropriate.

4.4 Operation of the SRP

A Standards development activity can be triggered by requests from any of the following sources:

- The SRP
- The Board of FWPA
- An industry association or individual company
- The Australian Building Codes Board or Standards Australia
- An external source such as government, industry, trade association, professional body, business, consumer organisation, or individual
- An existing Standards Writing Committee (SWC)
- Any other interested party

4.5 New Project Proposal

A new project proposal may be:

- To develop a new Standard in areas that are not covered by an existing standard
- To develop a new Standard to complement or support existing standards
- To revise or amend an existing Standard, where the content may not be current or appropriate
- To adopt certain categories of Australian, industry, or international standards or guidelines.

A project proposal will be developed for each standards development activity. This proposal shall cover:

- The scope and objective of the proposed Standard
- The need for the proposed Standard
- A broad base of support for the development of the proposed Standard
- The net benefit of the standard, including the benefits of the proposed Standard including considering the following or other factors as appropriate:
 - Support for innovation, trade, and economic benefit
 - Advancement of the health, safety and wellbeing of the community
 - Protection of the natural environment
 - International competitiveness
 - Potential or actual impacts of implementing the Standard
 - Whether there are any International Standards on the same subject and the reasons why such International Standards were not being adopted or used as the basis for the proposed standard
 - If appropriate, the nature of any likely conformity assessment activities (such as testing, inspection, and certification) that may be undertaken once the Standard is published, and the likely bodies that will undertake such activities.

4.6 Evaluation of a Standards Development Activity

The SRP will assess the Project Proposal against the following criteria:

- Consistent with FWPA's objectives, role and functions
- Within the FWPA's scope of operation
- Has genuine and demonstrated stakeholder support
- Will improve the economic efficiency of the timber products and related industries
- Will result in more efficient use of resources
- Has social or commercial benefits
- There are special interests that support the development of such a standard
- Will deliver a net benefit
- Does not create any technical barriers to trade
- Does not duplicate an existing Standard. Where such duplication occurs, justification or explanation shall be included in the standard
- Does not create conflicting requirements between FWPA's standards and other existing standards on the same or similar subjects
- If developed for conformance assessment purposes (i.e., the basis of a certification scheme) the standard shall comply with the principles in ISO/IEC 17007, Conformity assessment - Guidance for drafting normative documents suitable for use for conformity assessment

- If developed as the basis for certification (or with the potential for certification) the SRP, and particularly those drafting the document, will need to be familiar with its requirements and recommendations.

4.7 Appointment of Project Manager

When a Standards development project is approved by the SRP and FWPA, the SRP or FWPA's National Codes & Standards Manager will appoint a Project Manager (who may be FWPA's National Codes & Standards Manager or a member of the SRP or an external consultant) for each project development activity, who is responsible for managing the development project for each standard being developed. The Project Manager shall be provided with the necessary authority and resources to enable the project to be completed within an agreed timeframe.

Where the Project Manager is an employee of FWPA, the Project Manager may provide advice but will not exert influence on the decisions of the SRP and SWCs. The Project Manager shall be responsible for the constitution and formation of the Standards Writing Committee and responsible for delivering the Standard.

Responsibilities of the Project Manager shall include, but not be limited to:

- Development of a plan, budget, and timeframe to deliver the completed Standards Project
- Formation of the SWC and election of the Chairperson
- In conjunction with the Chairperson, organisation of meetings and the writing and distribution of minutes of meetings and action items as appropriate
- The formation of Sub-committees where necessary

5.0 Standards Development Process

5.1 General

The FWPA, through the SRP, shall ensure that:

- All Standards it is responsible for shall be within its scope of operation.
- A Standard shall not duplicate an existing Australian Standard. Where such duplication occurs, justification or explanation shall be included in the standard.
- Standards developed for conformance assessment purposes (i.e. the basis of a certification scheme) shall comply with the principles in ISO/IEC 17007, Conformity assessment - Guidance for drafting normative documents suitable for use for conformity assessment.
- All reasonable efforts should be made to avoid the creation of conflicting requirements between Standards on the same or similar subjects.
- A copy of the final published standard is publicly available.
- FWPA shall not overrule the decisions of the SRP or change the standard unless there are special circumstances. The circumstances where such occurrences may apply shall be documented.
- If FWPA is proposing to overrule or change the decisions of the SRP, it shall be done in consultation with the SRP. Communication between FWPA and the SRP concerning the

changes shall be documented.

