

Restoring forests and landscapes and securing Australia's future

Effective stakeholder engagement

Implications for forest managers

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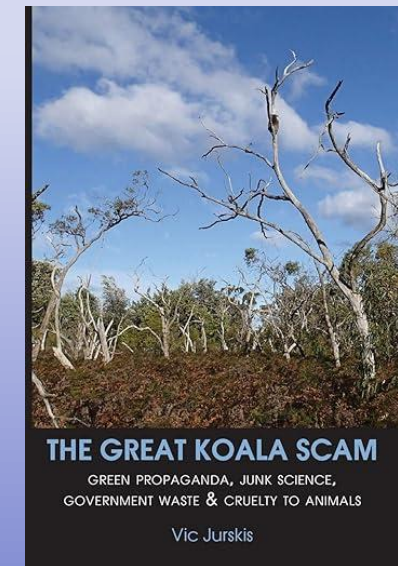
Acknowledgements

Traditional owners

- Kurna Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide plains in South Australia.
- I'm from Bundjalung country in the north of NSW

My teachers, mentors and peers

- Dr Ross Florence, Emeritus Prof. Ian Ferguson and Emeritus Prof. Eric Bachelard
- Richard Stanton
- Dr Neil Burrows and Vic Jurskis



Overview

- Challenges
- Certification Standards, accreditation, and governance
- Requirements of the Standard
- Strategic and operational planning
- Some new requirements in AS/NZS 4708
- What AI has provided

Challenges

Restoring forests and landscapes and securing Australia's future

- What's the problem we're trying to fix?
- Where are we heading?
- What do we want from our forests?
- Who sets the agenda?
- What's the plan?
- Are we there yet?
- When will we get there?



What others have said...

Restoring forests and landscapes and securing Australia's future

- Rob De Fegely - why is forestry so hard - Social licence and reputation
- Leanda Garvey - Indigenous knowledge and perspective
- Tyron Venn - Exporting our environmental impact
- Paul Haar - Plantation hardwood and diversity of stakeholders
- Ben Boxshall - hybrid forestry and active silviculture
- Gibson Farmer - indigenous forest management and cultural burning
- Courtney - we are Country
- What keeps me up? - Fire
- Anshul - Be brave. Get in people's minds. social license - disinformation
- David Shelton - highest and best use value
- Radha - building alliances to influence regulators
- Michelle Freeman - understand forest values
- Mike Ryan - evidence to support biodiversity positive outcomes as a result of actively managed forests
- Owen Bassett - how much can we bear
- Positive direction engagement - Zoe
- Patrick Baker - managing for uncertainty



Certification Standards, accreditation, and governance

Scheme Owner – sets the Standard and Scheme Rules

Standard – specifies requirements for certificate holders

Scheme rules – specify requirements for certification bodies

Certification bodies – accredited to conduct audits and provide certificates

Accreditation bodies

- provide accreditation to Certification Bodies
- Accredited under the International Accreditation Forum (IAF)

International Accreditation Forum (IAF)

- Independent of Scheme Owner
- ensures rules are consistently applied across national accreditation bodies



Requirements of the Standard

4 Context of the forest manager

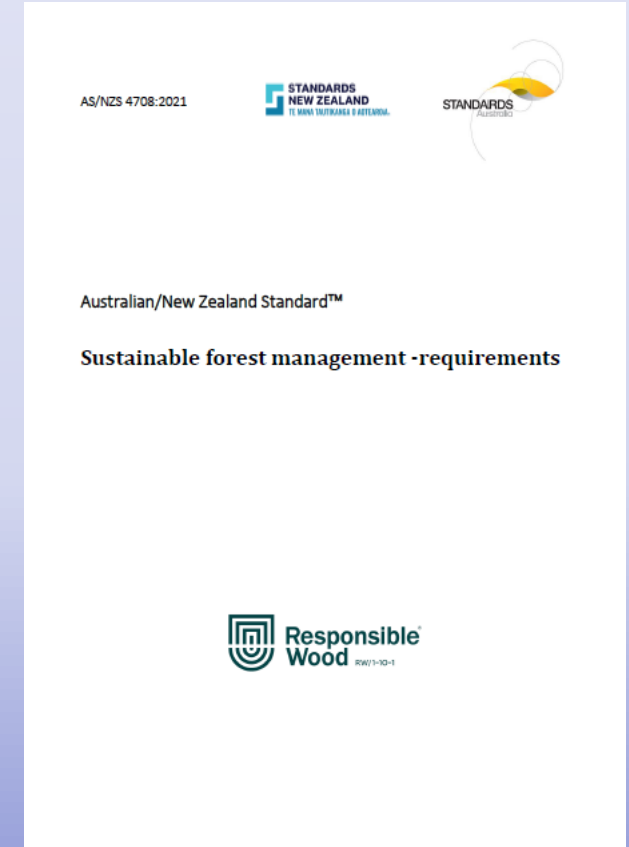
4.1 Understanding the forest manager in its context

The forest manager shall **determine external and internal issues** that are relevant to its purpose and that affect its ability to achieve the intended outcomes of its forest management system. Such issues shall include cultural, economic, environmental and social conditions being affected by, or capable of affecting the forest manager.

