AFS/01-10-01

PROCEDURE 1

STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE AUSTRALIAN FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME

AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY STANDARD LIMITED
SEPTEMBER 2007

STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE AUSTRALIAN FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME

Objectives

To establish the rules and written procedures for the standards development process within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS).

To require consensus for standards development.

To ensure that the rules and written procedures are compatible with the requirements of the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Schemes' Technical Document and Annex 2 which will facilitate PEFC endorsement and mutual recognition of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme.

Scope

This document covers the standard development process and procedures for the certification of sustainable forest management and chain of custody within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme.

Standard Development Process for Forest Management Certification – The Australian Forestry Standard

Introduction

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is an accredited Standards Development Organisation (SDO). This accreditation is awarded by the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations (ABSDO) [1] of Standards Australia with the current accreditation period expiring on 31 August 2010. As an accredited Standards Development Organisation, Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFS Limited) is compliant with ISO Guide 59:1994 *Code of good practice for standardization* and Annex 3 of the WTO's TBT *Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards*.

The scope of the accreditation is " … to develop Australian Standards® for forest management for wood production and Australian Standards® that support the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS)". Standards developed by AFS Limited and recognised by Standards Australia, Australia's peak Standards development body, are formal Australian Standards® and a formal part of Australia's conformity assessment framework. The Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations publication – 'Requirements for Accreditation of

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[1] For information on the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations, go to - http://www.absdo.org.au

Standards Development Organisations - December 2006' - provides requirements for the accreditation of organisations to comply with the formal Standards development processes in Australia.

AFS Limited is responsible for Standards development only in accordance with its scope of accreditation. The accreditation of certification bodies is undertaken by the Joint Accreditation System of Australian and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ)[2] to specific JAS-ANZ programmes for industry sectors. The certification of organisations to Standards through JAS-ANZ accredited programmes is delivered by independent, third-party certification bodies. Accordingly, the independence of Standards development, accreditation and certification within Australia's conformity assessment framework is assured to all stakeholders.

Australian Standards

The Australian Forestry Standard within the AFCS is recognised as an Australian Standard®.

In order to produce further Australian Standards within the scope of its accreditation, AFS Limited must meet its on-going requirements for accreditation,[3] and ensure that each proposed new project for the development of an Australian Standard® complies with the *Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard ('the Criteria')*.

Although the *Criteria* are set by ABSDO, they are administered by Standards Australia's National Standards Office (NSO) as part of its role in co-ordinating the development of Australian Standards across industry.

All new proposals for drafting Standards with the intention to be recognised as an Australian Standard® must be registered with the National Standards Office. AFS Limited must submit to the NSO information about the proposed Standard, including the scope of the proposed Standard and the timeframes for completion. The NSO is also responsible for validating the proposed project against the *Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard,* and AFS Limited must submit to the NSO documentation demonstrating how the proposed standard will comply with Part A of the *Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard*. This registration and demonstration of compliance must take place prior to the commencement of any significant development work.

Once the development phase for the new Standard has been completed, the NSO will assist AFS Limited to obtain final process approval for the new Standard. In order for this to take place, the AFS Limited must submit to the NSO relevant information about the Standard and how it was developed. The NSO will then make a submission (on AFS Limited's behalf) to the Standards Development Committee of Standards Australia (or a relevant subsidiary Standards Sector Board). This Board provides independent validation that due process has been followed by AFS Limited in the development of the new Standard. Where any issues arise in relation to this process

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[2] For information on JAS-ANZ go to - http://www.jas-anz.com.au/showpage.php?file=web/index.htm
[3] See Requirements for Accreditation of Standards Development Organisations – December 2006, Part B

approval, the NSO will assist AFS Limited to resolve these matters in communication with the Board.

Where issues arise in the above process that relate to AFS Limited's accreditation, the NSO will raise these with ABSDO, which may then seek to investigate and/or carry out an audit of AFS Limited.

Once process approval has been granted, the NSO will provide a final authorisation for the new Standard to be designated as an Australian Standard®.

Standards which are recognised by this process are conferred as an Australian Standard® and published by SAI Global under an agreement with AFS Limited.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited

AFS Limited is a not-for-profit, public company which owns the Australian Standards developed for forest management and chain of custody certification and which also manages the Australian Forest Certification Scheme. AFS Limited is comprised of members from the following four membership classes:
  · Government;
  · Forest and Wood Products Sector (including national forest owners and forest industry organisations);
  · Employee Representative Organisations; and
  · General.

Membership of AFS Limited is open to any individual or organisation that supports the objects of the company which are:
  · to promote sustainable forest management in Australia's forests through an Australian Forestry Standard to be owned by the company (AFS);
  · to support and maintain the development of the AFS, and other related or complementary standards;
  · to maintain accreditation as a Standards Development Organisation;
  · to support and facilitate the use of the AFS, and any related standards, for forestry certification within Australia; and
  · to seek mutual recognition for the AFS internationally.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited has delegated the role for the development of the technical content of the Australian Forestry Standard to the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee (AFS TRC). The AFS TRC is a duly constituted committee of Australian Forestry Standard Limited as provided for in Clause 41 of Australian Forestry Standard Limited's constitution.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is responsible for the review and/or revision process for the Australian Forestry Standard as an Australian Standard®.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited, as an accredited SDO, has a commitment to utilising the Standardization Guides produced by Standards Australia to assist in the development of its Australian Standards to ensure national compatibility of the

standards development processes. The guides that are directly relevant to Australian Forestry Standard Limited's work are:

- · Standardization Guide 001 – Preparing Standards[4]
- · Standardization Guide 003 - Committee Members – Their Roles and Responsibilities[5]
- · Standardization Guide 008 - A Guide for Nominating Organisations[6]; and
- · Standardization Guide 011 – The Structure of Committees[7]

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee

In July 2003, Australian Forestry Standard Limited assumed the management of the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee from the Australian Forestry Standard Steering Committee (see Annex 1) which had initiated the AFS project in late 1999. Information on the activities of the Australian Forestry Standard Steering Committee and Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee over that period to realise the Interim Australian Standard – AS 4708(Int)―2003 – are provided at Annex 1.

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee is now composed of twenty (20) seats which cover four main stakeholder groups:

- · Forest owners and processors;
- · Independent professional and scientific bodies;
- · Community and consumer interests; and
- · Regulatory or controlling bodies.

These four stakeholder groups in the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee cover individuals or organisations which have environmental, economic, social or indigenous interests in the management of Australia's forests. The criteria for representation on the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee and the current organisations on the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee are provided at Annex 2 and Annex 3 respectively.

In its initial meeting in October 2000, the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee endorsed a number of procedural documents which remain in force and are the basis of the ongoing standard development work which is undertaken by the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee. These documents, provided in Annex 4, are:

- · Developmental Process of The Australian Forestry Standard;
- · Role of the Chairperson;
- · Role of Stakeholders Participating on the Technical Reference Committee; and

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[4] https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-001/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-001.HTM
[5] https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-003/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-003.HTM
[6] https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-008/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-008.HTM
[7] https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-011/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-011.HTM

· Role of Project Manager (now Executive Officer) in the Technical Reference Committee.

The review of The Australian Forestry Standard by the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee has been based on 'Developmental Process for Review of The Australian Forestry Standard' which is provided in Annex 4.

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee also adopted an objective in terms of the drafting of an Australian Forestry Standard – " *To reach a consensus on an auditable forestry standard that embodies forest management performance criteria which support sustainable wood production in Australia on all tenures regardless of scale of ownership or forest type whether natural forest or plantation.*"

Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee - Standard Development Requirements

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee shall:
➢ have a balanced representation from amongst the four identified stakeholder groups - Forest owners and processors; Independent professional and scientific bodies; Community and consumer interests & Regulatory or controlling bodies – who are invited to participate and which would include forest owners, forest industry, environmental representation, social representation, trade unions, supply chain, Government and other relevant organisations at the national level, or State level, if no national level organisation exists;
➢ have procedures for stakeholder participation and views to be considered 'in committee' in an open and transparent manner with due regard for Standards Australia's guides on the standard development activities of committees;
➢ have a requirement of consensus (see Annex 4 for the definition of consensus) in the approval of the technical content of the Australian Forestry Standard;
➢ have an initial public comment period prior to any revision of the Australian Forestry Standard which will allow for public and stakeholder directions on the revision process;
➢ have a public comment period of no less than sixty (60) days for the Public Comment draft at the appropriate stage of the revision process;
➢ have a review mechanism for all public and stakeholder comments to allow the finalisation of drafting of the Australian Forestry Standard; and
➢ have a formal ballot process to approve of the technical content of the Australian Forestry Standard.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is responsible for the secretariat functions of the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee which will ensure the organisation of meetings, the despatch of meeting papers, the minutes of meetings, the conduct of the initial public comment and Public Comment Draft periods, the provision of seminars or workshops as required, the collation of public comments, the postal ballot process and the provision of a 'Record of Process' to Standards Australia to allow the Australian Forestry Standard to be considered for recognition as an Australian Standard.

The Australian Forestry Standard web site will be used as a communications media to inform the public and other interested stakeholders on the standard development and standard revision processes. The web site will make available electronic copies of The Australian Forestry Standard, the Supplements, Rulings and any revisions of the Australian Forestry Standard. The web site will also make available relevant documentation to highlight the changes in Australian Forestry Standard requirements as a means of demonstrating continual improvement in sustainable forest management.

Standard Development Process for Chain of Custody Certification – the Chain of Custody Standard

Introduction

The sections – Introduction, Australian Standard and Australian Forestry Standard Limited – from 'Standard Development Process for Forest Management Certification – The Australian Forestry Standard' are generally applicable in the context of the development and/or revision of the Chain of Custody Standard where the Chain of Custody Standard within the AFCS is recognised as an Australian Standard®. .

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is responsible for the review and/or revision process for the Chain of Custody Standard as an Australian Standard®.

Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee

In July 2003, Australian Forestry Standard Limited assumed the management of the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee from the Australian Forestry Standard Steering Committee which had initiated the CoC project in March 2003. Information on the activities of the Australian Forestry Standard Steering Committee/ Australian Forestry Standard Limited and Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee over that period to realise the Interim Australian Standard – AS 4707(Int)―2004 – are provided at Annex 5.

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee is now comprised of seventeen (17) seats which cover the main stakeholders in the supply chain from certified forests through processing, manufacturing, retailing and wholesaling organisations prior to the final end consumer. The current organisations on the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee are provided at Annex 6.

In its initial meeting in June 2003, the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee were advised of a number of procedural documents (similar to those endorsed by the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee) which are the basis of the ongoing standard development work for the CoC Standard. These documents, provided in Annex 7, remain in force for the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee.

The review of The Chain of Custody Standard by the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee has been based on 'Developmental Process for Review of The Chain of Custody Standard' which is provided in <u>Annex 7</u>.

Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee - Standard Development Requirements

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee shall:
- ➢ have a balanced representation from amongst the main stakeholders in the supply chain from certified forests through processing, manufacturing, retailing and wholesaling organisations prior to the final end consumer who are invited to participate and which would include forest owners, forest industry, wood procurement, processing, retailing, trade unions, Government; environmental representation & social representation, where appropriate, and other relevant organisations at the national level, or State level, if no national level organisation exists;
- ➢ have procedures for stakeholder participation and views to be considered 'in committee' in an open and transparent manner with due regard for Standards Australia's guides on the standard development activities of committees;
- ➢ have a requirement of consensus (see <u>Annex 4</u> for the definition of consensus) in the approval of the technical content of the Chain of Custody Standard;
- ➢ have an initial public comment period prior to any revision of the Chain of Custody Standard which will allow for public and stakeholder directions on the revision process;
- ➢ have a public comment period of no less than sixty (60) days for the Public Comment draft at the appropriate stage of the revision process;
- ➢ have a review mechanism for all public and stakeholder comments to allow the finalisation of drafting of the Chain of Custody Standard; and
- ➢ have a formal ballot process to approve of the technical content of the Chain of Custody Standard.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is responsible for the secretariat functions of the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee which will ensure the organisation of meetings, the despatch of meeting papers, the minutes of meetings, the conduct of the initial public comment and Public Comment Draft periods, the provision of seminars or workshops as required, the collation of public comments, the postal ballot process and the provision of a 'Record of Process' to Standards Australia to allow the Chain of Custody Standard to be considered for recognition as an Australian Standard.

The Australian Forestry Standard web site will be used as a communications media to inform the public and other interested stakeholders on the standard development and standard revision processes. The web site will make available electronic copies of the Chain of Custody Standard, Rulings and any revisions of the Chain of Custody Standard. The web site will also make available relevant documentation to highlight the changes in Chain of Custody Standard requirements as a means of demonstrating continual improvement in the tacking of certified timber or wood-based products in the supply chain.

Pilot Testing

The Australian Forestry Standard and Chain of Custody Standard, as Interim Australian Standards and published in February 2003 and March 2004 respectively, have a two year implementation and public comment phase leading up to their reviews prior to their confirmation as full Australian Standards. The two year review period can be extended for a further two years to allow the review to be finalised, which was the situation for the Australian Forestry Standard.

The Interim Australian Standard period allowed for two years of 'pilot testing' of the two Interim Australian Standards in practical and commercial application within the Australian forest management and wood, wood-based and timber supply chain environment.

The reviews of the two standards took into consideration the comments from the general public - as an Interim Australian Standard is a two year public comment mechanism - and the views of the stakeholder sectors represented on the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee (AFS) and the Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee (CoC).

Revision of Standards

The Australian Forestry Standard [AS 4708—2007] and Chain of Custody Standard [AS 4707—2006] are published as full Australian Standards following the reviews undertaken by their respective technical committees and the recognition and approval process required by Standards Australia.

As an Australian Standard®, there is a statutory revision cycle of five years for each Standard from its date of publication by Standards Australia.

As an accredited SDO, Australian Forestry Standard Limited will be responsible for the revision process which would usually commence in the fourth year of the revision cycle eg for a standard published in 2006 with the revision due by 2011, the revision process would commence in 2010.

The revision cycle conforms to standards practice for Australian Standards and provides a stable basis within which forest owners and managers and the wood supply chain entities can implement the AFS and CoC Standard over reasonable periods of time. Emerging imperatives for standards review may arise between the five year review periods as a result of changes in PEFC accreditation requirements or local issues. Australian Forestry Standard Limited will consult with its Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee (AFS), its Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee (CoC) and Standards Australia on an 'as needs' basis in respect of such review requirements.

Appeals and Complaints Procedures

Australian Forestry Standard Limited has developed a 'Complaints and Grievances Procedure – Issue 2' (Annex 8) to ensure that all stakeholders with an interest in the

Australian Forest Certification Scheme can address any concerns on the Australian Forest Certification Scheme's certifications to the appropriate body within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme.

