

Public Notification Letter

To: Interested Parties
From: SCS Global Services
Date: 11 October 2019
Re: Notification of Pending FSC Controlled Wood Evaluation of VicForests

Summary: As part of a Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®) Controlled Wood assessment, SCS is currently seeking stakeholder input regarding the forest management of VicForests. Please comment via email, or call our offices or representatives to discuss (contact info below).

VicForests is seeking Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Controlled Wood (CW) certification. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a non-profit organization devoted to encouraging the responsible management of the world's forests. FSC sets standards that ensure forestry is practiced in an environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable way. FSC Controlled Wood standards ensure manufacturers and traders avoid unacceptable timber and timber products, including; illegally harvested wood; wood harvested in violation of traditional and civil rights; wood harvested in forests in which High Conservation Values^[1] are threatened through management activities; wood harvested from conversion of natural forests; and wood harvested from areas where genetically modified trees are planted.

VicForests is a state-owned business responsible for the sale, harvest and re-growing of commercial timber from Victoria's state forests. VicForests regrows all harvested areas with the same type of forest that was originally there. Approximately 3000ha is harvested annually, consisting of Ash and mixed species forest, following a multilayered and comprehensive planning process with regulatory oversight and legislative obligation from many different agencies. Even-aged and uneven-aged management are applied dependent upon the forest conditions. Timber

release plans (TRP) and other detailed operational documents are made publicly available online.

Scope and Certification Evaluation Process

SCS Global Services (SCS), a FSC-accredited certification body based in Emeryville, California, will conduct this FSC evaluation.

Performance will be evaluated against the FSC Controlled Wood Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FSC-STD-30-010), Version 2.0. A copy of the standard is attached to this email.

The CW Evaluation Process Includes the Following Phases:

- Public notification: distribution of the standard and solicitation of comments on the certification applicant; Audit planning and document review;
- Field assessment: A representative sample of field sites and operations within the defined forest area are inspected by a team of auditors;
- Stakeholder consultation;
- Synthesis of findings: Compliance with the standard is ascertained and the certification decision is formulated;
- Reporting: A draft report describing the evaluation process, findings, and certification decision is produced;
- Delivery of final certification report;
- Certification decision: a public summary of the certification report is released, if certification is awarded.

Call for Public Participation

SCS welcomes comments on the forest management of VicForests or other topics pertinent to their seeking FSC CW certification, such as whether VicForests complies with the legal, social, technical, and environmental requirements of the standard or identification of high conservation value forests^[1] within its managed lands. Comments can be submitted via email or standard mail to Lead Auditor Beth Jacquain. The audit team can make arrangements to allow stakeholders to meet with them during the evaluation upon request. All comments and sources will be kept in strict confidence at the request of the commenter.

Dates

The field evaluation is scheduled to commence during the week of **11 November 2019**. SCS will make arrangements to meet with interested parties during the evaluation if appropriate, but it is preferred that comments are submitted before the evaluation commences.

Dispute Resolution Procedure

As provided by the FSC Interim Dispute Resolution Protocol and the SCS Forest Conservation Program Quality Manual, dispute resolution procedures are in place and available to interested parties at <http://www.scsglobalservices.com/your-feedback>

Additional Information

More information about FSC and SCS can be obtained from www.fsc.org and www.SCSglobalServices.com. Information about VicForests can be found at <http://www.vicforests.com.au>

Please Contact Us

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Setting the Standard for Sustainability™



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The SCS Kingfisher certification mark signifies products and services that deliver proven environmental, social and quality benefits.

[1] High Conservation Value Forests possess one or more of the following attributes: a) forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant: concentrations of biodiversity values (eg. endemism, endangered species, refugia); and/or large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance b) forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems c) forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (eg. watershed protection, erosion control) d) forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (eg. subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities). Also see Principle 9, in the FSC Principles and Criteria.