

## **World Bank backs certification of world's forests**

Certified sustainable forestry operations have received recognition from the World Bank at the *High Level Meeting on Forests and Climate* in Sydney, Australia this week.

The World Bank announced that it recognises the need for multiple systems of forest certification, which provides a mechanism to ensure forestry operations are legal and sustainable.

Forest and timber products carrying certification labels and claims provide consumers with the assurance that they are buying products from responsible sources.

Around 9 million hectares of Australia's forests are certified to its own world class forest management standard, The Australian Forestry Standard (AFS). The AFS is recognised internationally through the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC).

"The PEFC is the world's largest certification network with over 200 million hectares of forests worldwide certified to strict environmental criteria," said AFS Limited Chair Geoff Gorrie, who was at the *High Level Meeting on Forests and Climate* to welcome the World Bank's endorsement of forest certification.

"The World Bank recognises the link between sound environmental practices and the welfare of communities. I am pleased that the World Bank is supportive of forest certification such as provided under the PEFC," he said.

"A key theme of the *High Level Meeting on Forests and Climate* is that unsustainable forestry and deforestation are major contributors to climate change. By sustainably managing forests, trees are regrown and carbon stored in wood products.

"Less than 10 per cent of the world's forests are certified, meaning forest stakeholders should encourage the uptake of certification. An increase to 12-15 per cent would make a huge contribution to climate change mitigation.

"In Australia, the forest estate is expanding in size and production native forests are actively managed to reduce greenhouse emissions from bushfires. Purchasing certified wood products is an important environmental choice. So, AFS Limited warmly welcomes the World Bank's support," said Mr Gorrie.

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