Publicly Available Documentation

Australian Forestry Standard Limited commits to have the following documentation available for forest managers and owners, for forest industries and for public perusal through its web site – http://www.forestrystandard.org.au :

1. Procedure 1 - Standards Development Within The Australian Forest Certification Scheme
2. The Australian Forestry Standard [AS 4708―2007] and Supplements
3. The Chain of Custody Standard [AS 4707―2006]
4. Rulings to AS 4708―2007 and AS 4707―2006
5. Drafts of The Australian Forestry Standard and Supplements (as appropriate during the revision process)
6. Drafts of the Chain of Custody Standard (as appropriate during the revision process)
7. The Complaints and Grievances Procedure
8. The Register of AFS certified organisations
9. The Register of CoC certified organisations
10. The AFS Logo Use Rules Manual
11. The PEFC Logo Use Rules Manual
12. The Register of AFS and PEFC Logo Licensees

Changes to this Procedure 1

This Procedure 1 may change from time to time.
This Procedure was approved on 17 September 2007 as Issue 3.

Review of the
Australian Forestry Standard
AS 4708(Int)—2003

RECORD OF PROCESS

Australian Forestry Standard Limited

July 2007

Introduction

The Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) was developed over a two-year period (2000 to 2002) involving two rounds of public consultation (prior to the development process commencing and at the Draft for Comment stage), stakeholder input through the AFS Technical Reference Committee (AFS TRC), public comment from the Draft for Comment stage and scientific advice from private and public sources to assist in the development of the technical content of the AFS and Supplements. The process was conducted in a transparent and participatory manner, involving a wide range of stakeholders on the AFS TRC (e.g. expert scientists, community groups, forest owners, forest industries and Government agencies) and provided opportunities for input by any interested persons at the public consultation periods or by general advice utilising the AFS web site.

The AFS was recognised by Standards Australia as an Interim Australian Standard [AS 4708(Int)—2003] on 14 October 2002 and published on 19 February 2003. As an Interim AS, it has been available for public consultation for the two years of its Interim AS status. The Interim AS status was extended by Standards Australia for a further two year period on 23 March 2005 to allow the finalisation of the review of the AFS. Following an extended AFS TRC consultation period on a substantive issue in the review of the AFS, Standards Australia agreed to further extend the expiry date of the AFS to 19 August 2007.

This Record of Process report on the review of the AFS both augments the original report of September 2002 – Development of the Australian Forestry Standard - Record of Process – and stands alone as a record of the review of the AFS process.

Table 1 provides a summary of the key milestones in the review of the AFS process.

Table 1 – Key milestones in the review of the AFS

Milestone	*Date*
• Public consultation period	19 February 2003 – 9 September 2004
• Advice to AFS TRC on the framework elements for the review of the AFS	July 2004
• First meeting of the AFS Technical Reference Committee	9 September 2004
• Development of a committee draft of reviewed AFS (5 review drafts)	September 2004 – September 2005
• Commence 1st round - Seeking AFS TRC agreement on 'Final draft' for ballot	2 September 2005
• Re-engagement of AFS TRC on substantive issue resulting from 1st round AFS TRC agreement on 'Final draft' for ballot including three meetings of AFS TRC – 8/06/06; 20/07/06 & 7/09/06	October 2005 – March 2007
• Commence 2nd round - Seeking AFS TRC agreement on 'Final draft' for ballot	5 April 2007
• TRC agreement on 'Final draft' for ballot	16 May 2007
• Balloting period for Final draft for ballot	16 May 2007– 20 June 2007
• Tally of ballots including follow up	21 June 2007 – 5 July 2007

• Forwarding Record of Process to National Standards Office, Standards Australia	6 July 2007
Future Milestones	
• Consideration of Record of Process within to National Standards Office, Standards Australia	July - August 2007
• Recognition as an Australian Standard (AS 4708)	July – August 2007
• Publication as an Australian Standard (AS 4708)	August 2007
• Launch of AFS as a full AS	August - September 2007

Role of Australian Forestry Standard Limited

The AFS Steering Committee was responsible for managing and supporting the development of the Australian Standard AS 4708(Int)—2003, which was to be developed by in the AFS Technical Reference Committee, between 1999 to mid 2003.

The partners in the AFS Steering Committee decided that it would assume the following responsibilities:

- Apply for accreditation with Standards Australia as a Standards Development Organisation (SDO)
- Develop and support processes i.e. resourcing the Project Management team
- Select and constitute committees
- Report regularly to sponsor groups

On 23 July 2003, a not-for-profit, public company was registered as Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFS Limited) to take over those ownership and management responsibilities from the AFS Steering Committee. Membership is open to all interested parties or individuals who support its objects. A copy of the constitution of Australian Forestry Standard Limited with these objects is available on request.

The then Standards Accreditation Board (SAB) accredited Australian Forestry Standard Limited in January 2004 for a three year period to take over from the December 2001 accreditation of Australian Forestry Standard Steering Committee as a Standards Development Organisation (SDO). Australian Forestry Standard Limited's accreditation was extended to July 2007 by the SAB due to Standards Australia's revised accreditation requirements becoming operable in 2007. AFS Limited was audited by the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations (ABSDO) on 25 June 2007 for re-accreditation as an SDO based on the revised requirements being implemented by ABSDO as of December 2006.

As an accredited SDO, AFS Limited has undertaken its standards' development in compliance with ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994 *Code of good practice for standardization* and Annex 3 of the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade *Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standard.*

AFS Limited Structure

As indicated above in relation to support for the development of the AFS, Australian Forestry Standard Limited is the owner and manager of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme which includes as its standards - the Australian Forestry Standard [AS 4708(Int)—2003] and its three Supplements and the Chain of Custody Standard [AS 4707—2006] and its Rulings. The company has four membership classes – Government; Forestry and Wood Products Sector; Employee Representative Organisations and General – with a current Board of nine Directors elected from those four classes as well as an independent Director who is the Chair of the company. Membership is open to any individual or organisation that supports its objects.

Directors: Geoff Gorrie (Chair), Independent
                                    Hans Drielsma, Government
                                    Michael Bullen, Government
                                    Tom Aldred, Government
                                    Ian Miles, Government
                                    Michael O'Connor, Employee Representative
                                    Organisations (resigned 21 May 2007)
                                    Catherine Murphy, Forestry and Wood Products
                                    Sector
                                    Brian Farmer, Forestry and Wood Products Sector
                                    Warwick Ragg, Forestry and Wood Products Sector
                                    David Fisken, General

Executive Officer: Mark Edwards

Role of the AFS Technical Reference Committee

The AFS Technical Reference Committee was responsible for the development of the initial Standard [AS 4708(Int)—2003] and its subsequent review. The role of the AFS TRC was to:

- provide balanced stakeholder participation in the development of the draft Standard and the review of the Interim AS;

- consider the public comments received through the initial public consultation period, those received later in response to exposure of a draft Standard for Comment and those received in the Interim AS period;

- achieve consensus on the performance elements to be embodied in the draft Standard and full Standard; and

- be balloted to ensure the draft Standard and full Standard reflects a consensus among the stakeholder groups.

At the first meeting of the AFS TRC on 20 October 2000, members agreed on an objective for the AFS TRC as follows:
"To reach a consensus on an auditable forestry standard that embodies forest management performance criteria which support sustainable wood production in Australia on all tenures regardless of scale of ownership or forest type whether natural forest or plantation."

AFS Limited has outlined its standard setting in "Procedure 1 – Standards Development within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme" which is available on the AFS web site at http://www.forestrystandard.org.au/12about.asp.

Re-convening of AFS Technical Reference Committee

In seeking to ensure the range of stakeholder views required for the drafting and review of the AFS, AFS Limited confirmed the membership of the AFS TRC from the development phase ie the AFS TRC between 2000 and 2002 and added one more seat to bring the number of seats to twenty (20).

Stakeholder organisations at the re-convened AFS TRC meeting on 9 September 2004 were:
  Forestry and Forest Products Committee (Australian Primary Industries Standing Committee) [X3]
  National Association of Forest Industries
  Australian Forest Growers
  Australian Council of Trade Unions
  Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council
  Institute of Foresters of Australia
  Independent Forest Scientist
  Independent Environmental Scientist
  Furnishing Industry Association of Australia
  Timber Merchants Association
  Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee (Australian Natural Resource Management Standing Committee)
  The Ecological Society of Australia Inc.
  Greening Australia Limited
  Bush Users Group (Victoria)
  Australian Forest Contractors Association
  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
  Tourism Industry Council Tasmania

As with most committees, stakeholders and organisations changed over the extended review period. The composition of the AFS TRC at the time agreement (1st round) was sought to go to ballot on 30 September 2005 was:

  Forestry and Forest Products Committee (Australian Primary Industries Standing Committee) [X3]
  National Association of Forest Industries
  Australian Forest Growers
  Australian Council of Trade Unions
  Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council
  Institute of Foresters of Australia
  Independent Forest Scientist
  Independent Environmental Scientist
  Furnishing Industry Association of Australia
  Timber Merchants Association
  Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee (Australian Natural Resource Management Standing Committee)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representative
The Ecological Society of Australia Inc.
Bush Users Group (Victoria)
Australian Forest Contractors Association
Tourism Industry Council Tasmania

Agreement to go to ballot was not resolved in this round and further consultation was undertaken by the AFS TRC on substantive issues. The composition of the AFS TRC at the time agreement (2nd round) was sought to go to ballot on 5 April 2007 was as per the 1st round membership with the exception of the withdrawal of the Timber Merchants Association (TMA) who had dissolved in 2006. AFS Limited contacted the Timber and Building Materials Association (TABMA) on 23 January 2007 inviting that organisation to replace the TMA, as both are from the same industry sector, but TABMA declined the invitation on 8 March 2007 but advised "TABMA however does support the establishment of a forestry standard …".

On 16 May 2007, the AFS TRC agreed, by electronic communication, to go to ballot on the AFS which commenced as of that date for a five week period. Consequently, seventeen (17) organisations or individuals were members of the AFS TRC at the time of the ballot on the review draft of the AFS in May/June 2007.

The papers sent to the AFS TRC for it to re-convene on the review of the AFS in 2004 re-confirmed that the consensus principle would apply for the approval of the reviewed AFS. The consensus principle has been elaborated in AFS Limited's "Procedure 1 – Standards Development with the Australian Forest Certification Scheme" which is in accord with Standards Australia and ISO guidance on consensus.

Engagement of stakeholders in the AFS review process

Australian Forestry Standard Limited has been actively engaging with ENGO and consumer groups to both seek technical comment on the AFS as well as to invite participation on the AFS TRC. A letter and complimentary AFS package (the AFS and 3 Supplements) was sent to twelve (12) national ENGO or environmental organisations and three (3) consumer organisations in November 2003 alerting them to the comment period on the AFS. This was followed up by a further letter of contact on 28 April 2004 in support of and reminding them of the opportunities to participate as members of the AFS TRC or comment on the AFS as advised in the November 2003 letter.

An individual invitation to join the AFS TRC was sent to the CEO of Greening Australia on 27 April 2004 to broaden the reach of potential participants from the environmental sector. As part of this contact, the WWF-A provided a Position Statement on the AFS (provided as Comments on the AFS to the AFS TRC) and the Australian Council of National Trusts indicated that they will not be taking up the offer due to "We do not have the appropriate expertise on staff to be value on the Reference Committee".

As a consequence of these approaches to national ENGO or environmental organisations, as outlined above, representatives from Greening Australia Limited and the Ecological Society of Australia Inc. nominated for membership of the AFS TRC. Subsequently, Greening Australia Limited withdrew from the AFS TRC in August 2005 citing both time

constraints on its qualified staff and the scope of the AFS not having direct relevance to the work of Greening Australia. However, Greening Australia in its withdrawal letter to AFS Limited said that it "strongly endorses the effort to develop standards for sustainable forestry practices".

As a member of the original AFS TRC for many meetings prior to its withdrawal, WWF-Australia was formally approached on 15 October 2004, based on dialogue between representatives of the two bodies, with an invitation to re-join the AFS TRC but its response of 11 January 2005 formally declined that offer based on its Position Statement on the AFS. Also, as another member of the original AFS TRC for many meetings prior to its withdrawal, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) was formally approached on 27 April 2004 with an invitation to re-join the AFS TRC but no response was received from the RAIA.

Whilst the AFS TRC was considering the 1st round agreement to go to ballot in September 2005, AFS Limited provided the review draft of the AFS to a selection of ENGO or environmental organisations and consumer groups seeking their comments on the technical content of the AFS. The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand acknowledged this contact but advised that it "does not wish to provide any comments on the latest draft of *AS 4708(Int)—The Australian Forestry Standard*".

Substantive comments on the AFS were received by Standards Australia in October 2005 from a number of ENGOs and an environmental scientist which addressed both organisational/institutional issues for the standard setting process and the technical content within the AFS. As the organisational/institutional issues relate to AFS Limited's SDO accreditation, the arbiter for those claims is the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations and Standards Australia which is outside the scope of this Record of Process. But one issue does bear comment in regards to ENGO participation in standard setting. AFS Limited has gone to considerable effort in order to seek such participation, without response from the ENGO community.

The technical issues raised by ENGOs in their submissions to Standards Australia mainly related to broadscale conversion of native forest, chemical usage, so-called high conservation value forest and stakeholder consultation during certification. The review of the AFS considered all of these issues as well as comments from the members of the AFS TRC and changes have been made to the AFS to address the following issues:
   · Broadscale conversion of native forest has been directly dealt with in requirement 4.3.2. There is now 'no conversion' subject to limited circumstances supported by substantial guidance on verification/implementation;
   · The chemical usage requirement (4.5.5) has had its scope of application widened to be more encompassing of chemical usage and clear in its direction to minimise environmental impact;
   · The AFS recognises the concept of 'significant biological diversity values' to encompass the elements of high conservation value within forests; and
   · Stakeholder consultation during certification has been addressed in JAS-ANZ's Procedure 26 for implementation by certification bodies to ensure that consultations of the relevant stakeholders identified under requirement 4.2.1., are undertaken

A selection of ENGO or environmental organisations and consumer groups (Annex A) were provided with the 2007 review draft of the AFS and its three Supplements on 16 May seeking comments on the technical content of the AFS in a process run in parallel with the ballot of the AFS TRC. At the closure of the comment period being Friday 15 June 2007, **one** comment was provided to AFS Limited by one organisation on behalf of a group of ENGOs within the one month comment period. The comment was also sent to Susan Streeter, Executive Manager, Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations at the same time it was provided to AFS Limited. The issues raised in the letter are not directed at the technical content of the AFS but at institutional or organisational issues and the organisations will be provided with an appropriate response to the issues they have raised in the letter. **One** further comment was received after the close of comments on 21 June from the Consumers Federation of Australia (CFA) but no issues on the technical content of the AFS were raised in the comments. The CFA have requested to be informed of the outcome of the review of the AFS following Standards Australia's review process.

Two of the environmental representatives on the AFS TRC have provided public statements on the AFS which provide support for the new requirement dealing with the broadscale conversion of native forest issue referred to in this section. These statements are provided at Annex B.

As there were no substantive issues raised on the technical content of the AFS from the two submissions received, AFS Limited intend to forward the Balloted AFS in the version approved by the AFS Technical Reference Committee on 6 July 2007.

A great deal of effort was invested ensuring that stakeholder representatives were involved in the review of the AFS. This was essential given that one of the roles of the AFS TRC was to provide balanced participation in the development and drafting of the AFS as an Interim AS and its formal review under that Standard status.