5.2 Formation and Constitution of the Standards Writing Committee (SWC)

Once a project proposal has been approved by the SRP, SWC members with relevant expertise will be sought. The SWC is charged with the writing of the Standard or a number of Standards.

The SWC shall consist of experts and other participants representing organisations concerned with the consequences of the Standard. This may include as manufacturers, engineers, designers, builders, safety authorities, regulators or other organisations and representatives deemed relevant to the Committee.

5.3 Balance of the SWC

The FWPA and the SRP shall endeavour to ensure:

- The SWC has a balanced representation of all major interest categories relevant to the standard. No interest category or Organisation shall have a disproportionate representation on the SWC. Each interest category may cover several organisations or interest groups. Where a major stakeholder or interest group does not accept the invitation to participate, FWPA shall determine whether the obstacle is due to lack of resources or lack of finances or lack of interest in the subject, or lack of confidence in the structural or procedural aspects of the process. Where one of these issues is the obstacle, the FWPA shall make reasonable efforts to address the obstacle. FWPA will document all attempts to engage the stakeholder group.
- Where a representative of FWPA is a participant on a SWC, their contribution shall be impartial, free from bias, and avoid a conflict of interest between their role as a facilitator of the Standards Development process and as a participant in the process.
- Any changes to the constitution of the SWC shall be recorded, including the rationale for the change, and any change shall maintain a balanced representation.
- Where a consumer or public interest representation would provide the needed balance of interests, FWPA shall identify and make efforts to secure support for equal access and effective participation of such interests.
- FWPA will consider the inclusion of any interest group that has a bona fide interest in participating in the standards development process.
- Membership of the SWC shall not be conditional upon membership of FWPA, or unreasonably restricted based on technical qualifications or other such requirements.
- FWPA will maintain a record of all contacted/invited stakeholder interest groups. If FWPA were to be directly represented on the SWC, its contribution shall be impartial, free from bias, and avoid a conflict of interest between its role as a facilitator of the Standards Development process and as a participant in the process.
- The defined interest categories and their representation on the SWC shall be available on request and published on the FWPA website.
- Any changes to the constitution of the SWC shall be recorded, including the rationale for the change.

- Any change shall ensure that a balanced representation on the SWC is maintained.

5.4 Chair of a SWC

The Committee Chair and the Project Manager (PM) form the leadership team that guides the SWC through the process of developing FWPA Standards, ensuring adherence to the Committee Member Code of Conduct and this manual throughout. As Standards are produced by cooperative effort and round-table discussions, the Chair and the PM play a key role in ensuring that such Standards represent the views of all concerned, to the maximum extent possible.

The selected Chair will be required to acknowledge, accept and comply with FWPA's policies and procedures related to standards development. In the event of the absence of the Chair from a SWC meeting, the SRP, FWPA's National Codes & Standards Manager or the Project Manager may approve the temporary appointment of a substitute Chair from the floor.

5.5 Role and Responsibilities of Chair

The role of the Chair is to:

- Facilitate meetings of SWCs and always remain impartial and ensure that the opinions of representatives are heard in meetings.
- Be available to attend SWC meetings.
- Liaise with the SRP and ensure that the program of work and target dates for the standard development stages are met.
- Ensure that monitoring/priorities and target dates are updated regularly and reviewed at least every six months. Monitor performance to ensure that standards development processes remain within defined timelines and constraints for the duration of the standards development process.

Prior to meetings of the SWC, the Chair is responsible for ensuring that;

- All Members are aware of the FWPA policies for Meetings, including:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Competition Law Guidelines
 - Conflicts of Interest

All members will be required to confirm their awareness and agreement to the above policies before meetings start and be documented in meeting minutes/notes.

