

## AS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management



### The Source

#### Growing Demand for Sustainable Products

Consumers are becoming better informed and more concerned about the environmental source of the goods they buy. The environmental impact of materials depends on a range of factors, including how they are initially produced, processed, manufactured, transported and transformed.

Consumers are increasingly demanding that the timber and wood products they buy come from sustainably managed forests. Many global regions such as Europe, North America, Canada and Asia now will not import timber unless it can be traced back to the certified source; the forest. This is also becoming the demand domestically.

Producers can demonstrate their social and environmental credentials by adopting the Australian Forestry Standard AS 4708. Certification is one of the tools the industry can use to assure the public that the wood & wood products they buy advance environmental responsibility and sustainable forest management.

#### Financial Risk Profile

Financial institutions are increasingly using credible corporate social responsibility reporting to assess financial risk profiles. As a recognised Australian Standard, AS 4708 certification provides companies with a credible and recognisable demonstration that their forest management system supports sustainable forestry practices.

*“...certification provides your organisation the recognition of ‘best practice’ in forestry...”*

#### The Source

The Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) Australian Forestry Standard AS 4708 has been used to certify over 8.7 million hectares (77%) of native forests and plantations across Australia. The AFCS target is to certify the remaining 2.5 million hectares by 2012.

#### Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

Forest certification is a process used by companies and state governments to demonstrate sustainable forest management in their production forests.

SFM is defined as ‘optimising the tangible and intangible social and economic benefits which forests can provide the community, with the goals of maintaining functional basis of forested land, biodiversity and the option available for future generations’.

SFM has three values at its core; maintaining ecological processes within the forest, maintaining biodiversity and optimising environmental, economic and social benefits.

The principles of SFM are supported by the development and implementation of codes of practice for harvesting, certification and environmental management systems. The Australian Forest Standard is one of these codes.

#### WHY CHOOSE THE AUSTRALIAN FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME (AFCS)?

Standards contribute to the protection of human beings, animals, property, forests and the environment against hazards of all kinds, ensure inter-changeability and inter-operability, and facilitate communication by means of common terminology. Standards are independently certified; when standards are absent we soon take notice.

In the domestic market your organisation can make the claim that it supports the sustainable management of Australian forests, promotes Australian produced and made products and supports the Australian work force – **forestry and the ‘extended’ industry make up (approx.) 3.3% of Australia’s total employment.**

The AFCS has the only Forest Management Certification process that is an Australian Standard AS 4708.



#### AS 4708 FOREST MANAGEMENT

- Guaranteed independently audited and verifiable certification of sustainable forest management from forest to end use.
- Guaranteed Australian Standard that provides consistency nationally and internationally.
- Guaranteed proof of your company’s corporate, environmental and social responsibility by forming the foundation of a credible forest management system.
- Guaranteed recognition and traceability as the source for wood & wood products Chain of Custody

# The Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) and the Industry

The AFCS is the leading authoritative voice for forest and wood products certification in Australia. The scheme has an open and transparent process for stakeholder consultation and involvement in the review and ongoing improvement of the Standards to ensure business relevance and capability, environmental responsibility and social awareness. As an industry stakeholder your organisation can become a member and be involved.

Go to [www.forestrystandard.org.au](http://www.forestrystandard.org.au) for more information

## International Recognition

The international language for commerce is standards. Adherence to agreed specifications for products, services and test methods underpins international commerce. The common acceptance of standards is fundamental to the success of robust, fair and free trade. While standardisation provides important domestic benefits, it is becoming more and more important internationally.

The AFCS National Standards are world-class forestry standards that are endorsed by the world's biggest assessor of sustainable forest management. The Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification scheme (PEFC). PEFC has 35 member countries, over 209 million hectares of certified world forests and over 5000 CoC organisations, all with mutual recognition of the AFCS through its membership.



## Business Benefits

Obtaining certification with AFCS gives 'proof of practice' through use of the TradeMark logo. You receive a licence for the use of the logo that has your company's unique registration ID.

The label delivers the message – **"Our forest management system undergoes continuous and rigorous independent audits against a world-class Australian Standard for environmental sustainable Forest Management – and we can prove it"**.

Many Forest Management organisations make statements of good environmental and sustainability practices. The certification of, and licence to use the TradeMark, provides proof that is recognised world-wide. Forest Management certification provides your organisation the recognition of 'best practice' in forestry that is increasingly being demanded by all consumers regarding the source of their wood and wood products.

## What's involved?

### Who needs to be AFCS Certified?

All private and public production forests. The AFCS Forest Management Standard AS 4708 provides a basis for voluntary and independent certification of production forests. It enables Australian companies to compete in international markets where consumers are increasingly demanding verification that timber products have come from sustainably-managed forests.

### Is the process costly and time consuming?

The cost can vary depending on your current management systems and practices. However, the majority of organisations already meet good management and forestry practices. The audit and certification is carried out by an independent third-party certification body. The requirement for forest management certification is to bridge the gap between your organisation's current practices and the AS 4708 standard.

### Why should you become certified?

Consumer awareness will increasingly grow, and with that will come the demand on your business to prove that it meets the corporate social and environmental responsibility commitments of sustainable forest management. As the source and producer of this highly valued and in demand product your practices are the core to the link in the chain right through to the end consumer.

Go to [www.forestrystandard.org.au](http://www.forestrystandard.org.au) for guidelines to becoming certified.

## DID YOU KNOW? Forest and Forest Management

- Forest industries are Australia's second largest manufacturing industry, with an annual turnover of \$19 billion. The industry contributes around 1% to Australia's GDP and 7.2 % cent of manufacturing output.
- In 2006-07 the forestry and wood products industry directly employed 83,400 people, including 11,300 people in the forestry and logging sector, which is an 11% increase over the past decade.

Source: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au)

- New plantations are being established at a rate of 73,000 ha per year, and around 40,000 ha of harvested plantations are re-established annually to meet timber supply requirements of new investments in timber processing.
- The Australian forest estate is storing 38.5 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. In 2005, the Australian Greenhouse Office estimated Australia's total CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions were 559 million tonnes, so Australian forests are storing 69 years worth of emissions.

Source: Plantations 2020 – [www.plantations2020.com.au/forestry](http://www.plantations2020.com.au/forestry)

## AUSTRALIAN FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME (AFCS)

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