



PRESS RELEASE

PEFC welcomes Green Building Council of Australia's' recognition of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS)

Geneva, 3 December 2009 - "As wood has a critically important role to play in carbon sequestration and has arguably the best environmental footprint of all building materials, it is fitting that initiatives promoting sustainable buildings promote wood from sustainably managed forests," said Ben Gunneberg, Director General of PEFC International, the world's largest forest certification system.

PEFC – the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification - accounts for over two thirds of the world's certified sustainable forest management including Australian forests certified under the Australian Forestry Standard.

"We welcome the decision by the Australian Green Building Council to give recognition for wood from all internationally accredited certified sustainable forest management schemes," Mr. Gunneberg continued. "Considering that 90% of the world's forests are not certified to any sustainable forest management systems, rewarding the leaders in this field will promote the uptake of certification, strengthen the supply chain and improve forest management globally. GBCA is therefore to be congratulated on its recent announcement on the inclusion of the AFCS."

Given the beneficial effect of the sustainable management of forests in reducing the negative effect of climate change, choosing sustainably produced timber through the AFCS, Australia's largest certification scheme, will allow the Australian construction industry to provide a positive choice for the environment by being able to source locally produced and processed timber.

This is also excellent news for investment and employment in the global sustainable forestry sector.

The AFCS is underpinned by two Australia Standards, accredited by Standards Australia® and globally aligned to the stringent international forest standards through accreditation by PEFC.

"By choosing and rewarding the use of AFCS certified timber, GBCA is recognising the best practices of the 10% of the world's forest area which are sustainably managed and certified as such."

NOTES

PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) PEFC is a framework for the mutual recognition of credible national or regional forest certification schemes that have been developed based on internationally recognised requirements for sustainable forest management. Since its launch in 1999, PEFC has become the largest forest certification umbrella organisation covering national schemes from all over the world, delivering hundreds of millions of tonnes of wood to the processing industry and then on to the market place from over 200 million hectares of certified forests. PEFC has strong grass roots support from many stakeholders including the forestry sector, governments, trade associations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

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.

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