Stakeholder communication and consultation

As Standards Australia appreciates through Standardisation Guide #13, the status of the AFS as an Interim AS confers on it a two year public comment period. Whilst this is well known in standardisation circles, AFS Limited decided to expand its reach for the review of the AFS by a series of actions as indicated below.

A call for public comments/submissions on the review of the Australian Forestry Standard as an Interim AS was advertised in the Public Notices section of the following papers on Saturday 19 June 2004; The Sydney Morning Herald; The Melbourne Age; The Adelaide Advertiser; The Brisbane Courier Mail; The West Australian; The Canberra Times; The Hobart Mercury; The Northern Territory News. The advertisement in the State media on 19 June 2004 provided a short background on the AFS review, sought comments or submissions by the deadline of 27 August 2004 ie a ten week 'formal' comment period and provided contact details for queries and lodgement of comments/submissions. The intent was to seek public comment on the implementation of the AFS so as to provide such comment to the AFS TRC which would be considered along with sectoral comment from the AFS TRC representatives.

In order to further encourage targeted submissions on the review of the Australian Forestry Standard, AFS Limited sent explanatory letters on the review of the AFS in April 2004 to the then three accredited certification bodies using the AFS for forest management certifications, AFS certified organisations or those organisations that had indicated an interest in or within the process of certification to the AFS, ENGO or environmental organisations and consumer groups (as outlined in 'Engagement of stakeholders in the AFS review process') seeking comments or submissions on the AFS for consideration by the AFS TRC.

Public comment on the AFS

At the first meeting of the AFS TRC in September 2004, the AFS TRC members were provided with an overview paper of the comments/submissions received by AFS Limited on the AFS as a result of 'Engagement of stakeholders in the AFS review process' and 'Stakeholder communication and consultation'. Nine (9) comments were received during the period February 2003 to September 2004.

Subsequent to these formal comments and during the AFS review process, further comments were received by AFS Limited and provided to the AFS TRC members prior to each meeting for discussion at the subsequent meeting. Five (5) comments were received between September 2004 and September 2006.

Benchmarking of the AFS

The Forest & Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC) engaged an international forestry consultancy firm in 2002 – Indufor Oy of Helsinki, Finland – to benchmark the standard setting and performance requirements of the original AFS against the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria and the Pan European Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLGs) used by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) schemes. This report (a hard copy is provided) indicated a high level of compatibility against both of these benchmarks but moreso against the PEOLGs. The report PN02.2400 was used as a reference source for suggested improvements for the review of the AFS and is available on the FWPRDC web site at http://www.fwprdc.org.au/menu.asp?id=36&lstReports=17&start=21&order= and the Executive Summary is provided at Annex C.

The Indufor Oy report was utilised as part of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme's (AFCS) documentation seeking mutual recognition endorsement under the PEFC Council to indicate the compatibility of the AFS's requirements against the PEOLGs. The consultancy firm – JP Management Consulting (Europe) Ltd, Finland - who undertook the evaluation of the AFCS in 2004 found compatibility with all but three of the PEOLGs and indicated that those three were partly compatible. The review of the AFS has regarded these partial compatibility findings as comments on the AFS in order to address the relevant requirements in the AFS so as to seek full compatibility at the re-evaluation by the PEFC Council of the AFS as a full Australian Standard. The report is available on PEFC web site at http://www.pefc.org/internet/resources/5_1185_1077_file.1054.pdf (no hard copy printed) and the Summary is provided at Annex D.

As a follow up to the above, the Forest & Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC) engaged the Canadian Standards Association in 2004 to undertake

a comparative analysis of the AFS against the Canadian forest management standard – CAN/CSA Z809-02 as both were developed under a national standards setting framework. The report (a hard copy is provided) focussed on management system, public participation, SFM criteria-based performance and Aboriginal engagement and it concluded that both standards "… share a high degree of conformance …" and "… where differences do exist, they are often an expression of different operating contexts and/or tenure types". The report PN04.4008 is available on the FWPRDC web site at http://www.fwprdc.org.au/menu.asp?id=36&lstReports=17&start=21&order= and the Executive Summary is provided at Annex E.

With the increase in forest management certification since 2003, the Forest & Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC) engaged an independent Australian consultant in 2006 to provide a status quo of forest certification against both of the schemes operating in Australia. The consultant has experience with both schemes and was able to provide an insight into the similarities and differences of each scheme. The report focuses on a wide array of forest management issues including forest management certification worldwide and in Australia; a comparison of the schemes in Australia including standard development process and specific Australian issues; opinion on strengths and weaknesses; has forest management certification changed forest management and the benefits of forest management certification. In terms of the standards under each scheme, the consultant concluded "At the assessment level (tier 3), each scheme has a different approach to assessing compliance with the 1st and 2nd tier requirements, but there are also considerable similarities, as both Woodmark and SmartWood incorporated a number of indicators directly from the AFS in adapting their generic, international standards to meet Australian conditions". The report PN05.1025 is available on the FWPRDC web site at http://www.fwprdc.org.au/menu.asp?id=36&lstReports=17 (no hard copy printed) and the Executive Summary is provided at Annex F.

The first and third reports provide an international benchmarking of the AFS in its 2003 version which has benefited from practical implementation, has been improved by the review undertaken by the AFS TRC and has resolved contemporary forest management issues which have arisen since 2002 leading up to the version presented for recognition by Standards Australia as the 2007 version. The fourth report provides an indication that the AFS is indeed required for an independent and credible process to certify the forest management practices in Australia and that it provides a uniquely Australian Standard that has achieved endorsement (see the second report) from the world's leading forest certification scheme, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes.

Implementation of the AFS

The Australian forest and timber industry has responded positively to the availability of the AFS from its publication in February 2003. Currently, sixteen (16) organisations have been certified to the AFS covering 8 551 560 hectares of forest land in all Australian States. Forest land coverage is both native forest – Eucalypts and Cypress Pine and plantations – Hardwoods and Softwoods. The size of ownerships range from 400 hectares to over 3.4 million hectares and cater for private individuals, projects and companies to State forest management agencies. In order to provide for independent, 3rd party certifications to the AFS, four Australian certification bodies have been accredited by JAS-ANZ under a specific AFS Certification Programme.

Finalisation of the AFS

Following the provision of the final review draft on 5 April 2007, members of the AFS TRC agreed by collective electronic communications to go to a ballot on the reviewed draft of the AFS to establish consensus on the AFS on 16 May 2007. The ballot period ran for five weeks between 16 May and 20 June 2007 to enable AFS TRC members to consult with their sector/nominating organisation before making their views on the final review draft formally known. Following the ballot period and tally of the balloted votes, there was provision for the resolution of negative votes, if they arose, by a dispute resolution process.

Consensus arrangements

AFS TRC members had agreed, at its initial meeting that if any negative votes are cast by AFS TRC members they must be supported with reasons related to the technical content of the Standard to allow a dispute resolution process. Every effort must be made to resolve differences before the draft proceeds to publication according to the agreed consensus[8] principles of Standardization Guides SG-001 and SG-003. If any negative votes from AFS TRC members remain unresolved, the ballot is assessed according to three criteria, all of which must be met to allow the Standard to proceed for publication:
- at least two-thirds (67 per cent) of the people eligible to vote must do so;
- of the votes received, a minimum of 80 per cent must be "yes"; and
- no major interest maintains a negative vote.

Result of ballot

The Draft Australian Standard for Ballot and a ballot form was provided to the seventeen (17) members of the AFS TRC at the commencement of the ballot period. Ballot forms were returned at the close of ballot to the Executive Officer and a tally of the forms resulted in a **sixteen (16) Yes or 'Agreed' votes, Nil No or 'Not Agreed' votes and one (1) 'No reply'** to accept the review draft Australian Standard for Ballot as The Australian Forestry Standard and its three Supplements. In regards to the 'No reply', the member provided an explanation for abstaining from the vote (see Form T36) but the member had agreed to proceed to the ballot of the AFS prior to the formal ballot being conducted by AFS Limited.

Procedural Issues with SAI Ltd

In order to progress the reviewed AFS and three Supplements through the necessary requirements of Standards Australia, AFS Limited has provided the following papers in hard copy and electronic copy with this report for consideration by the National Standards Office (and relevant Standards Sector Boards) and Standards Australia.

- Postal Ballot Report – T36
- Document for Publication – T27
- Standards for Publication – T3

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[8] The consensus principle is also embedded within AFS Limited's "Procedure 1 – Standards Development with the Australian Forest Certification Scheme" to reinforce the requirements of Standards Australia's Standardization Guides.

- ATP report
- Copy of 'Benchmarking The Australian Forestry Standard' [Not in FWPRDC format]
- Copy of 'Australian & Canadian Sustainable Forest management Standards – A Comparative Analysis of AS 4708(Int)―2003 and CAN/CSA Z809―02' [Not in FWPRDC format]

Further information or clarification of any section, Annex or any issue in the report is available from the Executive Officer of AFS Limited in the first instance or the Chair, as required.

Mr Geoff Gorrie	Mark Edwards
Chair	Executive Officer
Australian Forestry Standard Limited	Australian Forestry Standard Limited

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**ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO PROVIDE COMMENT ON
MAY 2007 BALLOT DRAFT**

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS	
Mr D Henry Executive Director Australian Conservation Foundation Floor 1, 60 Leicester Street CARLTON VIC 3053	The Secretary Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand GPO Box 211 MELBOURNE VIC 3001
Ms F Wain Chief Executive Officer Environment Business Australia PO Box 5364 KINGSTON ACT 2604	Mr P Mullins Chief Executive Officer Greenpeace Australia Pacific Level 4, 35-39 Liverpool Street SYDNEY NSW 2000
The National Liaison Officer Friends of the Earth – Australia PO Box 222 FITZROY VIC 3065	Mr G Bourne Chief Executive Officer World Wide Fund for Nature – Australia GPO Box 528 SYDNEY NSW 2001
Dr J Gilmour Executive Director Earthwatch Institute of Australia 126 Bank St SOUTH MELBOURNE Vic 3205	Mr C Binning Chief Executive Officer Greening Australia PO Box 7074 YARRALUMLA ACY 2600
Mr R Hanson Chief Executive Officer The Wilderness Society GPO Box 716 HOBART TAS 7001	
CONSUMERS GROUPS	
Ms C Lowe Chair Consumers Federation of Australia C/- Consumer Action Law Centre Level 9, 91 William Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000	The Executive Director Australian Consumers Association 57 Carrington Road MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204
Mr P Gillson President Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Australia Level 5, 167-171 Collins Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000	

A major step forward for forest management and the Australian Forestry Standard.

The recently ratified Australian Forestry Standard (AFS: AS 4708) ensures that AFS certificate holders can no longer engage in the practice of broad scale plantation conversion, whereby large areas of native vegetation are cleared for the establishment of eucalyptus or exotic plantations. The Standard puts a moratorium on broad scale native vegetation clearance for plantation development, effective from December 31st 2006. AFS certificate holders include some of the biggest forest managers in the country, such as Forests NSW and Forestry Tasmania. The AFS has been criticized in the past for effectively sanctioning the practice of broad scale plantation conversion. The cessation of broad scale plantation conversion and requirements under the Standard represents a major step forward for the sustainability credentials of the Australian timber industry.

A 3-yearly review of the Standard is required under the rules of Standards Australia. The review process is aimed at ensuring the interpretation of sustainable forest management, embodied in the AFS, remains contemporary and adapts to changes in societal values and scientific understanding.

[Sgd] B Wintle

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PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED ON THE REVISION OF THE AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY STANDARD

The Ecological Society of Australia Incorporated (ESA) is a learned society with a membership of about 1400 professional ecologists from around the country. These professional scientists work for universities, government departments, private industry and non-government organisations. The ESA seeks to foster the science of ecology and the adoption of ecological principles in relation to rational management of land and other natural resources.

In 2004 the ESA accepted an invitation to participate in the continued development of the Australian Forestry Standard through a Technical Reference Committee. Through successful participation in the continued development of the Australian Forestry Standard, the ESA has been able to address several key environmental management issues including the assessment of significant biodiversity values; systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the Standard's criteria and the difficult issue of on-going clearing of native vegetation for plantation development.

The ESA has previously announced, via its policy position statements, that the permanent alteration to ecosystems (composition and structure) through clearing is a primary cause of past, current and predicted future losses of native biodiversity. The ESA congratulates its colleagues on the Technical Reference Committee in supporting the immediate cessation of broad scale land clearing for plantation development as a Standard requirement. The Australian Forestry Standard provides the basis for independent verification and continuous improvement in the sustainability of forest management in Australia and the ESA commends its adoption within Australian forests.

The ESA supports the Australian Forestry Standard in its use of a market based instrument to certify the application of improved forest management systems where they are based on strong scientific research and up-to-date ecological thinking. The ESA sees that sustainability can only be achieved when decisions are based on scientific ecological principles.

Date: 5th January 2007

[Sgd] P Fairweather

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BENCHMARKING THE AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY STANDARD

INDUFOR OY – OCTOBER 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The development of the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) is an initiative sponsored by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (through the Forestry and Forest Products Committee of its Primary Industries Standing Committee), the National Association of Forest Industries, the Plantation Timber Association of Australia and the Australian Forest Growers. The development of the Standard was supported by a Steering Committee containing representatives of the sponsors, together with representatives of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council's Natural Resources Management Standing Committee and the Australia Council of Trade Unions. The development process was undertaken in accordance with a set of recommended development stages as guided by Standards Australia's Standardization Guides 1-4, 11 & 14.1 (Standards Australia, 1995, 1996 & 1999). The Steering Committee has been granted accreditation by the Standards Accreditation Board of Standards Australia (SA) as a Standards Development Organization to oversee the development of the Standard.

Indufor Oy have been engaged by the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC) to provide an assessment of how the AFS compares to the documentation used by the Pan European Forest Certification Scheme (PEFC) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for standard setting and performance requirements. The AFS has been prepared according to processes equivalent to those established by Standards Australia, the national standards organization, to meet Australian conditions. Assessment of conformance with specific FSC and PEFC requirements was not the intent of the study, but the aim was to assess whether substantively equivalent processes and performance requirements are reflected in the AFS.

The assessment is based on the Pre-Publication Final Committee Draft of the AFS published in August 2, 2002 (reference number DR 01249), documents in the AFS 'Record of Process' submitted to SA and information found on the Internet homepage of the AFS (*www.forestrystandard.org.au*). The assessment of the AFS is made against the normative documents of the PEFC[9] and the FSC on standard setting and performance requirements.

Compatibility with the PEFC Requirements on Standard Setting

The following conclusions can be made on the compatibility of the AFS with the PEFC requirements on standard setting:

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[9] The assessment is based on the PEFC Technical Document valid until November 22, 2002.

1. Conclusions on compatibility regarding the participation of interested parties

- Economic, ecological and social interest groups are all represented in the Technical Reference Committee (TRC).
- The membership share of forestry and forest industries is high in the TRC.
- All interested parties were invited to participate in the TRC work according to the SA guidelines.

2. Conclusions on compatibility regarding the interpretation and definition of elements of SFM

- The PEFC requires that the Pan European Criteria and Indicators are used as the basis of the standard development. These are not relevant to Australia. The equivalent Criteria and Indicators (Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests - The Montreal Process) have been used as the basis for the Standard's development and are highly compatible with those of the Helsinki Process.
- The AFS interprets and defines the elements of SFM to the Australian conditions and was cognizant of the three steps in resolving SFM in Australia.

