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Australian forests protected by high standards

Australia's forest and timber industry is leading the world in sustainable forest management with the help of an organisation that has the support of the Australian government.

The Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) provides the Australian forest and timber industry with easy access to international best practice standards so that forests are managed in an environmentally-friendly way.

"JAS-ANZ has established a program for the accreditation of independent, third-party certification bodies that provide assessment and certification of forest management systems that comply with the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS).

"Many people living in cities are not aware that the forest and timber industry today operates under high standards of environmental management," said the Chief Executive of JAS-ANZ, Tony Craven.

Since 2003, the AFS has set a benchmark for how Australia's forests should be managed for wood production in an environmentally responsible, socially acceptable and economically viable way.

Chair of Australian Forestry Standard Limited, Geoff Gorrie, said that buyers of timber are becoming more interested in where the product they purchase comes from and how it has been produced which reflects similar overseas sentiments.

"In order to satisfy this consumer interest, Australian forest managers and timber producers have moved to the independent certification of forest management systems.

"Today, over 5 million hectares (or 5 million football fields) of native forests and plantations in Australia are certified to the AFS – a standard formally recognised by Standards Australia to meet domestic and international best practices for sustainable forest management," said Mr Gorrie.

"Consumers and retailers need to know that the forests supplying particular wood and forest products are being managed in a sustainable way for future generations.

"Third-party certification against the AFS provides a clear and unambiguous statement that wood production in a particular forest is being managed in accordance with a set of clearly defined environmental, economic, social and cultural performance requirements that support sustainable management of forests," said Mr Gorrie.

"As the peak body responsible for accrediting organisations that certify forest management systems, JAS-ANZ provides confidence in certification to forest managers and timber producers who wish to adopt the AFS.

"Consumers and retailers can also be assured that a certificate issued by any of the three JAS-ANZ accredited certification bodies meets the highest standards for forest management systems," concluded Mr Craven.

About JAS-ANZ

JAS-ANZ is a not-for-profit, fee for service organisation formed under a treaty between the Governments of Australia and New Zealand on 30 October 1991 as the peak accreditation body for Australia and New Zealand.

JAS-ANZ accredits conformity assessment bodies (certification bodies) for the delivery of certification services for management systems, product certification, inspection bodies and personnel certification.

JAS-ANZ accredits some 57 certification bodies in 12 countries that operate 150 different programmes.

Website: <http://www.jas-anz.com.au>

Australian Forestry Standard Limited

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is a not-for-profit, public company which is responsible for and manages the Australian forest certification scheme. The scheme is comprised of Australian Standards for forest management and chain of custody and a labelling scheme for wood and forest products.

The company has two technical committees whose role is to draft and review the two Australian Standards for forest management and chain of custody that supports continual improvement towards sustainable wood production in Australia.

Website: <http://www.forestrystandard.org.au/default.asp>

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