

Australian Forestry Standard Limited

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AFS certification system re-endorsed by PEFC at conference in Switzerland

Australian Forestry Standard Ltd CEO Simon Dorries accepted the certificate of re-endorsement of the national forestry standard certification system from PEFC chairman William Street at the PEFC General Assembly in Switzerland in December last year.

PEFC International CEO Ben Gunneberg also took part in the ceremony held during the PEFC meeting of more than 150 representatives of member countries and stakeholders and supporters in Montreux on Lake Geneva on December 10.



(from left) Ben Bunneberg, PEFC International CEO, William Street, PEFC Chairman, Simon Dorries, AFS Ltd CEO

“The Australian system has been extended by PEFC for another five years, which confirms that the Australian Forest Certification Scheme continues to meet PEFC's globally-recognised sustainability benchmarks,” Mr Dorries said.

“It also ensures that certified forest owners and companies in Australia continue to benefit from the global acceptance of PEFC.”

Re-endorsement of the scheme is significant – Australia is the first non-European country to be recognised by PEFC. More than 10 million hectares of forest have been certified in Australia.

AFS Ltd is hosting an industry dinner in Melbourne on March 21 – the UN International Day of Forests – to be addressed by Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Senator Anne Ruston and PEFC International CEO Ben Gunneberg who will be in Australia visiting AFS stakeholders.

China opts for national forests standard over foreign schemes

The Chinese government has enacted its new national forest certification regulations, recognising PEFC and requiring all forest products to be certified against national standards.

These rules set out the scope, framework, and requirements for all forest certifications operating in China. All forest certification activities must comply with the forest certification requirements which require adherence to Chinese national certification standards.

This means China is putting recognition of its national standards before foreign certification standards.

“This is an important and historic step in China for forestry workers, forest dependent-communities and the forests,” PEFC International CEO Ben Gunneberg said.

“It recognised the extensive work undertaken by a multitude of stakeholders to develop both the CFCC Chinese national forest certification and chain of custody certification standards and system,” he said.

In addition, both these national standards have been thoroughly assessed, resulting in international recognition through PEFC endorsement.”



(from left) Ben Bunneberg, PEFC International CEO, Wang Wei, CFCC Chairman, William Street, PEFC Chairman

As China's CFCC is PEFC-endorsed, China's new regulation effectively means that all certified Chinese forest fibre must meet PEFC's sustainability benchmarks and be audited by PEFC authorised auditors.

In China, it puts an end to the use of unauthorised and unaccredited certification bodies. These must now be registered and accredited by national accreditation bodies belonging to the global certification/accreditation organisation, the International Accreditation Forum, the only internationally recognised standard bearer for all certification systems.

“As a trade attorney it is welcome news that Chinese forest products will now all be audited to IAF approved processes and procedures following ISO guidelines. We will do everything we can to make the transition to these new PEFC-approved standards as seamless as possible,” PEFC International chairman William Street said.

“PEFC's respect for national sovereignty and our commitment to empower and support our national governing body approach means that those who are most affected by certification decisions have a direct voice and vote in how their own national and local forests are managed.”

Chairman of CFCC Wang Wei said for sustainable forest management to succeed globally, it needed to be developed and supported by stakeholders nationally. In addition, it needed global recognition to internationally recognised benchmarks for sustainable forest management.”

Forester's work on certification recognised in NZ Order of Merit

A respected and devoted forester who helped with the endorsement of the PEFC certification scheme in New Zealand in December was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year's Honours List.

Congratulating Dr Andrew McEwen on the award, Simon Dorries, CEO, Australian Forestry Standard Ltd, said he had worked closely with the scientist to set up PEFC in NZ, which will be managed by AFS for the NZ Forest Certification Association.

Dr McEwen's most recent assistance to the sector stems from his anticipation that NZ forestry needs to significantly strengthen its claim to be a supplier of legal and sustainable forest products.

The Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification endorsed the NZ scheme at a round of meeting in Switzerland late last year. With more than 268 million hectares of certified forests, PEFC is the world's biggest forest certification system.

"With the endorsement of the New Zealand system, the country's forest owners can now obtain PEFC certification for their responsible forest management practices through AFS Ltd, enabling processors and others along the forest products supply chain to procure PEFC certified material from local, sustainably managed sources as well as access to new markets," Mr Dorries said.

The Wood Council of New Zealand is delighted that Dr McEwen has received the Order of Merit.

"Andrew has made a vast contribution to our sector over his professional career," said Brian Stanley, Chair of the Council.

"His retirement has not stopped him and he continues to actively support the sector in a voluntary capacity through his involvement in a wide variety of activities.



Dr Andrew McEwen, recognised in New Year's Honours

"Behind the scenes Andrew continues to campaign for the sector on better and fairer regulatory mechanisms for recognising what the forest and wood products sector does to mitigate climate change and protect the environment.

"Exceptional foresight is the name of the game in forestry and throughout his career Andrew has shown this quality. Official recognition of this will, I hope, inspire others to follow in his footsteps and help lead New Zealand towards a much more sustainable future."

Mr Stanley said that in securing PEFC membership, Andrew had given the sector greater business certainty, access to a wider market and, for consumers, a guarantee that NZ products could be trusted.

Also chair of the Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association, Mr Stanley said Andrew demonstrated an ability to see the bigger picture.

"PEFC membership is something that will benefit the whole wood supply chain from tree growing right through to final product marketing," he said.

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