

# working with signatories

# **guidance for consumers**

July 2021



Australian  
Carbon Industry  
**Code of Conduct**



## Who are Signatories to the Code of Conduct?

Signatories are entities that have made an application and been approved by the Code Administrator as Signatories to the Carbon Industry Code of Conduct.

Signatories are typically carbon service providers (project developers, agents, aggregators and advisers) who provide project services and/or advisory services to consumers regarding registration, implementation and management of carbon offsets projects (including under the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) and other Voluntary Offset Schemes); the provision of legal/financial/technical advice; and the trading of carbon credits in the Australian market.

For the current list of Signatories to the Code, on the [Current Signatories](#) page of the Code website.

## Who are considered consumers under the Code of Conduct?

The Carbon Industry Code of Conduct recognises that there are various consumers who interact with Signatories to the Code, within the industry and on both the supply and demand side of the carbon market.

Consumers can be involved in the development and management of both land-based and non-land-based carbon projects. These consumers may be approached by businesses to agree to and/or to sign agreements for carbon projects to operate on land, sites and/or within their business operations. These consumers require protections from risks associated with agreeing to carbon projects being undertaken where they have legal rights and/or have an eligible interest. Examples of these supply-side consumers include Native Title Holders, Native Title claimants, farmers, landowners, pastoralists, site owners, business owners, landlords and tenants.

Consumers also represent the buyers of carbon credits generated by carbon offsets projects. These consumers require protections from risks associated with receiving advice on and purchasing carbon credits for either compliance or voluntary purposes. Examples of these demand-side consumers include Government, business or community/other organisations and individuals.

Note: The Code defines supply-side consumers and demand-side consumers in the Carbon Market as clients.

## What should clients of a Signatory expect?

Signatories to the Carbon Industry Code of Conduct have agreed to conduct their business in line with the requirements of the Code. Clients of a Signatory can expect to be dealt with in a manner that befits the best practices outlined in the Carbon Industry Code of Conduct.

Signatories have obligations relating to the types of information, advice, and documentation that they provide to clients. When providing project services to clients, Signatories are required to apply best practices under the Code to their business activities both before a project commences, as well as during the project's lifetime.

More detail on Signatories' obligations to clients can be found in the Code Overview Fact Sheet on the Code website's [Resources](#) page, and in Section 2.2 and 2.3 of the Code. Please refer to the Code of Conduct (Version 2.0), available on the Code of Conduct website, or contact the Code Administrator via email if you require more information.



## Making a complaint against a Signatory

Should a complaint need to be made against a company identifying itself as a Signatory to the Code, the first point of contact should be with the company directly. In accordance with the Code, Signatories are required to have an appropriate internal complaints handling procedure that is fair, efficient and transparent. Under this procedure Signatories are required to acknowledge that they have received your complaint, and provide an expected timeframe for resolution of the complaint.

You are also encouraged to raise the complaint with the relevant consumer protection organisation or scheme regulator (see Appendix 1, section 5 of the Code for a list of relevant consumer protection organisations).

In the event that you are not able to raise the complaint directly with the Signatory, or if your complaint has not been actioned or acknowledged, or if you are unsatisfied with outcomes from raising your complaint with a Signatory, you may contact the Code Administrator directly by email to notify us of this issue, and/or submit a complaint through the **Client Complaints Form** on the Code website's [Resources](#) page.

Once your complaint had been lodged with the Code Administrator, it will be handled in accordance with the **Code Administrator's Complaints Handling and Breaches Procedure** which can be found on the Code website's [Resources](#) page.

## Notifying the Code Administrator of a complaint

If you have made a complaint against a company identifying itself as a Signatory to the Code (either directly to the Signatory or through a relevant consumer protection organisation), you can notify the Code Administrator by completing the **Client Complaint Form** on the Code website's [Resources](#) page.

The Code Administrator will log this information in its Complaints Register and use this information to monitor the effectiveness of the Code and inform the Code Annual Report. Information collected will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

Please note: The Code Administrator is not a dispute resolution body and will encourage all complainants to contact the Signatory against which they are making the complaint in the first instance.

## Suspected breach of the Code

If you have a complaint involving a suspected breach of the Code, or you have lodged a complaint against a Signatory regarding a suspected breach with a consumer protection organisation, you should also complete the **Client Complaint Form**, available on the Code website's [Resources](#) page. You can fill out the appropriate sections of the **Client Complaint Form** relating to a suspected breach of the Code.

All suspected breaches of the Code, notified to the Code Administrator, will be treated with appropriate confidentiality and will be handled in accordance with the **Code Administrator's Complaints Handling and Breaches Procedure** which can be found on the Code website's [Resources](#) page.



## Stakeholder & Client FAQs

### How are complaints made against a Signatory?

The first contact for any complaint is directly with the Signatory. If someone making a complaint is unable to contact the Signatory or the Signatory is not responding to the contact, or if you are unsatisfied with outcomes from raising your complaint with a Signatory, you can notify the Code Administrator using the **Client Complaints Form** available on the Code website's [Resources](#) page.

### A complaint relates to a suspected breach of the Code. How can this be reported?

If the complaint relates to a suspected breach of the Code, clients are encouraged to notify the Code Administrator using the **Client Complaints Form** available on the Code website's [Resources](#) page.

### The Signatory has not responded to the complainant regarding the status of a complaint.

Signatories are required to provide feedback on the complaint investigation within 21 days of receiving the complaint. If additional time is required for the investigation, the Signatory must inform the complainant that this is the case. The Signatory must complete the investigation and notify the complainant of the outcome within 45 days of receiving the original complaint. Clients may contact the Code Administrator if they are unable to contact the Signatory regarding the status of the complaint investigation by the Signatory.

### The complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints investigation by the Signatory.

#### What are the next steps?

If consumers (clients) are not satisfied with the manner in which their complaint has been handled by the Signatory, they may contact a relevant consumer protection organisation. They may also escalate the complaint to the Code Administrator using the **Client Complaints Form** the Code website's [Resources](#) page.

### What will happen with my complaint after I have lodged it with the Code Administrator?

The Code Administrator will provide written acknowledgment of a complaint to the complainant within three (3) business days of receiving the complaint. All information received in relation to the complaint, including all commercial-in-confidence information, will be treated with appropriate confidentiality and subject to the requirements of relevant laws, in particular the Privacy Act 1988.

If the complaint does not fall within the Code Administrators jurisdiction as the entity subject to a complaint is not a Signatory or the complaint does not relate to the Code, the Code Administrator will inform the complainant within ten business days of receiving the complaint that the complaint should be re-directed to the relevant consumer protection agency or other body.

If the Code Administrator determines that the complaint may constitute a breach of the Code then a full investigation by the Code Administrator will take place. The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

More detail on how complaints are handled by the Code Administrator can be found in the **Code Administrator's Complaints Handling and Breaches Procedure** which can be found on the Code website's [Resources](#) page.

**for more information please contact**

Code Administrator

[code.administrator@carbonmarketinstitute.org](mailto:code.administrator@carbonmarketinstitute.org)



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