3. Conclusions on compatibility regarding the transparency and consultation

- The Public Comment Draft and the Pre-Publication Final Committee Draft (Final Australian Forestry Standard) are available on the Internet at no charge.
- The Pre-Publication Final Committee Draft is a thoroughly revised version based on the considerations of the TRC who referred to the comments received for the Public Comment Draft.
- The Final Australian Forestry Standard was submitted to TRC for ballot but not for further public consultation. The document is temporarily available on the AFS Internet site.

4. Conclusions on compatibility regarding the consensus

- The guidelines on how to achieve consensus are clearly defined in the standard development process.
- The TRC has approved the Draft Australian Standard for Ballot as the Australian Forestry Standard, which is now pending endorsement by Standards Australia (SA) and publication as an Australian Standard.

5. Conclusions on compatibility regarding the pilot study

- A pilot study is recognized as a desirable, but not a mandatory requirement of the current PEFC rules, but its status may be emphasized in the revised rules. A pilot application of the AFS has not been undertaken. This is not a requirement of Australian standards setting processes.

6. Conclusions on compatibility regarding the periodical review of the certification criteria

- Standards Australia's Standardization Guides provide an adequate framework for the periodical review of the standards and its performance requirements.

Compatibility with the FSC Requirements on Standard Setting

1.   Conclusions on compatibility with FSC P&C, regional and local circumstances

- The AFS was not developed using the FSC P&C as the basis of the standard development but the performance requirements are adapted to regional circumstances and largely compatible with the FSC P&C as indicated in the respective assessment.
- Regional ecological, social and economic circumstances are widely taken into consideration in the formulation of the AFS criteria and requirements as well as in their implementation within the FMU level management system.

2.   Conclusions on compatibility regarding the structure of working group

- Ecological, social and economic interest groups are all represented in the TRC. The TRC has met the Standards Australia guidelines for balance of interest groups, although there may be some question about whether this would meet the FSC requirements.
- The procedures of the TRC seem to be clearly defined, including avenues for participation of interest groups through the consultative process.

3.   Conclusions on compatibility regarding the consultation and transparency

- Information dissemination and the consultative process seem to be comprehensive and well structured.
- The minutes of the TRC meetings are available to interested parties on request, which is largely compatible with the FSC requirements on transparency.
- The Pre-Publication Final Committee Draft is available for public viewing but not submitted for public consultation as the ballot process in the TRC approved it as the Australian Forestry Standard which is pending for SA's approval.

4.   Conclusions on compatibility regarding the decision making

- The decision-making procedures were based on consensus and are deemed fair and compatible with FSC requirements.

5.   Conclusions on compatibility regarding the mechanisms for future revisions

- Standards Australia's Standardization Guides provide an adequate framework for the periodical review of the standards and its performance requirements.

6.   Conclusions on compatibility regarding the grievance procedures

- The procedures for decision making dispute settlement during the standard setting process are based on the Standards Australia's Standardization Guides and specified in detail in the processes, roles and functions of the TRC.
- Dispute settlement procedures related to the certification process are well defined in the international standards on general requirements for bodies operating certification e.g. quality or environmental management systems. The AFS certification is based on environmental management system certification and certification bodies assessing compliance to the AFS shall have the dispute settlement procedures defined in these standards.

__Compatibility of the AFS Performance Requirements with the PEOLG__

**1.   Conclusions regarding maintenance of forest resources
         (Pan European Criterion 1)**

- The consistent and comprehensive management system required by the AFS for a FMU provides an excellent basis for the implementation of the AFS requirements. In this respect the AFS requirements exceed those presented in many other national certification schemes that merely rely on the existing management frameworks.
- The AFS requirements regarding enhancement of forest resources emphasize the maintenance of the productive capacity of the forests. The outcome of the AFS criteria on the maintenance of forest productive capacity and restrictions on land conversion also implies strongly the maintenance of forest area.
- Overall, the AFS requirements are compatible with the PEOLG. In addition the AFS addresses also carbon balance, which is an issue that will have an importance in the future development of certification.

2.   Conclusion regarding maintenance of health and vitality in forests (Criterion 2)

- The AFS sets requirements to maintenance of natural structures and species mixes and use of natural regeneration in native forests. In plantation forests the focus is in species and provenance selection. Although addressed at the general level in the AFS it is likely that these issues are covered in detail in the respective guidelines. The general AFS requirement on the monitoring of the significant aspects and impacts of forest management can be implemented to cover also the health and vitality of forests.
- The AFS addresses avoidance of harvesting damage where some tolerance is accepted. Spilling, and risks for soil or water contamination should be strictly avoided in all forest management, which is fully compatible with the respective PEFC requirements.
- The PEFC considers overgrazing a health risk for forest ecosystems. Grazing is covered within more generic references to damage agents within the AFS and is mentioned in the guidance information as a potential health risk, which should be taken into consideration in the forest management.

3.   Conclusion the maintenance of productive capacity of forests (Criterion 3)

- The AFS recognizes the broad variety of forest products and forest uses that shall be maintained and kept viable. Integration of the non-wood products in forest management planning can be further emphasized.
- The AFS focuses on regeneration of native forests and plantations and addresses indirectly tending and implementation of other silvicultural operations as appropriate.
- The AFS undertakes serious consideration of the maintenance of productive capacity of forests.

4.   Conclusions on conservation of biological values in forest ecosystems (Criterion 4)

- The AFS focuses on the conservation of significant biodiversity values that have been identified in the AFS Definitions whereas soil and water values are to be identified. The Definition for significant biological value includes lists of significant biodiversity values. The thresholds when a site, community or species are considered to be threatened or under-represented are defined in natural reserve criteria, official regional

forest agreements and State and Federal legislation. This gives a well justified flexibility in the identification and protection of these values in the diverse ecosystems.

- The AFS addresses natural stand structure and species mixes in native forests but regarding plantation ownership only species selection and spreading to native vegetation shall be restricted. The PEOLG requires knowledge on species ecology prior to the planting of exotic species.

5.   Conclusions on the conservation of protective functions of forests (Criterion 5)

- The AFS includes consistent requirements for maintenance of the protective functions of forests. Water protection is also taken into consideration at the landscape level where hydrological flows shall be maintained. Criteria on soil and water protection as well as those on the maintenance of the productive capacity of the land urge for thorough consideration of these values in forest management planning.

6.   Conclusion on the conservation of socio-economic and cultural values of forests (Criterion 6)

- The AFS addresses in a comprehensive manner the recognition of the traditional uses of forests as well as the socio-economic benefits that forests and timber processing may have to local communities.
- The PEOLG specifies a few aspects e.g. documentation of land tenure rights which is addressed in national legislation and free public access to forests which is not part of the Australian common law or tradition. On the other hand, the AFS recognizes and ensures the continuation of the traditional use of forests, which is related to the free access.

In addition to the Pan European Criteria and Indicators, the PEFC foresees that certified forest management is in conformance with the core ILO Conventions on labor standards. When ratified the requirements are incorporated in national legislation and thus implemented in forest management. If a Convention is not ratified the respective requirements should be included in the forest management standard or it should be demonstrated that they are included in normative rules applied in forest management. Australia has ratified all other listed Convention except the Convention on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.

__Compatibility of the AFS Performance Requirements with the FSC Principles and Criteria__

1.   Conclusions regarding compliance with laws and FSC principles (Principle 1)

- The overall conclusion is that the management system elements of the AFS provide the forest manager with a tool to fully meet the requirements of the FSC Principle 1.
- The above statement can be justified despite of the fact that certain FSC Criteria are not specifically addressed in the AFS.

2.   Conclusions regarding tenure and use rights and responsibilities (Principle 2)

- Even though the AFS does not specifically address the demonstration of legal tenure of forest resources, it is required by the AFS that the forest management shall be in compliance with relevant legislation. The tenure rights of the forest manager are legally established and documented in Australia.

- The customary rights are a more complicated issue than the tenure rights. The FSC explicitly requires the customary rights to be clearly defined, documented and legally established, and that the local communities are allowed to control over forest operations with respect to their customary rights. Technically, the AFS does not include such requirements, but requires the forest manager to respect the customary rights. The performance outcome may well be exactly the same, even though the measures to achieve it may differ from each other.

3. Conclusions regarding indigenous people's right (Principle 3)

- At the level of Principle 3, the AFS is fully compatible with the FSC requirements. However, the more detailed Criteria of the FSC are formulated in a different way than in the AFS. Only the significant sites for indigenous people are addressed in a comparable and compatible way.
- Control of forest management by the indigenous people is not specifically addressed in the AFS, but the stakeholders are allowed to participate in the development of forest management plans. The possibility to influence the content of the management plan provides, when so applied, an effective procedure for taking indigenous people's interest into account in forest management. The outcome can be equal or even better from the point of view of indigenous people's interest, including the resources or tenure rights.
- The AFS Requirement 4.8.1 requires that the forest manager shall support the indigenous peoples' economic aspirations in sharing benefits from the management forests and associated environments. The AFS Requirement 4.8.1 is broadly defined and the compensation for the use of traditional knowledge can be a part of it.

4. Conclusions regarding community relations and worker's rights (Principle 4)

- The AFS would be fully compatible with the FSC Principle 4, if the health and safety requirements were extended to also cover the families of the employees. In this respect, the social responsibilities of the forest manager are larger in the FSC than in the AFS. The FSC approach can be partly explained and justified, in countries where social security/health care is strongly dependent on the employment status. Also in many countries, family members follow the men working in different, sometimes very remote, harvesting areas.

5. Conclusions regarding benefits from forests (Principle 5)

- As regards wood products, the approach of the AFS to the benefits from forests is highly compatible with the FSC. The non-wood products are not specifically addressed in the normative elements of the AFS. Consequently, the AFS does not specifically recognize the forest's diversity of products and avoiding the dependency on a single forest product. However, the Guide to Verification identifies both wood and non-wood products.
- The waste minimization is not directly addressed in the AFS. However, the efficient and optimal use of forest products results in a similar type of outcome (minimizing the amounts of harvesting and processing waste of raw materials).
- The value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries is not a specific issue of the AFS. The protective functions of forests are discussed in the Criterion 6, under which the most requirements are related to the minimizing negative impacts of forest management operations on soil and water. The FSC has a somewhat broader scope and seeks to ensure that the forest is maintained as a fully functioning

ecosystem capable of providing the full range of products, benefits and services. Still, the performance output can be equivalent in the both cases.

6.   Conclusions regarding environmental impact (Principle 6)

- The compatibility of the AFS with the FSC Principle 6 is at a high level regarding the conduct of environmental impact assessments, protection of species and their habitats, maintenance of ecological functions and values of forests, and conversion of natural forest cover to plantations. The AFS focuses on the conservation of significant biodiversity values as identified under the national forest reserve criteria, and on the protection of the water and soil resources. The AFS definition for significant biological diversity values is detailed and comprehensive, the threshold-levels when a site, community or species is considered to possess significant values (threatened, depleted, under-represented, listed) is defined by reference to national forest reserve criteria, official regional forest agreements and State and Federal legislation. Measures to maintain these values include e.g. conservation zones, protection areas or protection of representative samples of ecosystems
- There are differences concerning the use of chemicals, biological control agents and gene manipulated organisms (GMO) between the AFS and the FSC. The FSC P&C include a list of strictly prohibited chemicals, which are not directly addressed in the AFS. Neither are the requirements equal for the use of biological control agents or GMO, as the AFS is more permissive to the use of them.
- The FSC requires a careful control and monitoring on the use of exotic species. These can be included in a management system established according to the AFS requirements, in particular if the use of exotic species is assessed as a significant environmental aspect (or impact).

7.   Conclusions regarding management plan (Principle 7)

- The forest management plan defined by the AFS
  - includes a comprehensive assessment of resources and values
  - sets objectives for forest management
  - describes methods and techniques for operations
  - contains a public summary
- If compared to the FSC definition, there are minor differences in the detailed requirements for the content of the management plan. If the profile of adjacent lands is not taken into account, the other differences include more or less self-evident matters that forest management plans typically contain.

8.   Conclusions regarding monitoring and assessment (Principle 8)

- In line with ISO 14001 requirements, the forest manager shall monitor all significant environmental (including social) aspects and compliance with legislation, and provide a documented procedure for their monitoring. The performance requirements in the AFS are interpreted to equal to objectives and targets of the ISO 14001, which allows or enlarges the monitoring to cover impacts of forest management operations on functions of forest ecosystems, biological diversity values, soil and water, and society.
- The requirement for continual improvement forces the forest manager not just to meet the performance requirements of the AFS, but also to actively seek areas for future improvements in forest management performance.

9. Conclusions regarding high conservation value forests (Principle 9)

- The protection of HCVF is consolidated under the AFS Criteria 4.3, 4.6 and 4.8. The definition of significant biological diversity values and their protection in ecosystem, species and genetic levels across the regional landscape provides a basis for the conservation of HCVF.
- Regardless of differences in terminology, the AFS provides the forest manager with a tool/framework to maintain and enhance the conservation attributes of HCVF. AFS requires that the listed significant biological diversity values are identified and protected and maintained also in the regional context.

10. Conclusions regarding plantations (Principle 10)

- The management regimes of plantations are broadly compatible with the FSC, including measures to control the impacts on soil and water resources. Individual differences, however, can be found in the scope and measures to be applied.
- The AFS rationale for the existence of plantations is not fully compatible with the FSC requirements. As regards establishment of new plantations, the AFS is highly consistent with the FSC's conservation purposes of natural forests. As regards to existing plantations, the consistency cannot clearly be observed.

Scheme Implementation and Chain of Custody Verification

The principles of the scheme implementation are defined at a general level, basically the standard is applicable to any type of forest owned by any forest owner. If group certification is aimed at in the AFS, more detailed guidelines would be appropriate to help the small-scale forest owners and managers to establish the credible and cost-efficient ways to apply for forest certification based on the AFS.

Systems to control the chain of custody of wood are not addressed in the AFS. The PEFC, the FSC and other labelling schemes specify their own provisions for the control of chain of custody. These should be taken into consideration if international endorsement for the AFS scheme is applied for, or the system is linked with an existing labelling scheme.

Evaluation and Assessment of Australian Forest Certification Scheme Against the Requirements of the PEFC Council

Summary

Recommendation

The Consultant recommends that the PEFC Council endorse the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS).

Structure of AFCS

The AFCS consists of three parts; Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), Chain of Custody Standard and the Accreditation Programmes. The AFS addresses the forest management certification part of the AFCS. The Chain of Custody Standard provides all the organisations in the wood or forest supply chain with necessary requirements and criteria to implement a system for tracking certified products through the supply chain from origin to end-users.

The documents have been published as an Interim Australian Standard; the interim period lasts two years from date of publication. If the AFS or Chain of the Custody Standard is not endorsed as a full Australian Standard after the interim period, the standards can still subsist as an "industry" standard but not under the Standards Australia umbrella. The Accreditation Programmes under JAS-ANZ outline the accreditation criteria for bodies seeking accreditation to be certification bodies for the AFCS.

