

Revision of the Australian Standards for Sustainable Forest Management and Chain of Custody

The Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFSL) announces the commencement of the 5-yearly revision process of the Australian Standards for Sustainable Forest Management (AS 4708) and Chain of Custody of wood and wood products (AS 4707).

The revision will be a concentrated and collaborative process spanning 2 years. 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 these internationally recognised Australian Standards continue to be regarded as the most credible and robust forest certification tools.

Responsibility of the reviews and ultimate decision making powers will reside with Standards Reference Committees (SRC), one for each Australian Standard. SRCs members will consist of representatives who cover scientific, environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects of sustainable forest management and wood production in Australia. Call for nominations from representative national organisations, industries bodies and stakeholders to participate on the SRCs are being mailed out and will be advertised in leading publications. There are many places that need to be filled and AFSL is ensuring that all interested parties are aware of their ability to be involved either on the committee or through public consultation.

Mr Geoff Gorrie, Chairperson AFSL stated “we are very pleased with the plan to conduct this revision as it will ensure a wide coverage of topics and criteria, and that engagement with stakeholders and interested parties is a priority. We are also very happy that Dr Paul Biggs has accepted the role as Chair to the SRC for Sustainable Forest Management. Paul has been a leader in Australian forest management for over 25 years, in that time developing a strong technical and scientific background, and greatly suited to this SRC Chair appointment.”

Kayt Watts, CEO of AFSL said “the revision process involves a public call for comment on both Australian Standards. It will be interesting to see the types of issues and aspects of the criteria of the Australian Standards that will be raised in this process, especially in this ever changing forestry and wood production environment.”

“AFSL is committed to the revision process which enables a fully transparent and inclusive consultation. We have engaged Fitzpatrick Woods Consulting (FWC) to provide an independent management service to the revision project, especially relating to collaborative stakeholder management and standards revision support to the SRCs”, Ms Watts said.

FWC is a specialist consulting firm with particular expertise in the Australian and regional forestry and forest products industries and in stakeholder identification and management.

Revision of the Australian Standards for Forest Management and wood products Chain of Custody will require significant support from industry, government and all stakeholders. AFSL will soon be commencing engagement with industry partners and the Australian Government to discuss assistance options. Needless to say, the revision process cannot be completed without considerable support.

For more information about the revision of the Australian Standards for Chain of Custody and Sustainable Forest Management contact: Kayt Watts (CEO - AFSL) 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.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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