- Agendas and associated drafts and correspondence are circulated at least one week prior to meetings of the SWC
- Agenda items are time-bound
- Any SWC representatives absent from key decision items can submit their views in writing prior to the meeting.

NOTE: The Project Manager will assist the Chair in achieving these duties.

During meetings of the Standards Writing Committee, the Chair is to:

- Ensure that the objectives and outcomes of the meeting clearly define what is to be

achieved

- Ensure that all SWC members are aware of their responsibilities to abide by the Code of Conduct for SWC Members
- Attempt at all times to attain consensus in decisions made (see [Consensus](#))
- Ensure that differences between members are resolved.
 - After meetings of the SWC, the Chair is responsible for ensuring that Minutes, decisions etc. of the meeting are distributed as appropriate in a timely manner.

NOTE: The Project Manager will assist the Chair in achieving these duties.

Before accepting the position of Chair, nominees must consider the call on resources associated with the role. This includes finding time for discussions with the PM outside of meetings, as well as attending all meetings at every location where the committee is likely to meet. A potential Chair must be able to devote the necessary time and be able to meet the cost of the necessary travel to fulfil these obligations.

5.5.1 Declaration of Interests by Committee Chairs

A Committee Chair may have a dual role, representing the interests of their Organisation as well as acting as a neutral facilitator of committee discussions. It is therefore important that the Chair declare their interests along with the other committee members. The Chair must also make it clear when they are putting forward the views of their organisation as opposed to their normal role of speaking from a position of neutrality as the Committee Chair. When necessary, a Chair may need to stand down from chairing discussions on subjects where there could be a perceived conflict of interest. This could be necessary in situations where perceptions could substantially detract from the committee's conclusions. In such circumstances, the PM, or if agreed by the committee, another committee member, may chair that part of the meeting.

5.6 SWC Meeting Management

The Chair will:

- Remind the SWC representatives that they exercise representative roles when discussing the content of the Standards in meetings, except in the case of individuals who have been invited to participate on the SWC because of their expert knowledge.
- Summarise the consensus view when a consensus has been reached.
- Summarise the key points of difference when an agreement cannot be reached and propose an action(s) to be taken to resolve any differences or deadlocks.

NOTE: The Project Manager may assist the Chair in the management meeting.

5.6.1 Frequency and Format of Meetings

The SWC will meet in locations suited to the majority of committee members. Video conference meetings may be held as the need arises. Committees may also interact via email and other electronic means.

The SWC may make decisions out of session via email, where all members receive the same documentation and are asked to respond to the same question(s) by a deadline with adequate notice and the outcome is communicated to all members in an appropriate time frame. A

resolution included in a decision in this manner is passed if consensus is achieved.

5.6.2 Conduct of Meetings Online

The security and integrity of the decision-making process and the privacy of individual members of the SWC need to be protected, particularly when meetings are being held by remote conferencing technologies.

FWPA will use conferencing software to conduct standards development activities when face to face meetings is impractical. FWPA will protect members' privacy by ensuring that any meeting recordings are only to be used for minute taking purposes and are to be destroyed once minutes have been accepted by the SWC. Prior to the meeting, the Project Manager will:

- Make all meeting documents available to participants
- Require all intending participants to register as attendees before the meetings

5.6.3 Decision Making

- SWC decisions to amend or approve the Standard shall be determined by a vote of all members eligible to vote at the meeting, and
- A resolution is carried if a consensus is achieved
- A member who is unable to attend a meeting at which the vote is being taken and who is not represented by an alternate member may vote by voting form or email, and
- The minutes of the meeting will record how each member voted, and if a member failed to vote, the minutes will record the reasons why (e.g., direct interest, abstained, did not submit a voting form, etc.)
- All other decisions are resolved by the agreement of the majority of voting members.

5.7 Conflict of Interest

When necessary, the Chair may need to stand down from chairing discussions on subjects where there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest.

The Chair needs to reiterate to SWC representatives that they do not make statements on behalf of or indicate that they represent the SWC unless the matter has been previously discussed within an SWC meeting or referred to FWPA by the Chair.

5.8 Consensus in SWC Meetings

FWPA acknowledges that there are two key processes in standards development, transparency and consensus, and that consensus shall be embodied in all FWPA Standards.

