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## **Sustainable forest management regime up for review**

By Kayt Watts \*

With the five yearly review of Australia's sustainable forest management standards about to commence, the opportunity to help ensure Australia's forest management remains at the forefront of sustainability is open to every interested organisation and stakeholder.

Nominations are open for the broad and inclusive Standards Review Committee. The Committee will consist of around twenty people from a range of backgrounds, interests and expertise. However, for those who are not directly involved in the Committee, a wide range of stakeholder meetings and briefings will also be conducted on a regular basis.

For those just seeking to keep up to date with the standards review process, there will be regular written updates and constant updating via the internet.

The Australian Forest Standards are a cornerstone of our national regime of sustainable forest management for both plantation forestry and native forestry. Through scientific and evidence based standards on economic, social and environmental criteria, the Australian standards provide certainty of the genuine sustainability of forestry activities and the products sourced from them.

More than 21 forest owners and managers (certified organisations) have been independently assessed and audited as meeting the requirements of the Australian Standard for forest management. Through that process, approximately 90% of Australia's productive plantations and native forestry are recognised as being sustainably managed and are required to meet an ongoing regime that is regularly audited.

It is true that the five yearly reviews of Australian Standards are driven by formal standards setting requirements that ensure the rigour of the processes used to develop and maintain our system of national standards. But while in that sense, this review can be viewed as 'coming around with the rations', it is also an opportunity for new and emerging issues to find their place in the standards.

The aim of the review is to encompass in the Australian Standard, all of the issues relevant to the ongoing sustainability of forest management in Australia. In completing the review, the expectations of the Australian and international community that forests are managed to a comprehensive and leading series of standards on social, economic and environmental considerations can be met.

The first step on what will be a two year review journey is for every interested stakeholder to consider who they know would make suitable contributions to the Standards Reference Committee.

Nominations to participate on the Standards Reference Committee for the Australian Standard in Sustainable Forest Management will be based on area of expertise. Preference will be given to those nominated or endorsed by a National representative body, although individual nominations can be made and will be considered.

AFSL is also holding a lunchtime information seminar on Thursday 4 November at The Windsor Hotel in Melbourne. The seminar will go into detail regarding the revision process, how to be involved and what the requirements are for those who wish to nominate to be a member of the Standards Reference Committee.

For those more interested in the supply chain and end use issues, the review of the Australian Standard on Chain of Custody will commence shortly, with a similar, formal process.

Additional information and nomination form can be accessed from the AFSL website: [www.forestrystandard.org.au](http://www.forestrystandard.org.au)

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## 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.

**Forest Certification** Forest certification is a process, which provides an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood and paper products that the wood used in the products comes from sustainably managed forests. Sustainably managed forests are those whose management implements performance standards based on internationally agreed environmental, social and economic requirements.

## MEDIA CONTACTS

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