Development of AFCS

The AFCS development process was initiated in December 1999 with the formation of the AFS Steering Committee. The process was open and transparent for all relevant stakeholders. The Australian Forest Growers, the main national organisation for private forest growers was represented in the committee. The Consultant has found that all relevant stakeholders have been invited to participate in the development process of the AFCS.

Three forums were created in the development of AFCS; the AFS Steering Committee (now AFSL), the AFS Technical Reference Committee (TRC) and the AFS Technical Committee (TC). The TRC have developed the AFS and the TC the Chain of Custody Standard. The Steering Committees role was to support and steer the function of the TRC and TC. All decisions regarding contents, criteria and formulations of the standards in the AFCS are made by the TRC and TC.

Two of the members of the TRC objected to some of the criteria in the AFS and opted to leave the development process. Through interviews with participants, who were actively involved in the process, the Consultant learned that a general consensus was reached amongst the remaining representatives on the AFS.

Certification Criteria

The AFCS covers the basic elements of sustainable forest management and the necessary legal framework for supporting sustainable forest management is in place in Australia.

The following criteria were found to only partly conform to the PEOLG during the assessment. However, none of the partly conforming criteria are so severe that the Consultant would not recommend the PEFC Council to endorse the AFCS.

PEOLG 4.2.b   The AFCS requires the most appropriate forest management regime to be used. The AFCS does not require any pre-assessment of introduced species. Forest managers shall prevent or constrain the spread of introduced species to native vegetation areas.

        AFCS Criteria 4.3.5, 4.3.6, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, 4.4.4

        AFCS Partly Conforms

PEOLG 4.2.g   The AFCS requires potential damaging agents, such as weeds, insects, vertebrate pests, feral animals, diseases and pathogens, that may impact the health and vitality of the forest ecosystem, to be identified, assessed and prioritised. Grazing from native animals is not mentioned as a damaging agent.

        AFCS Criteria 4.4.4, 4.5.1, 4.8.3

        AFCS Partly Conforms

PEOLG 6.1.c   The AFCS does not promote public access to the forest but states that the forest manager shall allow the exercise of existing customary rights and traditional uses, which do not threaten the integrity or the achievements of the forest management performance criteria.

        AFCS Criteria 4.8.2, 4.8.3

        AFCS partly Conforms

Level of Implementation

Forest owners may apply for AFS certification, as single forest manager or as a group of forest managers. In both cases the AFS requires the forest manager to specify or define the area of forest (including land and water) to which the requirements of the AFS will apply. The forest manager must also demonstrate "management control" over the defined forest area which allows them to carry out operations according to the requirements of the AFS.

Certification Procedures

The national accreditation body - The Joint Accreditation System for Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) will carry out the accreditation of certification bodies. The accreditation will guarantee that the certification bodies are independent and have the technical competence to carry out certification according to the AFCS. The AFCS outlines an 8 step certification process, including all required components to be carried out by the certification bodies.

Australian & Canadian Sustainable Forest Management Standards

A Comparative Analysis of AS 4708 (Int)-2003 and CAN/CSA Z809-02

Prepared by:

Abusow International Ltd. and
Canadian Standards Association

August 26, 2004

1. Executive Summary

This report includes a comparative analysis of the requirements of the Australian Forestry Standard, AS 4708 (Int)-2003 [AS 4708], and the CSA's Sustainable Forest Management Standard, CAN/CSA Z809-02. It highlights the overarching similarities in these standards, as well as areas where they differ. This report also highlights the standards development process used for CAN/CSA Z809-02 and specifically issues related to a balanced technical committee including ENGO and Aboriginal representation.

There are many fundamental similarities between the Australian Forestry Standard, AS 4708 (AFS) and Canada's National Sustainable Forest Management Standard, CAN/CSA-Z809-02 (CSA) including:

- the incorporation of management system elements that are based on the internationally recognized **ISO 14001 Environmental Management System Standard**;
- requirements for **meaningful public participation in the development of the forest management plan;**
- **requirements to address sustainable forest management (SFM) criteria that are consistent with Montreal Process criteria,** which are internationally recognized and inter-governmentally developed SFM criteria;
- **respect for Aboriginal rights**, traditional knowledge and values;
- the use of **accredited standards development organizations** to develop the standard through a balanced technical (reference) committee and in conformance with protocols and procedures set out by their respective national standards systems;
- **efforts made at encouraging *brand name* ENGOs** to become members of their technical committees; and
- **efforts made at encouraging Aboriginals** to become members of their technical committees.

Requirements of the Standards

There are four key requirement areas identified that the AFS and CSA forest management certification standards address: management system requirements; public participation requirements; SFM criteria-based performance requirements; and aboriginal engagement requirements.

Management System Similarities

Both the AFS and CSA standards have a systems component to their requirements that are consistent with ISO 14001. Both standards require that the applicant:
- Implements a management system
- Defines a policy
- Establishes a defined forest area

- Develops a forest management plan
- Complies with relevant legislation
- Defines roles and responsibilities
- Has operational procedures in place to meet the forest management requirements of the standards
- Establishes and maintains communications procedures
- Has emergency response plans/procedures in place
- Ensures staff and contractors have the skills required to achieve the forest management objectives/requirements
- Has document control procedures in place
- Has procedures to monitor operations to demonstrate progress towards the requirements of the standard
- Has procedures to allow for remedial and corrective action
- Conducts audits to determine conformance with the requirements of the standard
- Conducts management reviews to facilitate continual improvement

While the AFS does include comprehensive system requirements, the CSA has more extensive and detailed system requirements with a higher level of conformance with ISO 14001.

The *Introduction* to the AFS states, *"The Australian Forestry Standard may be used either by itself or in conjunction with AS: NSZ ISO 14001: 1996 Environmental Management Systems – Specifications with guidance for use."* (AFS, page 7) This guidance therefore recognizes the benefits and compatibility of ISO 14001 implementation, but the AFS only requires key EMS elements to ensure that smaller companies that do not seek ISO 14001 will benefit from some of its key requirements.

In the Canadian context, the vast majority of companies which have achieved certification to CAN/CSA-Z809 have already achieved certification to IS0 14001, which facilitates the transition from the ISO 14001 EMS foundation to the forestry-specific CSA SFM Standard.

Public Participation Similarities

Both the AFS and CSA standards are similar in that they offer meaningful opportunities for public participation in the development of the forest management plan. Both the AFS and CSA standards require that the applicant:
- Provide for public participation
- Contact relevant stakeholders (AFS) / a broad range of interested parties (CSA) affected by or with an interest in the management of the defined forest area.
- Facilitate meaningful participation in the development of the SFM plan
- Demonstrate how views/inputs were considered
- Make a summary of the plan available to stakeholders (AFS) / make the plan publicly available (CSA)

The AFS and CSA differ in that the CSA relies on the establishment of an on-gong public participation process to identify and select values, objectives, indicators and targets for each of the CSA SFM elements, as well as any other elements of relevance

to the defined forest area, whereas, the AFS provides more specificity at the outset to its SFM criteria.

This difference in approach demonstrates that standards can promote SFM in ways that best address the national / regional / local operating context. The non-normative *Introduction* to the CSA Standard states, *"Because Canadian forests are primarily publicly owned, it is vital that a Canadian forest certification standard involve the public extensively in the forest management planning process."* Certifications to the CSA Standard to date have been on the public lands in Canada, which is not surprising given its rigorous public participation requirements. However, there is nothing that precludes the application of the CSA Standard on private lands, other than the practical reality that most private landowners would find the CSA's public participation requirements out of context in a private land scenario. Given that the AFS Standard was intended for and is being applied on both public and private tenures, it is understandable that the public participation requirements of that standard are not as comprehensive as the CSA's, and instead more specific SFM criteria are required at the outset.

SFM Criteria-Based Performance Similarities

Both the AFS and CSA standards found their SFM criteria-based performance requirements on criteria that are consistent with the Montreal Process criteria, which are internationally recognized and inter-governmentally developed SFM criteria. Both standards require the applicant to:
- Maintain / conserve biological diversity
- Identify the significance of biological diversity values (AFS) / sites of special biological significance (CSA)
- Maintain the productive capacity of forests (AFS) / the ecosystem condition and productivity (CSA)
- Protect / maintain soil and water resources
- Maintain forest contributions to global ecological cycles, including carbon uptake
- Recognize the rights and values of Indigenous / Aboriginal peoples
- Maintain (AFS) / sustain (CSA) forest benefits
- Provide for the health and safety of workers

Despite these similarities, the AFS prescribes a higher degree of specificity and detail in its SFM criteria-based requirements than the CSA standard. However, the 17 CSA SFM elements are in turn interpreted further into specific performance requirements at the local DFA level through a public participation process which results in values, objectives, indicators, and targets being set for each of the 17 CSA SFM elements, and any other elements of relevance to the DFA.

Aboriginal Engagement Similarities
Both the AFS and CSA standards are similar in that they:
- Recognize the rights of Indigenous / Aboriginal peoples
- Protect Indigenous heritage values (AFS) / respect traditional Aboriginal forest values and knowledge (CSA)

The AFS and CSA standards share a high degree of conformance in the system, public participation, and SFM criteria-based performance requirements, as well as in their respect and recognition of Aboriginal rights and values. These standards also share some similarities in terms of the processes used to develop them.

In summary, there is a high level of conformance across the two Standards in all key requirements areas and where differences do exist, they are often an expression of different operating contexts and/or tenure types.

A REVIEW OF FOREST CERTIFICATION IN AUSTRALIA

HAMISH CRAWFORD[10]

Executive Summary

In June 2003, just three years ago, certification of sustainable forest management was an untested concept in Australia. Globally, forest certification schemes had been around for nearly a decade, and large areas of forest, mostly in the northern hemisphere had been certified, but this did not include any Australian forests. Today, over 5.7 million ha of Australian forests are certified as being sustainably managed.

Three forestry certification standards are currently operational in Australia, covering two overall schemes: the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) - accredited Woodmark and SmartWood standards and the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS). The two FSC-accredited certification bodies' standards are based on the same principles and criteria, with indicators which are adapted to suit local conditions to form "Interim Standards", until a national Australian FSC standard is in place. The AFS has been developed utilising the formal Australian Standards process and has been designed specifically to suit Australian forests, legal systems and community expectations. The AFS has also been conferred mutual recognition by the international Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). schemes

While each scheme has followed a quite different development path, from a practical point of view – that is, their coverage of forest management issues and how they are implemented to certify forest managers - they are very similar in application. Each takes a three tiered approach to assessment and, in terms of the 56 specific FSC management criteria (tier 2), an independent report found the AFS scheme compatible with 51 of the criteria (91%); only three out of the 56 criteria were not compatible. At the assessment level (tier 3), each scheme has a different approach to assessing compliance with the 1st and 2nd tier requirements, but there are also considerable similarities, as both Woodmark and SmartWood incorporated a number of indicators directly from the AFS in adapting their generic international standards to meet Australian conditions.

There are some specific differences between the FSC standards and the AFS, as would be expected, and each certification scheme has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, brand identification and acceptance of FSC products in the marketplace has been a relative strength of the FSC schemes. Alternatively, the recognition given by the AFS criteria to the role of forests in carbon cycles and greenhouse gas emissions from forest management may be perceived as a relative strength. The FSC is silent on carbon cycles and greenhouse gas emissions. FSC

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[10] The author is a forest economist with over 22 years experience in forestry and natural resources management. A former policy advisor to the WA Minister for the Environment, the author is currently the director and principal of Cailum Pty Ltd, an independent consultancy firm. The author has had direct experience in a number of forest management and chain of custody certifications through both the AFS and FSC (Woodmark) in Australia and overseas, either as an assessor, or as an advisor to forest management organisations considering or preparing for certification.

takes a more definitive stance against the use of genetically modified organisms in forests than the AFS. Some may view this as a strength, others may see it as a weakness.

Market perception of certification schemes is extremely confused in Australia at present, and is often characterised by misconceptions and negative promotional campaigns. Commonalities are often put aside as the market focuses on points of difference. Issues of contention include differences in the treatment of stakeholder engagement and conversion of native forests to plantations; this report shows that while there are points of difference, there are also similarities in the requirements of managers expected by each scheme.

Another question often raised is "Is this simply an endorsement of existing management arrangements as sustainable, or has certification produced changes in the way forests are managed?" *Experience with forest management organisations preparing or obtaining certification has shown that not one organisation has been able to step through the certification process without making changes, often significant changes, to the way it operates and/or manages its forests. That is not to say that pre-existing practices were necessarily unsuitable or insufficient, but certification standards, whether it's AFS, Woodmark or SmartWood, require comprehensive and rigorous treatment of a wider range of forest management values than has traditionally been the focus of forest management organisations. Each of the certification standards requires measures that go well beyond legal compliance.*

Advances that have occurred with certification also include: greater ownership of sustainability performance at all levels within forest management organisations; more widespread application of spatial technology in identifying and protecting environmental values; much greater integration and connectivity between forest management organisations and custodians of social and environmental data; and tighter planning systems, peer review and internal audit processes that focus on environmental and social outcomes as well as economic performance and legal compliance.

Certification also facilitates a number of long term benefits to sustainable forest management.
First, the focus on continuous improvement in all aspects of forest management provides a powerful agent for ongoing change. Creating a culture of always looking to improve offers significant opportunities for forest management into the future.

Second, certification provides an opportunity to de-politicise forestry issues. Certification schemes spell out the key criteria for sustainable forest management. If a forest manager can demonstrate compliance with these criteria, as assessed, by an independent third party, then the community can be assured that the forest is being managed to internationally accepted standards, regardless of whether it is a native forest or a plantation.

Third, certification for forestry confers significant leadership over other competing industry sectors that impact heavily on our natural environment. Forest and chain of custody certification provides a significant market competitive position in a future marketplace which favours materials and products that are sustainable – in their production, application and wider life cycle impacts.

Criteria for Technical Reference Committee

The Technical Reference Committee should:

1. Be representative of the major stakeholder groups directly using or influenced by the Standard.

2. Be of a reasonable size to allow effective meetings and discussion to be held (Max. 15-20).

3. Provide a reasonable balance that gives:

   · adequate representation of major stakeholder groups

   · no individual stakeholder group can dominate, and major influences are tempered.

4. Include two independent scientists, (a forest scientist, and an environmental scientist), nominated by a nationally recognised research body.

Technical Reference Committee members should:

5. With exception of members under 4. above, be drawn from organisations or stakeholder groups with a national mandate; able to commit to continuous representation, and with mechanisms to establish the collective views of their stakeholder group.

6. Be committed to sustainable production of timber from forests and able to encourage the use of the Standard they have helped to prepare.