FWPA uses the definition of consensus from ISO/IEC Guide 2 – Standardization and related activities – General vocabulary.

“General agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity”

FWPA shall ensure that all decisions on the technical content of Standards have been based on agreed and verifiable consensus. SWC representation see Section 4.2 and 4.3 and in the context of consensus within the SWC, no single concerned interest shall be allowed to dominate the standard setting process from those participating interests.

Each SWC member shall work towards and contribute to reaching committee consensus on the technical content of Standards or other documents that require similar status. The SWC member shall commit to providing expert opinion for the technical content that contributes to genuine consensus within the SWC.

The decisions made within meetings of the SWC shall be by way of consensus without the need for voting by voice or by hand, as it is expected that the SWC will work within committee' to overcome areas of disagreement. SWC members shall accept a consensus decision that has followed the internationally recognised principles of consensus. The SWC shall establish evidence of the formal approval of the technical content of Standards or other documents that require similar status by a ballot of all technical members.

Where there is a negative vote(s) relating to the technical content of the Standards or other documents which require similar status and there is the likelihood of successful resolution of the issue, the SWC shall undertake further consideration with the aim to resolve the negative vote to achieve consensus on the technical content.

In any case of one or more negative votes, which represent sustained opposition of any important part of the concerned interests to a substantive issue, every effort shall be made to resolve the issue using the following mechanisms:

- Discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the SWC in order to find a compromise;
- Electronic distribution of key documents and teleconferencing outside of the SWC to attempt to gain a resolution. Direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise; or
- Undertaking additional public consultation in an effort to obtain further stakeholder feedback.

5.8.1 Interpretation of Consensus

To achieve consensus, the following outcomes must be achieved:

- At least two-thirds (67 per cent) of those eligible to vote have voted affirmatively.
- Of the votes received, a minimum of 80 per cent must be "yes"; and
- No major interest maintains a negative vote, which is supported by valid technical reasons.

5.9 Escalation

When a committee, Chair, or PM can't resolve an issue, the PM will seek guidance from the CSM and or the SRP. The CSM or SRP will decide if additional independent expertise to assist in resolving the issue. Once a resolution has been proposed the SWC will consider and vote on the proposal seeking consensus. If after the vote does not reach consensus, the SRP will make the final determination of further actions.

6.0 Public Consultation Procedure

Public consultation is an essential stage in the development process for FWPA Standards. Standards that are intended to be called up in the National Construction Code (NCC) or as Australian Standards may undergo separate and additional processes. (see Section 9.0 and 10.0). The Public Comment draft represents the relevant SWCs consensus recommendations for the Standard and has been recommended to the SRP for release for public comment only. The Public Comment draft is made available to the public for their views or comments for a period as determined by FWPA, but usually a minimum of 8 weeks, and is promoted via various media vehicles to provide as wide coverage as possible for those interested in commenting on the Standard.

The following process is essential to assist the SWC in its consideration of the technical content, but also to ensure acceptance of the Standard by stakeholders:

1. The secretariat distributes the Public Comment draft standard to community stakeholders through appropriate forms of media including the FWPA and WoodSolutions websites.
2. Where the publication is NOT intended to be referenced in the NCC, a public consultation period of 42 days is typically required for consideration by stakeholders.
3. Where the publication is intended to be referenced in the NCC, a public consultation period of at least 56 days is required for consideration by stakeholders.
4. The following information is to be included:
 - a. Copy of the draft standard
 - b. Details of sections changed in the Standard where the Standard is a revision or an amendment
5. The Project Manager will receive and register all submissions received during the public comment period.
6. The SWC will review all comments received and decide on their relevance and whether to include or reject.
7. The Project Manager and Chair shall retain a record of actions made for comments received.
8. Resolution of Public Comment & ballot will be completed by the Project Manager
9. The new or revised Standard(s) will be reviewed by the SWC. This will include editorial checking & proof reading.
10. The SWC will conduct a final ballot.
11. The revised standard will be sent to the SRP for process approval.

