

19-March-12

Draft Standard Available for Public comment Revision of the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management

Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFS Ltd) announces the commencement of the first public comment phase of the revision process of the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (AS 4708).

The Standard Review Committee appointed by AFS Ltd to review the Australian Standard AS4708 has released a draft for public comment. The draft revised Standard has been sent to the broad range of stakeholders in forest management seeking their comments. The Australian Standard AS4708-2007 is five years old and is due for its periodic review. The Committee is seeking public comment on the draft standard via two public comment periods. The first public comment period is from 19 March 2012 to 18 May 2012. The second public comment period will be based on a revised draft and is currently scheduled to be undertaken from June to August 2012.

“The Australian Forestry Standard is recognised as a world class standard and regular review and improvement is required to maintain this recognition.” said the Chairman of the Standard Review Committee, Dr Paul Biggs

“The Committee is made up of a broad range of interested and affected stakeholders and they are keen to get public feedback on the draft Standard to compare with their own views on how the Standard can be further improved” he added.

The review process is being undertaken in accordance with Standards Australia procedures. AFS Ltd is accredited as a Standards Development Organisation and can therefore develop and review Australian Standards provided the necessary procedures are followed.

The Australian Forest Certification Scheme, of which AS4708 is a key component, is also accredited by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). PEFC is the world’s largest certification system for sustainable forest management. PEFC requirements have also continued to evolve in recent years and the Standard Review Committee has sought to ensure that the revised Australian Standard (AS4708) continues to be consistent with PEFC requirements.

The intensive public participation plan for the project will fully engage all stakeholders groups and interested parties within and connected to sustainable forestry and the supply chain of wood and wood products. Couple this with rigorous adherence to international processes and guidelines, as well as an emphasis on science and evidence, this review project will ensure that this internationally recognised Australian Standard continues to be regarded as the most credible and robust forest certification tool.

The draft revision of the Standard and a submission form can be downloaded from the AFS Ltd website at www.forestrystandard.org.au.

For more information about the revision of the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management contact: Richard Stanton (National Secretary – AFS Ltd) on 02 6122 9000, or email Standards-Revision@forestrystandard.org.au

NOTES

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is a Standards Development Organisation and a not-for-profit public company registered in July 2003. The company owns the standard development functions and manages the elements of the **Australian Forest Certification Scheme**. The Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) will:

- provide Australian and overseas consumers with an independent, internationally recognised third-party certification scheme for forest management in Australia
- promote a culture of 'continuous improvement' of the sustainable forest management practices in Australia
- support a market for forest products that are a result of sustainable forest management practices and value adding processes that maintain the integrity of the source forest certification and promote the broader environmental benefits of using wood-based products.

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