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Reference Committee

The AFS TRC has twenty seats plus secretariat support from AFS Limited and is comprised of nominated representatives from the following organisations or areas of expertise:

Chair

The Chair of the AFS TRC is the Chair of AFS Limited who is an independent Director on the Board of AFS Limited (this is a non-voting position)

PISC's Forestry and Forest Products Committee

The PISC's Forestry and Forest Products Committee (http://www.mincos.gov.au/pi_sc_committees.htm#products) has three representatives comprising, a Commonwealth and two State representatives;

NRMMC's Natural Resources Management Standing Committee

The NRMMC's Natural Resources Management Standing Committee (http://www.mincos.gov.au/about_nrm_sc.htm) has one representative;

National Association of Forest Industries

The National Association of Forest Industries has one representative;

Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council (A3P)

The Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council (http://www.a3p.asn.au/) has one representative;

Australian Forest Growers

Australian Forest Growers has one representative;

Australian Council of Trade Unions

The Australian Council of Trade Unions has one representative;

Institute of Foresters of Australia

The Institute of Foresters of Australia has one representative;

National Furnishing Industry Association of Australia

The National Furnishing Industry Association of Australia has one representative;

The Australian scientific community

The Australian scientific community has two independent professionals as its representatives and is represented by both an environmental scientist and a forestry scientist.

The Ecological Society of Australia Inc.

*The Ecological Society of Australia Inc. (**http://www.ecolsoc.org.au/**) has one representative;*

Indigenous Peoples

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has one representative, who was previously an elected member of the Board of Commissioners for The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) which was Australia's democratically elected national Indigenous representative body.

Australian Forest Contractors Association

The Australian Forest Contractors Association has one representative;

The Bush Users Group of Victoria

*The Bush Users Group of Victoria (**http://groups.msn.com/BushUsersGroup**) has one representative;*

The Tasmanian Tourism Council

*The Tasmanian Tourism Council (**http://www.tctas.com.au/**) has one representative.*

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF AN AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY STANDARD

(developed from Standardization Guides 1, 3 & 8)

The development process for an Australian Forestry Standard has been adapted from the recommended developmental stages, as outlined in the Standards Australia's Standardization Guides.

This development process consists of five main draft stages:

1   *Draft framework* - submitted by the Project Manager for consideration by the Technical Reference Committee (TRC), to provide an agreed basis for the preparation of the preliminary draft.

2   *Preliminary draft* - submitted by the Project Manager and based on the framework agreed by the TRC at an initial meeting for further consideration by the TRC;

3   *Committee (TRC) draft* - incorporates decisions of the TRC after examination of the preliminary draft and any subsequent committee (TRC) drafts due to contentious areas requiring investigation or elaboration prior to the next stage;

4   *Public Comment draft* – this draft represents the TRC's recommendations for the Standard and the document is made available to the public for their views and comments (2 months).; and

5   *Final draft* - all comments received on the public draft must be considered by the TRC as part of the process of finalising the Standard. Formal voting for approval of the final draft as a Standard is by postal ballot to the TRC members with a process review by the applicable Standards Policy Board.

The definition of consensus in this process is taken from *ISO/IEC Guide 2 – Standardization and related activities – General vocabulary:*

"general agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.
Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity."

Consensus is achieved within the technical committee of a standards development body based on Standards Australia's methodology for consensus in standards development which is set out in Standardization Guide 001 – Preparing Standards[11]

Thus, consensus is achieved using a postal balloting system of committee members. Effort must be made to find resolution with all negative votes.
If the differences are unresolved due to one or more negative votes then the following would allow the Standard to proceed for publication:

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[11] https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-001/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-001.HTM

- a minimum of 67 per cent of those eligible to vote have voted affirmatively (ie a 19 member TRC would require 13 affirmative votes); and

- a minimum of 80 per cent of votes received are affirmative (ie if 19 votes were cast this would require 16 affirmative votes); and

- no major interest maintains a negative vote.

If a negative vote is registered it must be supported with a reason for rejection of the Standard so that processes of resolution can be instigated. Every effort must be made to resolve differences before the draft proceeds to publication. The majority vote is only accepted with the condition that no major interest maintains a negative vote. A major interest may be within one stakeholder grouping or a combination of votes that have a similar reason, whether social, economic or environmental, for registering a negative vote.

Once the final draft has been approved by the TRC, as a result of the postal ballot, it will then be forwarded to the AFS Steering Committee who will seek endorsement of the final draft Standard from the Ministerial Council on Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture (MCFFA) and the Forests and Wood Products Council (FWPC) [refer to Strategic Imperative 1 of the "Forest and Wood Futures - An Action Agenda to pursue the Vision for Australia's Forest and Wood Products Industry"].

If endorsed by the MCFFA and the FWPC, the final draft Standard will become the Australian Forestry Standard and be forwarded to a Standards Policy Board (SPB) who have been delegated the final approval powers for the Standard by the Council of Standards Australia. The SPB will approve the Standard after having confirmed that committee consensus has been achieved and that public consultation has occurred. The SPB will publish the Standard as well as handle any media enquiries on the published Standard.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY STANDARD

(developed from Standardization Guides 1, 3 & 8)

The development process for the review of the Australian Forestry Standard [AS 4708(Int)—2003] has been adapted from the recommended developmental stages, as outlined in the Standards Australia's Standardization Guides.

This development process for a review of an Interim Australian Standard which reflects a similar process to develop an Australian Standard consists of five main draft stages:

1   *Draft framework* – this is the Interim Australian Standard – AS 4708(Int)—2003 as the base document;

2   *Public Comment draft* – this is the Interim Australian Standard – AS 4708(Int)—2003 which was available for a two year public comment period backed by a call for public comments through State and Territory newspaper advertisements and direct invitations to specific stakeholder interests in 2005;

3   *Preliminary draft* - submitted by the Project Manager and based on comments provided in the public comment period under the AFS's status as an Interim Australian Standard;

4   *Committee (AFS TRC) draft(s)* - incorporates decisions of the AFS TRC; and

5   *Final draft* –the draft that the AFS TRC agrees to go to postal ballot. Formal voting for approval of the final draft as a Standard is by postal ballot to the AFS TRC members with a process review to be undertaken by relevant Standards Policy Boards of Standards Australia.

The definition of consensus in this process is based on the definition in *ISO/IEC Guide 2 – Standardization and related activities – General vocabulary*

"general agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.
Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity."

Consensus is achieved within the technical committee of a standards development body based on Standards Australia's methodology for consensus in standards development which is set out in Standardization Guide 001 – Preparing Standards[12]

Thus, consensus is achieved using a postal balloting system of committee members. Effort must be made to find resolution with all negative votes.

If the differences are unresolved due to one or more negative votes then the following would allow the Standard to proceed for publication:

·   a minimum of 67 per cent of those eligible to vote have voted; and

·   a minimum of 80 per cent of votes received are affirmative; and

·   no major interest maintains a negative vote.

If a negative vote is registered it must be supported with a reason for rejection of the Standard so that processes of resolution can be instigated. Every effort must be made to resolve differences before the draft proceeds to publication. The majority vote is only accepted with the condition that no major interest maintains a negative vote. A major interest may be within one stakeholder grouping or a combination of votes that have a similar reason, whether environmental, economic or social, for registering a negative vote.

Once the final draft Standard has been approved by the AFS TRC, as a result of the postal ballot, it will then be forwarded to AFS Limited who will seek endorsement of the final draft Standard from the Primary Industries Ministerial Council and the Natural Resources Management Ministerial Council. These two Councils were established in 2001 by agreement of Australian Federal, State and Territory Governments with the major role to better integrate Australia's conservation and sustainable production objectives.

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[12] https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-001/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-001.HTM

Whilst the endorsement process is underway with the Ministerial Councils, the final draft Standard will be forwarded to a Standards Australia for recognition as a full Australian Standard. Standards Australia will provide the process review documentation to relevant Standards Policy Boards who have been delegated the final approval powers by the Council of Standards Australia for recognition of the final draft Standard as an Australian Standard. The Standards Policy Boards will approve and recognise the Standard after having confirmed that AFS TRC consensus has been achieved and that public consultation as a result of its Interim Australian Standard status has occurred. Standards Australia will publish the Australian Standard as The Australian Forestry Standard on behalf of Standards Australia and AFS Limited.

Role of the Chairperson

(developed from Standardization Guides 1, 3 and 4)

Role

The Chairperson has a key role in:

· facilitating meetings of the Technical Reference Committee; and

· ensuring that the Standard represents the views of all concerned to the maximum feasible degree.

To fulfil this role the Chair is expected to:

· ensure that notices of meetings and items for meetings are circulated four weeks prior to the meeting; agendas and associated drafts and correspondence to be circulated within two to four weeks of the meeting

· ensure that agenda items are time bound

· consider the objectives of the meeting beforehand in order to be clear as to what it is intended to be achieved.

· ensure that monitoring/priorities and target dates are updated regularly and reviewed at least every six months

· act impartially at all times to ensure that opinions of all interests are heard, but ensure a minority voice on a Committee receives careful consideration

· remind the Committee that they (the Chair) exercise representative roles when supporting particular points under discussion.

· remind members to express the views of the sectional interests they represent and not their own personal or their company's or department's opinion.

· strongly discourage Committee members from reopening discussions on points that have previously received thorough consideration, unless very good reasons exist.

· discourage members absent from meeting where a particular decision was taken from reopening the subject. Members in these situations should be asked to submit their views in writing for review at the next meeting.

· control private discussions and disagreements between members.

· overrule trivial objections.

- limit discussions to the point under consideration

- strictly curtail discussions on editorial or purely drafting points. This should be left with the Project Manager.

- summarise the consensus view when a consensus of opinion has been reached, so members can understand what has been agreed upon.

- summarise the key points of difference when agreement cannot be reached on a matter and the proposed action(s) to be taken to resolve the deadlock.

- with the Project Manager, find a formula to resolve difficulties where it is clear that differences are irreconcilable and action must be taken outside the Committee. As a last resort, this matter may need to be referred to the Standards Policy Board.

Absence of Chair

In the event of the absence of the Chairperson from a meeting, the Steering Committee will appoint a replacement from the floor at the meeting.

Conflict of Interest

When necessary the Chairperson may need to stand down from chairing discussions on subjects where there could be a conflict of interest. This may even be necessary in situations where perceptions could substantially detract from the Committee's conclusions.

Public Comments

It is important that the Chairperson and Committee Members do not make statements on behalf of or indicate that they represent Standards Australia or the Technical Reference Committee unless the matter has been previously discussed within a Committee meeting or referred to Standards Australia by the Chairperson.
All statements made to the media are to be pre-agreed with the Standards Australia's senior management and media management.
The Chairperson should ask members not to criticise the Committee's work or findings in public in the interests of Committee solidarity.

Role of Stakeholders Participating on the Technical Reference Committee

(developed from Standardization Guides 1 3 & 4)

Role

Members of the Technical Reference Committee have a key role in:

- representing the views of their area of interest; and

- contributing to the development of a mutually agreeable outcome.
To fulfil this role, members are expected to:

- attend meetings whenever possible. Maintaining continuous representation of the nominating organisation's sectional interests is essential for effective Committee process;

- participate fully and continuously at meetings and Committee work;

- avoid re-opening issues settled at a meeting where they were absent. Members, in these situations, should submit their views in writing for review at least one month prior to the next meeting;

- help minimise the time spent in meetings by providing written submissions prior to each meeting, thoroughly examining all documentation supplied in advance and through maintaining regular attendance;

- assist the Chairperson by working decisively and efficiently, adhering to work programs and being mindful of target dates and priorities;

- accept the need to work towards a consensus decision by the Technical Reference Committee and contribute to mutually acceptable outcomes. Every attempt must be made by the Committee to overcome disagreement and to produce a consensus document;

- work towards resolving disagreements or differences of opinion a within the Committee process. If a significant difference of view cannot be resolved at the Technical Reference Committee level, the problem may be referred to the relevant Standards Policy Board for examination and direction. This may be initiated by any Committee member but must be considered a 'last resort' option. The Standards Policy Board will usually only get involved at the 'Public Comment draft' and the 'Final draft' stages;

- refrain from publicly criticising the Committee's work or findings;

- declare any specific interests they may have in the outcome of a Committee decision, especially where such interests are not self-evident;

- take care to provide full information to the Committee and must not improperly withhold relevant information within the scope of the draft Standard;

- ensure the final document is produced without undue influence;

- thoroughly and objectively consider public comments on the draft Standard;

- concentrate on communicating the desired forest management performance criteria and leave matters of presentation up to the Project Manager. Don't get stuck on the format and editorial detail in the meetings. Presentation is in accordance with a Style Manual "Guidelines for the Presentation of International Standards" and will be completed by the Project Manager in consultation with Standards Australia;

- avoid delaying the development of a document while non-critical technical details are resolved. It is often preferable to release a not quite perfect draft for publication, so that users have the earliest possible opportunity to take advantage of enhancements, and defer any refinements to the next revision stage;

- be impartial and broadly represent national interests;

- represent their area of sectional interest;

- ensure that sectional views placed before the Committee are objective;

- maintain contact with members of the nominating organisation to ensure that the viewpoint they express, is the viewpoint of the organisation as a whole. It is important to ensure you are providing a representative point of view and exchanging information and ideas within your organisation will facilitate this process; and

- advise their nominating organisation if they are unable to attend a meeting, so it has the opportunity for an alternate to be appointed to that meeting.

Public Comment

- Technical Reference Committee minutes (agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chair) may be made available to the public upon request to the Project Manager.

- Internal Committee documents marked 'For Committee Purposes' should be treated as such. This does not preclude a Committee member from reporting back to a nominating organisation. Wide distribution of Committee documents can lead to lobbying and premature public criticism that could obstruct and slow the Committee consensus processes. It is therefore essential that Committee members observe the rights of distribution.

- The names of Committee members are not publicly revealed, only those of the nominating bodies.

- It is important that a Committee member, including the Chairperson, does not make statements on behalf of the Technical Reference Committee or Standards Australia until the matter has been discussed and agreed by Technical Reference Committee members and/or Standards Australia. All statements made to the media are to be pre agreed with and approved by Standards Australia, as required.

Conduct

- Meetings of the Technical Reference Committee will normally only be open to nominated members and project secretariat staff. Requests for attendance by visitors for special purposes require the prior approval of the Technical Reference Committee.

- Use of tape recorders are prohibited to encourage full and frank discussion in Committee.

Role of Project Manager in the Technical Reference Committee

Roles include:

The Project Manager has a key role in:

- providing the secretariat for the Technical Reference Committee; and

- managing development of a draft Standard that reflects the decisions of the Technical Reference Committee.

The Project Manager is expected to:

- provide a point of public and stakeholder contact on the development of the Standard

- provide secretariat support for the Technical Reference Committee meetings, agenda papers and the drafts of the Standard

- manage the Australian Forestry Standard communication plan and an Australian Forestry Standard web site (with the proposed address to be – www.forestry-standard.org.au)

- manage the public comment period on the draft Standard (national media advertising of the public comment period, direct contact to the public via compiled lists of interested individuals and parties, acknowledgment of public submissions on the draft and production of a summary of public submissions report)

- ensure the Standard Development Organisation's (being the AFS Steering Committee) adherence to Standards Australia Guidelines, as provided for under the terms of accreditation by the Standards Accreditation Board

- maintain document control of the Australian Forestry Standard development process for both accreditation and audit purposes as an SDO

- prepare and coordinate the development of the draft Australian Forestry Standard including management of necessary drafting assistance and technical expertise

- administer the conduct of the postal ballot and report on the outcome of the ballot

The Project Manager will be assisted by a small Project Management team in the above roles.

The main e-mail contact for the Project Manager and the team will be afs@affa.gov.au and fax number will be (02) 6272 4875.