6.1 Mechanisms used for Public Comment

FWPA will announce draft standards and invite comments through the following mechanisms:

- Advertisement in publications appropriate and relevant to the sectors concerned
- E-mail to members of the FWPA Board and Organisations represented by the SRP
- E-mail to industry e-mail lists

- Via FWPA media platforms and WoodSolutions websites as appropriate.
- Other means such as phone calls and in-person discussions.

6.2 Recording comments from feedback and Subsequent SWC Meeting(s)

All comments received as part of the public consultation will be recorded, referenced, and given due consideration (i.e., even if the appropriate response is “no action to be taken”, this should be documented). Feedback and comments received, along with actions taken, will be recorded on a Summary Sheet, which will be available to the SWC Committee and the SRP. The SWC Committee will work towards a final draft standard document, which will be submitted to the SRP for approval to publish.

6.3 Final Process Approval Procedure

Once consensus is achieved, the Project Manager, in conjunction with FWPA’s National Codes & Standards Manager, will prepare a submission to the SRP that will provide:

- Evidence that the revision was advertised for Public Comment
- Length of time the document was open for Public Comment
- The summary of the Public Comment and how each comment was addressed
- Ballot report (including organisations and their vote; and if any major interest voted negatively, how this was resolved). The SRP will give final process approval provided the standards activity has been conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in this and other relevant documents.

Following final process approval, the SRP will advise the FWPA Board. Once process approval is given by the FWPA Board, FWPA will electronically publish the standard.

7.0 FWPA Board Involvement in Standards Development Activities

The FWPA Board gives autonomy to the Standards Reference Panel (SRP) to conduct the Standards Development activity. The FWPA Board will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to the SRP and the relevant SWCs for standards development and maintenance activities. The FWPA Board will ensure autonomy to the SRP and shall not influence or direct, the SRP or any SWCs on the technical content of the final developed standard.

7.1 FWPA Board Delegation of Authority

The FWPA Board delegates authority to the Standard Reference Panel (SRP):

1. To act with independence and with authority on the review and maintenance of standards and technical matters relating to standards; and
2. To approve amendments to Standards subject to the bodies compliance with relevant policies, the bodies' budgets, and procedures
3. The FWPA Board sets policies and budgets and procedures for the operation of the SRP for the development and maintenance of Standards

7.2 FWPA Accreditation and Certification

If the FWPA were to undertake certification, accreditation or similar activities, the FWPA Board shall ensure there is a clear separation of the policy-making and governance functions of such activities from those of standards development through not directing the activities or decisions of the SRP. It may, however, be a participant in SRP deliberations.

7.3 International Alignment Policy

The FWPA shall ensure that:

- All staff responsible for managing the standards development process shall be familiar with the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (commonly referred to as the TBT Agreement) and particularly Annex 3.
- The provisions of the TBT agreement are communicated to the SRP and Standards Writing committees (SWCs). Where appropriate, the development processes and content shall be adjusted accordingly to meet the requirements of the TBT. Where an International Standard is being adopted as a Standard, the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 21.1 Regional or national adoption of International Standards and other International Deliverables — Part 1: Adoption of International Standards shall be complied with.

7.4 FWPA Compliance with Technical Barriers to Trade

The FWPA recognises that Australia is a signatory to the WTO GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), which includes the [Technical Barriers to Trade \(TBT\) agreement](#)

The FWPA will comply with the provisions of the TBT through the following procedures:

1. At the commencement of the first meetings of SRP and SWC, ensure that these Procedures, including the requirements and implications of the TBT agreement, are discussed (See 18.6 Commencement Meeting of SWC)

2. Ensure that FWPA Standards do not create unnecessary obstacles to international trade.
3. Not permit FWPA Standards to give a more favourable treatment of products of national origin when compared to like products originating in any other country.
4. Take steps to comply with the TBT agreement as outlined in the [TBT agreement](#), which imposes certain requirements on standards bodies (Annex 3), [“Code Of Good Practice For The Preparation, Adoption And Application Of Standards”](#)

Specific procedures that FWPA has in place are:

1. Make copies of TBT available to affected FWPA staff and SWC Members.
2. Ensure staff and SWC Members involved in standards development are aware of the main provisions, particularly of Annex 3.

