

# MEDIA RELEASE



## **Forest Management Practices Come of Age with PEFC mutual recognition for Australia**

The forest management and production tracking practices of the forest and timber industry in Australia has significantly raised its international profile with the mutual recognition of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme by the worlds leading certification body, the *Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes* (PEFC) based in Luxembourg.

The mutual recognition was conferred on Australia, by the Chair of the PEFC, Mr Henri Plauche-Gillon at the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PEFC Council in Santiago de Chile on Friday 29 October.

This recognition was the culmination of over a years detailed evaluation by the PEFC through an independent consultant of the elements of the AFCS – the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), a Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard, JAS-ANZ certification programmes, independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification bodies and actual implementation of the AFS in Australia.

“This is by far the single most important event on the international forest certification calendar in terms of Australia’s credentials for sustainable forest management” commented Mr Geoff Gorrie, Chair, Australian Forestry Standard Limited. “Australia’s forest and timber industries, both public and private, have been working on the AFCS since 2000 and this is the pinnacle of achievement for all participants in the process.”

Australia became a member of the 28 country PEFC in 2002 with the intention of seeking mutual recognition for Australia’s scheme as soon as possible.

“Mutual recognition provides an assurance that Australia’s scheme is compatible with the international requirements of the PEFC which was established in 1999 to promote sustainably managed forests through independent third party certification,” said Mr Gorrie. “Australia now becomes one of 16 countries to have achieved mutual recognition and only one of 2 outside of Europe.”

Mutual recognition status has been achieved in 2004 due to the hard work, dedicated effort and determination of the AFS Steering Committee, AFS Limited and its Technical Committees.

“The drafting and recognition of both the AFS and the CoC Standard to reflect an Australian perspective of forest management and product tracking based on international processes and with the input of a diverse stakeholder base has now been worth the effort,” remarked Dr Hans Drielsma, Chair, AFS Technical Committee.

The certification of forests to the AFS has been underway since 2003 and certification of products from certified forest is now in progress. The mutual recognition status now allows access to the PEFC logo for use in international markets where that labelling provides market recognition for wood products which promote sustainable forest management.

Further information

Mark Edwards

AFS Limited

02 6281 3455