Review of the
Chain of Custody for Certified Wood
and Forest Products Standard
AS 4707 (Int)—2004

RECORD OF PROCESS

Australian Forestry Standard Limited

May 2006

Introduction

The Chain of Custody for Certified Wood and Forest Products Standard (CoC Standard) was initially developed in 2003 involving interested stakeholder input through the AFS Technical Committee (AFS TC) and specialist advice from private and public sources to assist in the development of the technical content. The process was conducted in a transparent and participatory manner, involving a wide range of invited stakeholders on the AFS TC (e.g. community groups, forest owners, forest industries, manufacturing/retail bodies and Government agencies) and provided opportunities for input by any interested persons to be considered by the AFS TC.

Following consideration of Record of Process documentation submitted by Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFS Limited) in November 2003, the Standards Development Board recognised the CoC Standard as an Interim Australian Standard [AS 4707(Int)] in 2004 and published the CoC Standard on 19 March 2004.

The purpose of this document is to provide a record of process which describes the review of the CoC Standard as a result of its status as an Interim Australian Standard.

The November 2003 Record of Process document provided the background to the development of the CoC Standard to the stage of its recognition of as an Interim Australian Standard and this report, as indicated above, provides the record of process for the review and confirmation of the CoC Standard as a full Australian Standard.

Table 1 provides a summary of the key milestones in the process to the present and proposed actions.

Table 1 – Key milestones in the review of the CoC Standard

Milestone	*Date*
• Accreditation of AFS Limited as a Standards Development Organisation (SDO) with Standards Australia	27 January 2004
• Publication of AS 4707(Int)—2004 and commencement of public comment period	19 March 2004
• Invitations to organisations to confirm membership of the AFS Technical Committee (AFS TC)	10 August 2005
• Confirmation of the membership of the AFS TC	17 October 2005
• First draft of CoC Standard to AFS TC	7 November 2005
• Second draft of CoC Standard to AFS TC	9 January 2006
• Third draft of CoC Standard to AFS TC	8 March 2006
• Draft of CoC Standard to AFS TC for consideration and agreement to go to ballot	8 March 2006
• Agreement to go to ballot	23 March 2006
• Postal ballot period commences	24 March 2006
• Reminders of ballot closing date	13 April and 20 April 2006
• Results of Ballot Draft and approval of CoC Standard	21 April 2006

Future Milestones	
• Forwarding Record of Process to Standards Australia for recognition as an Australian Standard (AS)	8 May 2006
• Approval by Standards Development Board as an AS	May – June 2006
• Launch and publication of CoC as an AS	June – July 2006

Australian Forestry Standard Limited

In July 2003, the responsibilities and commitments of the AFS Steering Committee, who initiated the CoC Standard project, were handed over to a not-for-profit, public company – Australian Forestry Standard Limited – to manage the Australian Forest Certification Scheme which includes the development and maintenance of standards under its scope of accreditation. The company has received Standards Development Organisation (SDO) accreditation from the Standards Accreditation Board (27/01/2004) as it took over that responsibility from the AFS SC. The company's membership has four classes with three classes reflecting the previous makeup of the AFS Steering Committee and it also provides for a General membership class for wider participation of community and stakeholder interests.

As an accredited SDO, AFS Limited has undertaken its standards development to be in compliance with ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994 *Code of good practice for standardization* and Annex 3 of the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade *Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standard.*

The current composition of the Board of the company is:

Membership Class	Director
Independent	Geoff Gorrie (Chair)
Government	Dr Hans Drielsma Mr Matthew Dadswell Mr Michael Bullen Mr Ian Miles
Forestry and Wood Products Sector	Mr Les Baker Mr Malcolm Tonkin Mr Warwick Ragg
Employee Representative Organisations	Mr Michael O'Connor
General	Mr David Fisken

Role of the AFS Technical Committee

The AFS Technical Committee, as constituted by the AFS Steering Committee in 2003 and re-convened by AFS Limited in 2005, developed the CoC Standard and was maintained for the public comment period of the Interim Australian Standard to review and finalise the CoC standard to full Australian Standard status. All organisations providing a representative on the AFS TC had agreed by their participation that the CoC Standard being developed would be submitted to Standards Australia for recognition as an Australian Standard following the review of the

implementation and operation of the Interim Australian Standard. The role of the AFS TC was similar to that of the AFS TRC which developed the AFS and was to:

- provide stakeholder views throughout the development of the draft CoC Standard;

- achieve consensus on the performance elements to be embodied in the draft CoC Standard; and

- be balloted to ensure the draft CoC Standard reflects a consensus among the stakeholder groups.

The roles, as outlined above and in the context of the Interim Australian Standard, were to review rather than develop the CoC Standard but follow the essential rules of standard development.

By membership of the AFS TC, nominating organisations had agreed on consensus as the basis for their representation on the AFS TC and for the CoC Standard.

Re-convening of AFS Technical Committee

In seeking to ensure the range of relevant stakeholder views required for the review of the CoC Standard, AFS Limited ensured that the AFS TC was representative of the supply chain from the certified forest through processing, manufacturing, retailing and wholesaling organisations prior to the final end consumer and utilised the same organisations as those involved in the drafting of the CoC Standard in 2003 with appropriate changes to reflect organisational restructures or invite the participation of other relevant organisations.

The seventeen (17) representatives of the AFS TC from 7 November 2005 onwards were:

> Hans Drielsma (Chair), Forestry and Forest Product Committee (of Primary Industries Standing Committee)
> David De Jongh, National Association of Forest Industries
> Peter Taylor, Australian Forest Growers
> Michael O'Connor, Australian Council of Trade Unions
> Malcolm Jamieson, Forestry and Forest Product Committee (of Primary Industries Standing Committee)
> Richard Stanton, Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council
> Alan Seymour, Forestry and Forest Product Committee (of Primary Industries Standing Committee)
> Peter Thode, Australian Wood Panels Association
> Andy NcNaught/Simon Dorries, Plywood Association of Australasia
> Neil Evans, Master Builders Association

Ian Hearn, National Furnishing Industry
Association of Australia
Ralph Gwynne, Timber Merchants Association
Mark Gomm, Australian Retailers Association
Colin Shipard, Australian Forest Contractors
Association
Kevin Collison/Andrew Dunn, Australian
Timbers Importers Federation
Detlev Vogt, Natural Resources Policies and
Programs Committee (of Natural Resource
Management Standing Committee)
Allen Broome, Decorative Wood Veneers
Association

Note that in consideration of the relevant stakeholders for the AFS TC, invitations had been previously extended to environmental and consumer groups to provide for community and consumer input but one of the ENGOs and one of the consumer groups formally declined in writing to participate on the AFS TC and the other environmental or consumer groups did not respond to any of the communications sent to those organisations.

Consultation on the CoC Standard

Whilst acknowledging that an Interim Australian Standard has, by its status, a public comment period for the duration of its life[13], AFS Limited at the outset of the review process decided to bring the review to the notice of range of interested stakeholders who would use or be influenced by the CoC Standard. On 12 August 2005, AFS Limited contacted to following sectors by letter to alert them of the review of the CoC Standard and to seek comments on the technical content of the CoC Standard for consideration by the AFS TC:

  ➢ a selection of environmental and consumer groups who were also provided with a complementary hard copy of the CoC Standard;
  ➢ certified organisations using or potentially able to utilise the CoC Standard;
  ➢ the only accredited certification body providing product certification under the CoC Standard;
  ➢ the Royal Australian Institute of Architects seeking a nomination to the AFS TC in view of their previous general interest on the AFS TC in 2003 (no formal response);
  ➢ the Consumers Federation of Australia seeking a nomination to the AFS TC (declined by letter of 15 November 2005); and
  ➢ the Decorative Wood Veneers Association seeking a nomination to the AFS TC (accepted by letter of 13 September 2005).

At the commencement of the review by the AFS TC, two (2) comments had been received by AFS Limited for consideration by the AFS TC and these comments were provided with the first review draft on 7 November 2005.

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[13] Standardization Guide 13

AFS Limited also secured the services of URS Forestry to undertake a benchmarking of AS 4707(Int) against the CoC Standard of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) – *Annex 4 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*. The 27 page report from URS Forestry details the benchmarking against an internationally recognised industry standard provided certain issues which have been addressed in the review of CoC Standard to ensure that the CoC Standard has international best practice for the tracking of wood or forest products in the supply chain.

Finalisation of the CoC Standard

Following the third meeting of the AFS TC which utilised the draft supplied as of 8 March 2006, all members of the AFS TC agreed in writing to go to a postal ballot on the review draft CoC Standard to establish a consensus position on the technical content of the CoC Standard. The ballot period ran for one month (four weeks) between 24 March and 21 April 2006 to enable AFS TC members to consult with their relevant sector before making their views on the final draft formally known on the ballot form. Following the ballot period and tally of the balloted votes, there was provision for the resolution of negative votes, if they arose, by a dispute resolution process.

AFS TC members had agreed, at its initial meeting that if any negative votes are cast by AFS TC members they must be supported with reasons related to the technical content of the Standard to allow a dispute resolution process. Every effort must be made to resolve differences before the draft proceeds to publication. If any negative votes from AFS TC members remain unresolved, the ballot is assessed according to three criteria, all of which must be met to allow the CoC Standard to proceed for publication:

- at least two-thirds (67 per cent) of the people eligible to vote must do so;
- of the votes received, a minimum of 80 per cent must be "yes"; and
- no major interest maintains a negative vote.

The Draft Australian Standard for Ballot and a ballot form was provided to the 17 members of the AFS TC at the commencement of the ballot period. Ballot forms were returned at the close of ballot period to the Executive Officer and a tally of the forms resulted in 16 affirmative votes and 1 No Reply (Form T-36) to accept the Draft Australian Standard for Ballot as the confirmed Chain of Custody for Certified Wood and Forest Products Standard – AS 4707. Note that member who did not provide their ballot form by the due by date had indicated their agreement to go to ballot on the Draft Australian Standard for Ballot in a unanimous decision of the AFS TC.

Following the requirements from Standards Australia letter of 17 November 2003 in relation to the CoC standard proceeding to postal ballot, the Draft Australian Standard for Ballot was also provided to a selection of environmental and consumer organisations (Attachment A), similar to the groups used for seeking comments on the Interim AS, seeking their comments on the technical content of the CoC Standard whilst the ballot was being conducted within the AFS TC. At the closure of the comment period being Friday 21 April 2006, **one** comment was provided to AFS Limited by one of these organisations within the one month comment period. The

comment was also sent to Colin Blair, Secretary of the Standards Development Board at the same time it was provided to AFS Limited. The issues raised in the letter are not directed at the technical content of the CoC Standard but at institutional or organisational issues and the organisation will be provided with an appropriate response to the issues they have raised in the letter. As there was no substantive issues raised on the technical content of the CoC Standard, AFS Limited intend to forward the Balloted CoC Standard in the version approved by the AFS Technical Committee on 21 April 2006.

Procedural Issues with Standards Australia

In order to progress the final approved CoC Standard through the necessary requirements of Standards Australia, the Executive Officer is providing the following papers with this report for consideration by the Standards Development Board and any relevant Standards Sector Board(s) taking into account the approved final draft of the CoC Standard resulting from the ballot of the AFS TC members:

- Postal Ballot Report – T36
- Document for Publication – T27
- Standards for Publication – T3
- ATP report

Further information or clarification of any issue in this Record of Process report or on any issues in the reports/papers above, would you please contact the Executive Officer in the first instance or the Chair, as required.

Geoff Gorrie   Mark Edwards
Chair   Executive Officer
Australian Forestry Standard Limited   Australian Forestry Standard Limited

Postal Address: PO Box 7031   Street Address: Building 6, CSIRO Complex
Yarralumla   ACT   2600   Wilf Crane Crescent, Yarralumla, ACT,
2600
Phone: 02 6281 3455
Fax: 02 6281 3455
E-mail: afs@forestrystandard.org.au

Encl.   Draft Australian Standard for Ballot
                  Postal Ballot Report – T36
                  Document for Publication – T27
                  Standards for Publication – T3
                  ATP report

Mr Peter Mullins Chief Executive Officer Greenpeace Australia Pacific Level 4, 35-39 Liverpool Street SYDNEY NSW 2000	Ms Fiona Wain Chief Executive Officer Environment Business Australia C/- National Press Club 8/16 National Circuit BARTON ACT 2600
Mr Greg Bourne Chief Executive Officer World Wide Fund for Nature - Australia PO Box 528 SYDNEY NSW 2001	Mr Cam Walker The National Liaison Officer Friends of the Earth – Australia PO Box 222 FITZROY VIC 3065
The Secretary Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand GPO Box 211 MELBOURNE VIC 3001	Mr Don Henry Executive Director Australian Conservation Foundation Floor 1, 60 Leicester Street CARLTON VIC 3053
The Executive Director Australian Consumers Association 57 Carrington Road MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204	Ms Catherine Wolthuizen Chairperson Consumers' Federation of Australia C/- Consumer Law Centre Victoria Level 7 20 Queen Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000 [Address change to Level 9, 91 William Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000]
The Executive Officer Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Australia Level 5, 167-171 Collins Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000	

Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee

The Australian Forestry Standard Technical Committee has seventeen seats including a Chair plus secretariat support from AFS Limited and is comprised of nominated representatives from the following national or peak organisations:

PISC's Forestry and Forest Products Committee

The PISC's Forestry and Forest Products Committee (http://www.mincos.gov.au/pi_sc_committees.htm#products) has three representatives comprising the Chair of the AFS TC and two State representatives;

NRMMC's Natural Resources Management Standing Committee

The NRMMC's Natural Resources Management Standing Committee (http://www.mincos.gov.au/about_nrm_sc.htm) has one representative;

National Association of Forest Industries

The National Association of Forest Industries has one representative;

Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council (A3P)

The Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council (http://www.a3p.asn.au/) has one representative;

Australian Forest Growers

The Australian Forest Growers has one representative;

Australian Council of Trade Unions

The Australian Council of Trade Unions has one representative;

Australian Forest Contractors Association

The Australian Forest Contractors Association has one representative;

Australian Wood Panels Association (AWPA)

The Australian Wood Panels Association has one representative;

Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia (PAA)

The Plywood Association of Australasia has one representative:

Furnishing Industry Association of Australia

The Furnishing Industry Association of Australia has one representative;

Timber and Building Materials Association (TABMA)

The Timber and Building Materials Association (http://www.tabma.com.au/) has one representative;

Australian Timber Importers Federation

The Australian Timber Importers Federation has one representative;

Australian Retailers Association (ARA)

The Australian Retailers Association (http://www.ara.com.au/) has one representative;

Master Builders Australia

The Master Builders Australia (http://www.masterbuilders.com.au/index.asp) has one representative:

The Decorative Wood Veneer Association

The Decorative Wood Veneer Association (http://www.woodveneer.asn.au/) has one representative;

Technical Committee – Terms of Reference

The Technical Committee (TC) is responsible for:
· **Development of the draft standard**
The standard will be developed by the TC through iterative rounds of drafts for comment and revision based on comment to reach a draft version suitable for public comment.
· **Providing stakeholder views on the standard**
Representation on the TC will be selected on a national basis to cover forest owners and managers, forest industries, forest regulators, consumers; retailers and purchasing bodies, unions.
· **Ballot of the interim AS**

TC members will be balloted in order to provide the draft standard as an Interim AS for public comment.
· **Review of comments and revision of standard**

TC members will review all comments provided on the Interim AS and will use such comments as well as stakeholder input to revise the standard as required to provide a final draft standard that reflects the consensus view of stakeholders.
· **Developing consensus on the final draft standard**
The TC will be balloted on the content of the final draft standard to ensure it reflects a consensus view of stakeholders. Where there are negative votes relating to the technical content of the standard and some likelihood of successful resolution of the issue, further committee consideration will be undertaken.
If one or more negative votes remain unresolved the draft may proceed to publication where:
· a minimum of 67% of those eligible to vote have voted affirmatively;
· a minimum of 80% of votes received are affirmative; and
· no major interest maintains a negative vote.