7.5 FWPA Impartial Facilitation Policy

The FWPA shall maintain impartiality and neutrality throughout the Standards development process including safeguarding the objectivity and impartiality of the individuals or Panels responsible for Standards development and shall not influence, or direct, the Standards writing committee on the technical content of the final document.

7.6 Project Management Independence

The FWPA Management will not influence, or direct, the SRP and SWCs on the technical content of the final document. FWPA may give guidance to the SRP and SWCs at the commencement of the standards development activity. After that, any involvement of FWPA management in the standards development activity will be through any direct representation on the SWC. Special circumstances where the FWPA may overrule the decisions of the SWC include, but are not limited to:

- The FWPA is not satisfied that there has been adequate stakeholder consultation conducted.
- The FWPA is not satisfied that consensus has been achieved in the final deliberations of the SWC.
- The FWPA is concerned that a major stakeholder group has not had input to the development of the consultation draft. Where FWPA is proposing to overrule the decisions of the SWC, FWPA shall communicate the changes to the SWC along with recommendations as to the steps that the SWC should take to remedy the concerns.

8.0 FWPA Records Management

The FWPA recognises its responsibilities to provide a framework to initiate and maintain record keeping practices to meet its needs and accountability requirements that are compatible with relevant standards and reflect prevailing community concern for best practice. This policy supports the company's business in an efficient and accountable manner as well as to support and document decision-making processes be they enduring evidential or informational value for future reference.

The FWPA will:

- Create, capture, and maintain records to facilitate the effective functioning of FWPA and

the protection and preservation of its corporate memory

- Ensure that electronic data is not lost through a rigorous backup system
- Retain information as evidence to demonstrate compliance for a minimum of 10 years and two standards review cycles from the date of publication of the Standard
- Retain records where the absence of such information would reduce confidence in the quality of the product and/or service supplied by FWPA
- Maintain records/minutes of SRP and SWC meetings, including the outcomes of considerations.

8.1 Data and Records

A record is defined as recorded information of any kind, and in any form, that has been created or received and maintained by FWPA as evidence in the business's transactions and the good conduct of its activities. Information may be represented by, but not limited to, data in computer systems, paper, images, photographs, e-mail messages or registers and becomes a record when used as evidence of a transaction or activity. FWPA has procedures in place to ensure that:

- Records are stored in a legible and identifiable format, clear in intention and are self-explanatory or supported by documentation that provides precise descriptions of the information contained.
- Records are stored and maintained in such a way that it is readily retrievable in facilities that provide a suitable environment to prevent damage or deterioration and to prevent loss
- Records are made available for evaluation by other relevant interested parties.

9.0 General Procedures

9.1 Public review and stakeholder feedback

FWPA recognises that it is essential that anyone who feels that they can contribute to a draft standard is provided with an opportunity to comment on its provisions. FWPA will make draft standards publicly available via the FWPA and WoodSolutions websites and publicly announce the existence of draft standards.

9.2 Achieving and Demonstrating Consensus

FWPA acknowledges that there are two key processes in standards development – transparency and consensus – and that consensus shall be embodied in all Standards. FWPA, through the SWC ensures that all decisions on the technical content of Standards have been based on agreed and verifiable consensus. The FWPA Board, through the SRP, arbitrates on whether the criteria for achieving a consensus have been met. Where the SRP deems that consensus has not been achieved, it may recommend a process to resolve the impasse.

9.3 Final Process Approval

Process approval will be dependent on the type of Standard produced, however final approval for Standards will be managed by the FWPA National Codes and Standards

Manager with the approval of the FWPA Board. Standards intended for referencing in the NCC will require participation and conformance with ABCB procedures.

9.4 Regular Review of Standards Development Process

The FWPA will regularly review and continually improve its standards development process by conducting an internal audit regularly, but no longer than 5 years between reviews.

9.5 Referring to other standards

References to other standards must be valid and relevant to the standard being prepared. The FWPA Standard shall not reference specific clauses as they may change in subsequent editions. Only the current edition of another standard may be referenced. The applicability of subsequent editions or amendments of referenced standards is a matter for determination by the users of the standard. References must be dated unless it is accepted that it will be possible to use all future changes of the referenced document for the purposes of the referring document or for informative references.

