



Setting the standard for
sustainable forest management
for more than 10 years

Media Release

31 July 2014

REVISED CHAIN OF CUSTODY STANDARD PUBLISHED

The revised Australian Standard® for Chain of custody for forest products has been published, ensuring it is up to date and consistent with international best practice.

The revised Standard (AS 4707:2014) underpins the tracking of wood or forest products originating from sustainably managed, certified forests through all phases of ownership, transportation and manufacturing to the end consumer.

Sustainably managed forests are certified under the Australian Standard® for Sustainable forest management (AS 4708:2013).

These two Australian Standards® form the core of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) managed by Australian Forestry Standard Ltd (AFS Ltd), which has been endorsed by the PEFC (Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification).

The revised Standard is based on the recently revised PEFC Chain of Custody Standard (PEFC ST 2002:2013) with some modifications to suit Australian circumstances and processes.

“Increasing interest from consumers in where their wood products come from, as well as the requirements of the new illegal logging laws, make this Standard a valuable way for businesses in the wood and paper products sectors to demonstrate their products are sustainable,” said Richard Stanton, AFS Ltd’s National Secretary.

“It is a voluntary standard for use by any organisation seeking to assure its customers that the certified wood and forest products they buy are sourced from a certified forest,” he said.

Along with the traceability advantages of the Standard the Australian Government’s illegal logging due diligence test, which comes into effect in November 2014, requires businesses to assess and manage the risk of importing or processing illegally logged timber, or face prosecution and heavy fines.

“By importing or purchasing timber from forests certified under the Australian Standard® or other PEFC endorsed Standards, businesses can be confident that they will be able to meet the due diligence requirements of the Australian Government’s illegal logging laws,” said Richard Stanton.

Businesses that manufacture, convert or repackage wood from certified forests can become certified under the chain of custody standard to demonstrate the sustainable use of timber along the entire supply chain.

This requires independent assessment and verification along the supply chain to ensure the product can be tracked back to a certified forest.

Australian Standards® are reviewed approximately every five years to ensure they remain consistent with any changes in technical and operational knowledge and reflect community expectations at both the national and international level. This is the second time that the Australian Standard® has been reviewed and republished.

The review of the Australian Standard® for Chain of custody of forest products was undertaken by an independent Standards Reference Committee made up of experts and representatives from a broad range of stakeholders, including forest managers, wood processors, traders and wood/paper products customers. The review followed the standards development procedures and requirements set down by the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations (ABSDO).

Certification bodies can continue to issue certificates against AS 4707:2006 until 31 December 2014. From 1 January 2015 all new chain of custody certificates must be issued against AS 4707:2014.

Existing certified clients may choose for their next scheduled audit, following the publication of AS 4707:2014, to be audited against either AS 4707:2014 or AS 4707:2006. Transition from AS 4707:2006 to AS 4707:2014 may occur during a surveillance audit. If the client chooses to be audited to AS 4707:2006 a transition plan must be discussed with the audit team and described in the audit report.

All clients should comply with AS 4707:2014 by 31 December 2015.

To learn more about the Australian Forest Certification Scheme and how your business could benefit from certification, visit www.forestrystandard.org.au.

- ENDS -

Contact:
Richard Stanton
National Secretary
Australian Forestry Standard Ltd
richard.stanton@forestrystandard.org.au
0421 310 758

More information about the Australian Standard® for Chain of custody of forest products can be found at our website www.forestrystandard.org.au.