

The Institute of Foresters of Australia

ABN 48 083 197 586



Note to Tasmanian members:

Some of you may have seen the article by Sue Neales in the Mercury newspaper on forest certification. It was quite slanted so a response was called for. Thanks to Aidan Flanagan for help with this. I don't think it got published unfortunately.

Regards,
Richard Shoobridge

Chairman
IFA Tasmania Division

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Dear Editor,

As a professional body, the Institute of Foresters of Australia is disappointed when a respected journalist, and fellow professional, such as Sue Neales fails to meet the standards in reporting expected of her.

In her article of 7th October, Ms Neales misrepresented the Australian Forestry Standard as being 'less highly regarded' when compared to the 'coveted FSC Logo'.

There is no evidence to support these emotive and unsubstantiated claims. Indeed, it appears to express the views of some NGO's rather than objective journalism.

The IFA would like to make the following facts known, to both Ms Neale and the wider Tasmanian community.

1. There are two international forest based certification initiatives: the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and the Forest Stewardship Scheme (FSC).
 - a) PEFC, the world's largest forest certification body, has endorsed 28 national schemes which cover over 211 million hectares of forests. These national schemes build upon the inter-governmental processes for the promotion of sustainable forest management, a series of ongoing mechanisms supported by 149 governments in the world covering 85 percent of the world's forest area. The Australian Forestry Standard is accredited under the PEFC.
 - b) FSC endorsement covers 112 million hectares of forest in more than 81 countries.
2. Unlike FSC, the development and ongoing management of AFS certification is independently maintained by Standards Australia and it is Australia's only scheme that provides accreditation only where an independent audit finds an appropriate level of compliance has been achieved.



3. The AFS also includes a Chain of Custody Standard (AS4707) which is used to monitor wood products through the supply chain to the customer. This process ensures customers are independently guaranteed that the wood is sourced from legally harvested forests and are being sustainably managed.
4. There are now 8.72 million hectares of forest in Australia certified under the AFS and around 0.53 million hectares of forest certified under FSC.
5. Over 1.83 million hectares of managed forests (52 per cent of all forests) in Tasmania are accredited as being sustainably managed under the AFS.

Tasmania's forest industry has embraced forest certification as an independent tool that demonstrates commitment to sustainable forest management.

Promoting only the FSC is inappropriate, and could have the potential to restrict trade, distort markets and increase the importation of illegally sourced wood product into Australia. In doing so, it could also potentially support anti-competitive behavior which may increase costs to consumers,

I urge Ms Neales to take the time to research the benefit promoted under the AFS and PEFC approach.

Richard Shoobridge
Chairman
IFA Tasmania Division

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