9.6 Amending standards

After a standard has been published, new information may be presented or errors found in the printed document. When this occurs an amended version of the standard may be issued. correction amendments may correct misprints or production faults in the document but not new material or affect the application of the standard. Revised text amendments add new material or change existing requirements that affect the application of the standard. Amendments must be approved by the FWPA Board through the SRP prior to publication.

9.7 Regular review and maintenance of standards

FWPA is committed to maintaining and reviewing our Standards and will:

- Regularly review the technical content of Standards, supplements or other documentation.
- Review Standards every 10 years or sooner if required.

10.1 General

The following information and guidance has been summarised and extracted from the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) document entitled [“Protocol for the Development of National Construction Code Referenced Document”](#) .

The full document should be read by any members of an SRP or SWC Committee before embarking on Standards intended for development as an NCC referenced document.

The processes described hereunder are similar to those described above in the main body of this Procedures Manual with the main differences being:

- The rigour of proposing an NCC document for development which may include more stringent requirements for justifying the proposal and the analysis of Net Benefit of the Proposal
- Possible additional requirements for composition of the SWC and possible inclusion of

a representative of the ABCB

- Stringent requirements for drafting style and criteria primarily due to the call up of NCC documents in regulation and legislation.

10.2 National Construction Code

The NCC is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) developed to incorporate all on-site construction requirements into a single code. The NCC comprises of the BCA (NCC Volumes One and Two) and the PCA (NCC Volume Three).

- a) Volume One: pertains primarily to Class 2 to 9 buildings.
- b) Volume Two: pertains primarily to Class 1 and 10 buildings.
- c) Volume Three: pertains primarily to plumbing and drainage associated with all classes of buildings.

The NCC is developed and maintained by the ABCB in conjunction with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments. The NCC provides a uniform set of technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures, and design and installation of plumbing and drainage systems, throughout Australia. The NCC is given legal effect by the relevant legislation in each State and Territory. This legislation determines the application of the NCC within the relevant jurisdiction. The manner of legislative reference, application and administrative arrangements may differ between each of the States and Territories.

10.3 NCC Performance Requirements

The Performance Requirements are the minimum level that buildings, building elements, and plumbing and drainage systems must meet. A building, plumbing or drainage solution will comply with the NCC if it satisfies the Performance Requirements, which are the legal requirements of the NCC. The Performance Requirements can be met using either a Performance Solution (an Alternative Solution) or a Deemed-to-Satisfy Solution, which often include NCC referenced documents.

10.4 NCC Referenced Documents

The technical provisions of the NCC are supported by referenced documents. These documents provide a means of complying, or a means for demonstrating compliance, with the Performance Requirements of the NCC. Once referenced by the NCC, these documents become part of the building and plumbing regulatory framework and therefore must be prepared to ensure compatibility with both the legal and technical requirements of the State and Territory building and plumbing control systems. A NCC referenced document could cover a range of matters including:

- a) A material e.g. concrete, steel, timber or copper.
- b) A product e.g. roof tiles, fibre-cement sheets or PVC-U pipes and fittings.
- c) Design e.g. designs methods for timber structures.
- d) Installation e.g. the installation of roof tiles or a heated water service.
- e) Testing or measuring e.g. fire tests methods on building materials, a sound pressure level measuring method or testing of products in contact with drinking water.

Stages

There are four stages in the NCC referenced document development process:

- a) Proposal stage.
- b) Drafting stage.
- c) Public consultation stage.
- d) Finalisation/Ballot stage.

NOTE Guidance on these stages is contained within the ABCB Protocol Document referenced at the start of this section.

Proposal Stage:

The proposal shall be submitted to the ABCB in electronic format and shall contain the following:

- a) Project leader's name and contact details.
- b) Composition of the development committee
- c) A proposed scope of work.
- d) Justification of the proposal, including:
 - i. Clear evidence of a problem and impacted stakeholders i.e. demonstrate why the current referenced document is not working and how stakeholders are affected.
 - ii. How the proposal is expected to solve the problem.
 - iii. How the proposal will result in a net benefit (benefits outweigh costs).
- e) Relevance to specific performance requirements/sections/clauses of the NCC.
- f) Relationship to other NCC primary referenced documents.
- g) Target date for project completion.
- h) Any other relevant information.