Operation of the Technical Committee

Members will operate under similar guidelines to those that operated for the AFS Technical Reference Committee. Three guidelines are particularly relevant and are attached below in the boxed text noting that that they are provided for information and have been amended to suit this project.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY STANDARD
(developed from Standardization Guides 1, 3 & 8)

The development process for the review of the Chain of Custody Standard [AS 4707(Int)—2004] has been adapted from the recommended developmental stages, as outlined in the Standards Australia's Standardization Guides.

This development process for a review of an Interim Australian Standard which reflects a similar process to develop an Australian Standard consists of five main draft stages:

1   *Draft framework* – this is the Interim Australian Standard – AS 4707(Int)—2004 as the base document;

2   *Public Comment draft* – this is the Interim Australian Standard – AS 4707(Int)—2004 which was available for a two year public comment period backed by a call for public comments through direct invitations to specific stakeholder interests in 2005;

3   *Preliminary draft* - submitted by the Project Manager and based on comments provided in the public comment period under the CoC Standard's status as an Interim Australian Standard;

4   *Committee (AFS TC) draft(s)* - incorporates decisions of the AFS TC; and

5   *Final draft* –the draft that the AFS TC agrees to go to postal ballot. Formal voting for approval of the final draft as a Standard is by postal ballot to the AFS TC members with a process review to be undertaken by relevant Standards Policy Boards of Standards Australia.

The definition of consensus in this process is taken from *ISO/IEC Guide 2 – Standardization and related activities – General vocabulary*

"general agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.
Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity."

Consensus is achieved within the technical committee of a standards development body based on Standards Australia's methodology for consensus in standards development which is set out in Standardization Guide 001 – Preparing Standards[14]

Thus, consensus is achieved using a postal balloting system of committee members. Effort must be made to find resolution with all negative votes.

If the differences are unresolved due to one or more negative votes then the following would allow the Standard to proceed for publication:

·   a minimum of 67 per cent of those eligible to vote have voted; and

·   a minimum of 80 per cent of votes received are affirmative; and

·   no major interest maintains a negative vote.

If a negative vote is registered it must be supported with a reason for rejection of the Standard so that processes of resolution can be instigated. Every effort must be made to resolve differences before the draft proceeds to publication. The majority vote is only accepted with the condition that no major interest maintains a negative vote. A

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[14] https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-001/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-001.HTM

major interest may be within one stakeholder grouping or a combination of votes that have a similar reason, whether environmental, economic or social, for registering a negative vote.

The final draft Standard will be forwarded to a Standards Australia for recognition as a full Australian Standard. Standards Australia will provide the process review documentation to relevant Standards Policy Boards who have been delegated the final approval powers by the Council of Standards Australia for recognition of the final draft Standard as an Australian Standard. The Standards Policy Boards will approve and recognise the Standard after having confirmed that AFS TC consensus has been achieved and that public consultation as a result of its Interim Australian Standard status has occurred. Standards Australia will publish the Australian Standard as The Chain of Custody Standard on behalf of Standards Australia and AFS Limited.

Role of the Chairperson

(developed from Standardization Guides 1, 3 and 4)

Role

The Chairperson has a key role in:
·   facilitating meetings of the Technical Committee; and
·   ensuring that the Standard represents the views of all concerned to the maximum feasible degree.

To fulfil this role the Chair is expected to:
·   ensure that notices of meetings and items for meetings are circulated three weeks prior to the meeting; agendas and associated drafts and correspondence to be circulated within two to three weeks of the meeting
·   ensure that agenda items are time bound
·   consider the objectives of the meeting beforehand in order to be clear as to what it is intended to be achieved.
·   ensure that monitoring/priorities and target dates are updated regularly and reviewed at least every six months
·   act impartially at all times to ensure that opinions of all interests are heard, but ensure a minority voice on a Committee receives careful consideration
·   remind the Committee that they (the Chair) exercise representative roles when supporting particular points under discussion.
·   remind members to express the views of the sectional interests they represent and not their own personal or their company's or department's opinion.
·   strongly discourage Committee members from reopening discussions on points that have previously received thorough consideration, unless very good reasons exist.
·   discourage members absent from meeting where a particular decision was taken from reopening the subject. Members in these situations should be asked to submit their views in writing for review at the next meeting.
·   control private discussions and disagreements between members.
·   overrule trivial objections.
·   limit discussions to the point under consideration
·   strictly curtail discussions on editorial or purely drafting points. This should be left with the Project Manager.

- summarise the consensus view when a consensus of opinion has been reached, so members can understand what has been agreed upon.
- summarise the key points of difference when agreement cannot be reached on a matter and the proposed action(s) to be taken to resolve the deadlock.
- with the Project Manager, find a formula to resolve difficulties where it is clear that differences are irreconcilable and action must be taken outside the Committee. As a last resort, this matter may need to be referred to the Standards Policy Board.

Absence of Chair

In the event of the absence of the Chairperson from a meeting, the Technical Committee will appoint a replacement from the floor at the meeting.

Conflict of Interest

When necessary the Chairperson may need to stand down from chairing discussions on subjects where there could be a conflict of interest. This may even be necessary in situations where perceptions could substantially detract from the Committee's conclusions.

Public Comments

It is important that the Chairperson and Committee Members do not make statements on behalf of or indicate that they represent Standards Australia or the Technical Committee unless the matter has been previously discussed within a Committee meeting or referred to Standards Australia by the Chairperson.

All statements made to the media are to be pre-agreed with the Standards Australia's senior management and media management.

The Chairperson should ask members not to criticise the Committee's work or findings in public in the interests of Committee solidarity.

Role of Stakeholders Participating on the Technical Committee

(developed from Standardization Guides 1 3 & 4)

Role

Members of the Technical Committee have a key role in:
- representing the views of their area of interest; and
- contributing to the development of a mutually agreeable outcome.

To fulfil this role, members are expected to:
- attend meetings whenever possible. Maintaining continuous representation of the nominating organisation's sectional interests is essential for effective Committee process;
- participate fully and continuously at meetings and Committee work;
- avoid re-opening issues settled at a meeting where they were absent. Members, in these situations, should submit their views in writing for review at least one month prior to the next meeting;
- help minimise the time spent in meetings by providing written submissions prior to each meeting, thoroughly examining all documentation supplied in advance and through maintaining regular attendance;

- assist the Chairperson by working decisively and efficiently, adhering to work programs and being mindful of target dates and priorities;
- accept the need to work towards a consensus decision by the Technical Committee and contribute to mutually acceptable outcomes. Every attempt must be made by the Committee to overcome disagreement and to produce a consensus document;
- work towards resolving disagreements or differences of opinion a within the Committee process. If a significant difference of view cannot be resolved at the Technical Committee level, the problem may be referred to the relevant Standards Policy Board for examination and direction. This may be initiated by any Committee member but must be considered a 'last resort' option;
- refrain from publicly criticising the Committee's work or findings;
- declare any specific interests they may have in the outcome of a Committee decision, especially where such interests are not self-evident;
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- ensure the final document is produced without undue influence;
- thoroughly and objectively consider public comments on the draft Standard;
- concentrate on communicating the desired <u>CoC criteria</u> and leave matters of presentation up to the Project Manager. Don't get stuck on the format and editorial detail in the meetings. Presentation is in accordance with a Style Manual "Guidelines for the Presentation of International Standards" and will be completed by the Project Manager in consultation with Standards Australia;
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- Meetings of the Technical Committee will normally only be open to nominated members and project secretariat staff. Requests for attendance by visitors for special purposes require the prior approval of the Technical Committee.
- Use of tape recorders is prohibited to encourage full and frank discussion in Committee.

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Roles include:

The Project Manager has a key role in:
- providing the secretariat for the Technical Committee; and
- managing development of a draft Standard that reflects the decisions of the Technical Committee.

The Project Manager is expected to:
- provide a point of public and stakeholder contact on the development of the Standard
- provide secretariat support for the Technical Committee meetings, agenda papers and the drafts of the Standard
- manage the Australian Forestry Standard web site (www.forestrystandard.org.au)
- manage the public comment period on the Interim Standard (national media advertising of the public comment period, direct contact to the public via compiled lists of interested individuals and parties, acknowledgment of public submissions on the draft and production of a summary of public submissions report)
- ensure the Standard Development Organisation's (being the AFS Steering Committee) adherence to Standards Australia Guidelines, as provided for under the terms of accreditation by the Standards Accreditation Board
- maintain document control of the CoC development process for both accreditation and audit purposes as an SDO
- prepare and coordinate the development of the draft CoC standard including management of necessary drafting assistance and technical expertise
- administer the conduct of the postal ballot and report on the outcome of the ballot

The main e-mail contact for the Project Manager will be afs@forestrystandard.org.au and fax number will be (02) 6272 4875.

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AFS/01-10-01

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES PROCEDURE

The Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) provides for the independent third-party certification of forest management against the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) and the identification and branding of products produced from AFS certified forests.

Australian Forestry Standard Limited (AFS Limited) recognises that disagreements may arise in the application of the Scheme. AFS Limited is committed to effective and efficient complaints and grievance handling which contribute to continual improvement of the AFCS.

There are four categories within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme where differences of opinion or disagreements could become the subject of a complaint or a grievance. The four categories are:

1. The content of the standards (AFS and CoC[15]) and the standards development body – AFS Limited;
2. The accreditation of certification bodies – the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ);
3. The approach taken at the time of certification or review by accredited, independent, third-party certification body – the accredited certification body; and
4. Forest management organisations.

Resolving a Complaint or Grievance

Within the AFCS different entities have responsibility for the different categories. Complaints or grievances should in the first instance be directed to that entity which has responsibility for the particular issue.

The first step in resolving a complaint or grievance should be to communicate with the responsible entity – AFS Limited, JAS-ANZ, the certification body or the forest management organisation – related to your complaint, grievance, concerns or questions.

In order to help people make contact with the responsible entity, Table 1 indicates the type of issue, who is responsible and how to make contact. Please see our Links page to assist in this matter.

Each of the identified entities have procedures and requirements for ensuring the resolution of complaints and grievances. In relation to AFCS, these are outlined within this procedure. In relation to accredited certification bodies, their appeals, complaints and disputes mechanisms are a requirement within the relevant

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[15] AFS and CoC – Australian Forestry Standard and Chain of Custody Standard

accreditation requirements - JAS-ANZ Procedure 26 for forest management certification, and JAS-ANZ Procedure 15 for CoC certification. For forest management organisations, such requirements form part of the AFS.

TABLE 1 *Resolving a Complaint or Grievance*

Category	What is the issue	Who is responsible	How do I make contact
1	The standards used within the Australian Forest Certification Scheme i.e. technical content	AFS Limited's AFS Technical Reference Committee and AFS Technical Committee	The Executive Officer of AFS Limited afs@forestrystandard.org.au
	Policies and procedures surrounding the development and management of the AFCS.	AFS Limited	The Executive Officer of AFS Limited afs@forestrystandard.org.au
2	The accreditation of a certification body	JAS-ANZ	The Manager Accreditation Services of JAS-ANZ mailto:admin@jas-anz.com.au
3	The certification of a particular forest, or chain-of -custody system.	The relevant accredited certification body	A list of accredited certification bodies are provided in the JAS-ANZ register at http://www.jas-anz.com.au/CC/register/registry.htm
4	Management of a specific forest area, or forest product supply chain	The certified forest management organisation or chain of custody holder	A list of certified organisations is provided on the AFS Limited website.

AFS Limited complaints handling procedure

·   All complaints or grievances will be dealt with fairly, transparently and in a timely manner;
·   The complaint or grievance should provide sufficient objective information to substantiate the complaint or grievance so that assessment and investigation can be undertaken. Complaints or grievances based on hearsay will not be considered as a complaint or grievance;
·   Complaints should be acknowledged within five (5) business days of it being lodged;
·   After receipt of the complaint or grievance, it will be assessed in regards to the particulars of the complaint or grievance and investigated as appropriate in the

context of Table 1. Advice will be provided to the complainant should the complaint need to be referred to another party;

· Following the assessment, if it is a matter for AFS Limited, the complaint will be investigated;

· After the investigation any decision or action will be communicated within twenty (20) business days from the date of acknowledgement, where appropriate;

· If the proposed decision or action is not accepted, the complainant will be informed of any alternative forms of recourse available.

As indicated in Table 1, issues of concern, complaints or a grievance in relation to AFS Limited may be dealt with at the two levels of AFS Limited's operations i.e. technical content of the standards or management.

In terms of the technical content of the AFS or CoC Standard, AFS Limited will convene, on a temporary basis, a Complaints Committee which will be comprised of a member of the AFS Technical Reference Committee (TRC) or Technical Committee (TC), as appropriate, from each of the four main sectors represented on the AFS TRC or TC and will be chaired by the Chairperson of the relevant technical committee[16]. The Complaints Committee will be provided with the substance of the complaint or grievance, convene to consider and discuss whether the issue should be referred to the next full review of the standard, or requires the development of an interim interpretation of the Standard. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of AFS Limited for a decision on any recommendation from the Complaints Committee. The Board will make a final decision on behalf of AFS Limited and a formal response will be forwarded to the complainant. All matters raised in this context will be registered and referred to the full technical committee at the next review of the standard.

In relation to management issues, AFS Limited will convene, on a temporary basis, a Complaints Panel. The Complaints Panel will comprise the Chairperson, or his/her nominee, and two (2) other Directors of the company, one of whom must come from the sector from which the complaint originated but who does not have a direct or proprietorial interest in the complaint. The Complaints Panel will be provided with the substance of the complaint or grievance, convene to consider and discuss the issue to provide a consensus outcome on resolving the complaint or grievance following necessary discussions with the complainant. The outcome will be forwarded to the Board of AFS Limited for a decision on any recommendation from the Complaints Panel. A formal response will be forwarded to the complainant following the Board's decision.

Summary

If you have a complaint or grievance with any aspect of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme, please contact the responsible entity as provided in Table 1.

It is suggested that informal discussion with the responsible entity in the first instance may assist in understanding the complaint or grievance.

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[16] The AFS Technical Reference Committee for the AFS [AS 4708] or the AFS Technical Committee for the CoC Standard [AS 4707].

If a consensus outcome cannot be reached in the first instance, approach the responsible entity formally to initiate appropriate complaint or grievance procedures.

Changes to this Complaints and Grievance Procedure Policy
This Complaints and Grievance Procedure Policy may change from time to time. This policy was approved on 4 June 2007 as Issue 2.