

December, 2008

### INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND (INITIAL) ENDORSEMENT

Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFSL) is a member of the **Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) Council** - one of 31 countries on the Council including seven non-European countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Gabon, Malaysia and the USA) with 21 endorsed schemes. The Secretariat of the PEFC Council is based in Switzerland.

The essential components of the **Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS)** were evaluated against the requirements of the PEFC Council's Technical Document and its Annexes for the purposes of seeking mutual recognition with other national schemes within the PEFC Council framework.

In October 2003, AFSL submitted its **application and scheme documentation** for a conformance (evaluation) assessment by the PEFC Council, which sought as an outcome for Australia, the mutual recognition of the AFCS under the PEFC Council.

The PEFC Council let a contract to JP Management Consulting (Europe), following a competitive tendering process within Europe, to deliver an evaluation of the AFCS. The consultant's team based in Finland, New Zealand and the UK commenced work in January 2004. An essential component of the assessment included an in-country visit (over a week in March 2004) to meet with interested stakeholders in Australia and discuss the various elements of the AFCS.

A Draft Final Report was provided to AFSL for its comments with the **Final Report** made available to the PEFC Council at the end of July 2004. The Final Report was considered by the Board of the PEFC Council at their September 2004 meeting and, as a positive recommendation ensued from the Board based on the consultant's recommendation, a ballot was undertaken of all member countries in September/October 2004. The member countries voted to endorse the AFCS for mutual recognition under the PEFC Council umbrella.

The decision on mutual recognition was announced at the **PEFC Council's General Assembly** in October 2004 which was held in Santiago, Chile. It should also be noted that the Italian and Chilean schemes were also evaluated at the same time as the Australian scheme with a similar decisions announced at the General Assembly.

Of interest to Australia, as a **Montreal Process** country, is that the **Chilean scheme** had its positive decision on mutual recognition at the same time as Australia as it has also undergone a similar evaluation process by a different consultant; **Brazil's** and **Canada's** forest certification schemes have now followed Australia and Chile and have received mutual recognition under the PEFC umbrella during 2005 and the **SFI scheme from the USA**, which had been evaluated during 2005, received a positive decision on mutual recognition which was announced in early December 2005.

---

**PEFC RE-ENDORSEMENT PROCESS - 2008**

- Only a national governing body, being a member of the PEFC Council, can seek to have its national forest certification scheme evaluated by the PEFC Council for possible endorsement or re-endorsement under its mutual recognition framework. Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFS Limited) is the Australian member of the PEFC Council;
  - AFS Limited submitted its documentation under the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) to the PEFC Secretariat in March 2008. AFCS documentation was comprised of Australian Standards®, Policies, Procedures, Guides and Manuals of both AFS Limited, JAS-ANZ and Standards Australia which covered the technical documentation requirements of the PEFC Council under the following headings:
    - Standard setting procedures
    - Standard implementation procedures
    - Forest management standard
    - Chain of custody standard
    - Certification and accreditation procedures
    - Logo usage
- The PEFC Secretariat provided a tender document to its panel of international consultants along with the AFCS documentation. Based on an evaluation of the submitted tenders, the PEFC Secretariat contracted a consultant in July 2008 to undertake the evaluation of the 2008 AFCS for re-endorsement under the PEFC mutual recognition framework over a defined timeline;
- The consultants assess the 2008 AFCS against the PEFC Council's Technical Document and its Annexes for the issues covered in the second dot point. This was further augmented by material supplied by AFS Limited in response to requests from the consultants based on the analysis of the AFCS and in response to interim reports during the evaluation. There was a 60 day public consultation period (July – September) where public comments on the AFCS were sent to the consultants for evaluation and if required, response by AFS Limited.
- The first interim report was submitted on 21 August 2008. The second interim report was submitted on 3 November 2008 and AFS Limited provided comments on 21 November 2008.
- The final report including a recommendation on re-endorsement and an Executive Summary of the evaluation process is to be delivered to both PEFC Council and AFS Limited within 2 weeks from the delivery of the AFS Limited comments to the second interim report;
- The PEFC Secretariat provides the final report to a Panel of Experts (PoE) who undertake a review of the consultant's report and, based on comments from the PoE, the report is finalised by the consultants and provided to the PEFC Secretariat and AFS Limited to finalise the evaluation contract;
- The PEFC Secretariat provide the consultant's final report to the PEFC Council Board of Directors for both its consideration and for a recommendation on whether to proceed to a postal vote on re-endorsement of the AFCS by the PEFC Council membership;
- If the recommendation from the PEFC Council Board of Directors is positive, the PEFC Secretariat organise a postal ballot of the PEFC Council over a 30 day period to allow members to vote on the re-endorsement of the AFCS;

- If the vote is a positive one by a majority of votes, the AFCS is re-endorsed under the PEFC Council mutual recognition framework for a five year period.

The AFCS documentation can be accessed from the PEFC web site:

[http://www.pefc.org/internet/html/members\\_schemes/4\\_1120\\_59/5\\_1246\\_306/5\\_1123\\_1878.htm](http://www.pefc.org/internet/html/members_schemes/4_1120_59/5_1246_306/5_1123_1878.htm)

The PEFC Technical Documents and its Annexes can be accessed from the PEFC web site:

[http://www.pefc.org/internet/html/documentation/4\\_1311\\_400.htm](http://www.pefc.org/internet/html/documentation/4_1311_400.htm)