10 5 Preliminary Impact Analysis

A Preliminary Impact Analysis (PIA) is an early-stage analysis of the impacts of proposals to change a NCC referenced document and is to be undertaken by the document proposer. A PIA should accompany the document at the drafting stage and the finalisation stage. The PIA needs to be commenced at the beginning of the drafting stage and updated at regular intervals during the development of the proposed referenced document. The PIA will then be used to support the proposal when considered by the ABCB's BCC and/or the PCC. An insufficient PIA can result in the proposal being rejected or a request to the proposer for more information. To ensure that the PIA meets ABCB requirements, proposers should refer to the ABCB's "Good-practice-guide-for-preliminary-impact-analysis" found on the ABCB's website. The PIA is a pro-forma document which includes some guiding questions and gives an indication of the kind of language and detail to be used. If a PIA identifies major and adverse impacts, the proposal to reference a document may not be supported as it has not passed the regulatory justification process. However, in some instances, a proposal with major

impacts may be subjected to a full Regulation Impact Statement. A PIA is not usually required for the revision or amendment of a NCC secondary referenced document.

10.6 Regulation Impact Statement

A vital part of rigorous impact assessment is the preparation of a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) as detailed in the COAG Best Practice Regulation Guide. A RIS is undertaken for proposed changes that are **deemed to have significant impacts** as identified through the PIA process and includes a more rigorous cost-benefit analysis of the proposal and more detailed stakeholder consultation. The decision to proceed with a RIS is undertaken by the ABCB in consultation with the OBPR. The ABCB consults with the OBPR at various stages during the RIS process to ensure compliance with the COAG Best Practice Regulation Guide. The proposer of the referenced document may be required to supply information regarding the impacts of the proposed document, in terms of costs and benefits, as input to the RIS process. The proposer must be aware that if an impact assessment in the form of a full RIS is required a period of 6 to 12 months may be necessary for completion of the RIS process. A RIS, if required, will be conducted on the accepted publication draft.

10.7 Document Drafting Style and Criteria

The ABCB Protocol contains guidance on the format and recommended wording for a referenced document. Advice is given regarding the use of normative and informative language, notes, commissioning provisions that may be used in Quality Assurance systems, and more.

11.0 Standards Intended as an Australian Standard

11.1 General

If FWPA and the SRP recommend a standard as an Australian Standard through Standards Australia (SA), the Standard will need to be proposed and developed in compliance with Standards Australia processes. These processes are generally in alignment with those contained in this Procedures document. In general, a proposal for a Standard would be forwarded to SA by FWPA through the National Standards and Codes Manager using an SA Project Proposal form. It is likely that the proposal would be considered by an existing SA Committee before the proposal would be formally considered by SA as an Australian Standard.

It should be noted that if this path is chosen and the proposal is accepted by SA, the formal Committee processes would be undertaken by an existing SA Committee, however, a draft of the Standard may have already been developed by FWPA or proposed by another person or body. In any case, a draft document would need to go through the formal SA Processes to become an Australian Standard

11.2 Net Benefit

Standards Australia has defined Net Benefit to mean “having an overall positive impact on relevant communities”. Where a party is proposing a project to develop, amend or revise an Australian Standard, that party is responsible for developing a Net Benefit case and submitting it as part of the project proposal. Standards Australia’s policy is that a Standard must provide a value or benefit to the Australian community that exceeds the costs likely to

be imposed on suppliers, users and other parties in the community as a result of its development and implementation. Each Australian Standard must demonstrate positive Net Benefit to the community as a whole. The Net Benefit Case must be made prior to the development of an Australian Standard see [“Guide to Net Benefit”](#).

Standards Australia Guides

- Standards Australia Patent Policy [SA Patent Policy](#)
- Competition Law Guidelines [SD Competition Law Guidelines](#)

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