

Australian Forest Certification Scheme



Setting the standard
for sustainable forest management in Australia and internationally

The Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) is the leading management standard of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS), which certifies extensive areas of native forests and plantations across Australia. The AFCS also includes a Chain of Custody Standard to track forest and wood products through the supply chain. This provides consumers with assurance that the forest and wood products they are purchasing are from forests which are managed to the highest possible standards. The AFS is a world class forestry standard which is endorsed by the world's biggest assessor of sustainable forest management, the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).



Promoting Sustainable Forest Management



Why are forests certified?

Consumers, governments and enterprises around the world are increasingly seeking assurances that the forest and wood products they purchase are sourced from legally and sustainably managed forests. Independent, third party certification of sustainable forest management has developed as the most effective means of demonstrating this assurance.

The AFS was developed in Australia, by Australians, as part of a worldwide push to develop systems for the certification of sustainably produced forest and wood products. These products vary from house framing, flooring and cladding, to furniture and paper products.

How was the AFS developed?

The AFS was developed through a rigorous 3 year process where community, industry, expert scientists and government representatives came together to draft the standard. It is based on internationally recognised frameworks, such as ISO 14000 environmental management standards and the criteria of the 'Montreal Process' for sustainable forest management. The AFS has been developed utilising the formal Australian Standards process and has been designed to suit Australian forests, legal systems and community expectations.

In 2002, Australia's Federal, State and Territory Forestry Ministers, endorsed the AFS as "the first purely Australian Standard, which is designed to define environmental performance and sustainability in the forestry industry."



Chain of Custody



Chain of Custody Certification allows tracking of forest and wood products from their origins in a certified forest through to their end use by the consumer.

It can be utilised over all steps in the supply chain; in harvesting, transportation, primary and secondary processing, manufacturing, distribution and sales.

Organisations obtaining forest and wood products from certified forests can utilise the AFCS's Chain of Custody Standard (an Australian Standard®) process to provide the end consumer with assurance that their products have been sourced from an AFS certified forest.

Certification Framework

The AFS is an Australian Standard® delivered under Australia's conformity assessment framework of standards development.

Accreditation of certification bodies is achieved through the Joint Accreditation System of Australia & New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) and certification of forests under the AFS is carried out by accredited, independent, third party certification bodies.

The major strength of the AFCS, when compared to other forest certification schemes, is the separation and subsequent independence of the main elements of the certification scheme. This ensures independent assessments are made throughout the certification process, providing a robust, transparent and credible certification scheme.



“the first purely Australian Standard,
which is designed to define environmental performance and sustainability in the forestry industry *”*



AFS Coverage

As at January 2007, 13 major forest managers have AFS certification in Australia, accounting for over 9 million hectares of native forests and plantations on both public and private tenures.

This includes private forestry operations and the government forestry operations in New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, and Queensland. The Victorian government forest manager, VicForests, recently finalised its AFS certification and it is anticipated that the Western Australian Government's forests will become certified under the AFS in the near future.

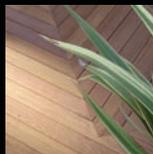


...sustainably produced forest and wood products

International recognition

The AFCS has mutual international recognition under the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) schemes. PEFC is the world's largest forest certification body certifying nearly 200 million hectares of forests worldwide. PEFC has 32 members on six continents with 22 endorsed schemes, including the AFCS, under its mutual recognition framework.

PEFC seeks to promote and support sustainable forest management worldwide by mutually recognising national forest certification schemes which are developed in line with its technical criteria. PEFC ensures that the highest international standards for standards development, accreditation and certification of the International Standards Organisation and International Accreditation Forum are being met and ensures transferability into the marketplace.



Consumer demand? Coming soon...

Although demand for certified wood products in Australia by consumers has not yet reached the levels of countries in Europe or Japan, certified sustainable resource products are becoming increasingly sought after or specified for use. The availability of AFS labelled products will increase markedly in the near future as more major forest managers achieve AFS certification and there is an increased uptake of chain of custody certification throughout the supply chain.

This will mean companies selling wood products such as sawn timber beams, veneers, flooring, window framing and paper products will be offering products with AFS certification labels.

As has been demonstrated by demand in international markets, an increase in requests for AFS certified timber will play a major role in driving the availability of AFS labelled wood products in the market place.

Also, the Australian forest industry's pursuit of AFS and chain of custody certification provides a clear demonstration of the sectors commitment to environmental leadership and product stewardship.



Promoting Sustainable Forest Management

Contact Information

Further information on the AFS can be found at:
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Information on the PEFC can be found at:
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