4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders

The forest manager shall:

- (a) **identify** stakeholders;
- (b) **evaluate** which activities are likely to directly impact stakeholders;
- (c) **determine** how they are affected by its operations;
- (d) **identify the relevant needs and expectations** (i.e. requirements) of stakeholders;
- (e) **identify and justify** which of these needs and expectations become its **compliance obligations**.



Requirements of the Standard

5 Leadership

5.1 Leadership and commitment

Senior management shall demonstrate leadership and commitment with respect to sustainable forest management by:...

b. ensuring that the sustainable forest management policy and sustainability objectives are established and are compatible with **the strategic direction** and the context of the forest manager;

5.2 Sustainable forest management policy

Senior management shall establish, implement and maintain a sustainable forest management policy, within the defined scope of its forest management system that:...(amongst other things)

(e) includes acknowledgement of the positive contribution of stakeholders and a **commitment to proactive engagement with stakeholders**;



Requirements of the Standard

6 Planning

6.1 Actions to address obligations, risks and opportunities

6.1.1 General

The forest manager shall **plan to meet compliance obligations** and the requirements of this Standard.

When planning, the forest manager shall consider:

- (a) compliance obligations;
- (b) the issues referred to in 4.1 (context);
- (c) **the requirements referred to in 4.2** (stakeholders);



Requirements of the Standard

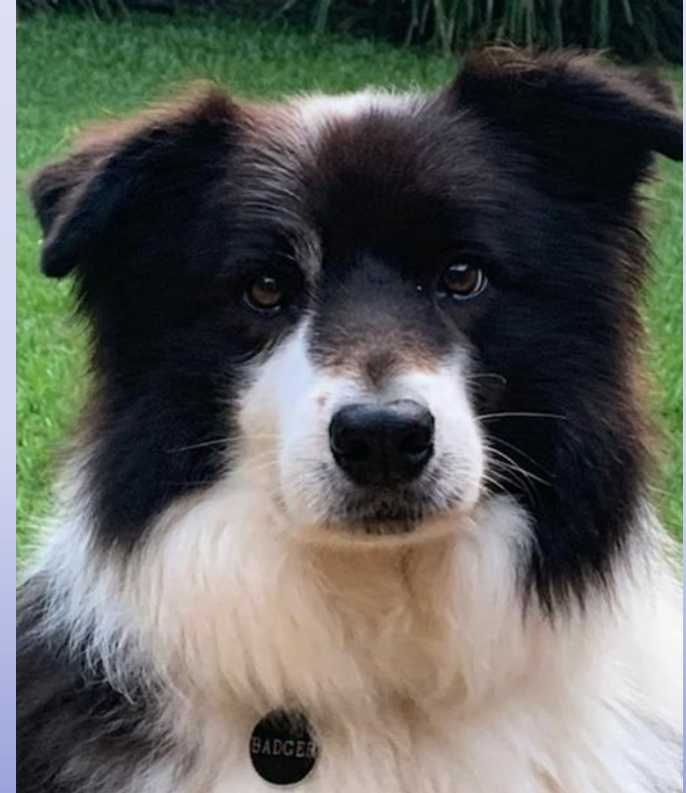
- **7.4 Stakeholder communication and engagement**
- **7.4.1 General**
- The forest manager shall **strive to build constructive relationships** with stakeholders.
- The forest manager shall establish, implement and maintain the process(es) needed for **facilitating effective, culturally appropriate, meaningful and timely** stakeholder engagement...
- When establishing its engagement process(es), the forest manager shall:
 - i. take into account the **needs and expectations of stakeholders**, its compliance obligations and sustainability requirements; and
 - ii. ensure that information communicated is consistent with information generated within the forest management system and is reliable.

Digging down further

The forest manager shall address relevant communications from stakeholders on its forest management system.

This will include:

- (a) **considering and incorporating stakeholder feedback into the forest management system;** and
- (b) having mechanisms for **managing complaints and disputes in a timely manner**, including processes for:
 - (i) receiving complaints or disputes;
 - (ii) investigating and reviewing;
 - (iii) taking corrective and remedial action where necessary; and
 - (iv) communicating outcomes.



Public disclosures

7.4.3 External communication

The forest manager shall make publicly available:

- (a) the sustainable forest management **policy** (Clause 5.2);
- (b) a **public summary** of forest management (Clause 7.4.4);
- (c) defined forest area **maps** at a scale that enables a clear understanding of the location of the forest and its context;
- (d) a copy of its current certification **certificate**; and
- (e) the audit **report summaries** provided by the certification body corresponding to the current period of certification.

Public summary – Forest Management Plan

7.4.4 Public summary

The forest manager shall make available a **public summary** of its management that is appropriate to the system scope, scale and management intent of the defined forest area. The forest manager shall ensure that the public summary includes:

- (a) **an overview** of the context of the organisation, its activities and the compliance framework in which the forest manager operates;
- (b) a **description of the defined forest area**, including the forest management unit/s and vegetation types (as applicable) and access to maps at appropriate scale;
- (c) an outline of the forest **management objectives**;
- (d) a description of **forest values** and an overview of how they will be managed to both provide benefits and minimise harm;
- (e) a **rationale for silvicultural regimes**;
- (f) a description of **operational planning** and control processes;
- (g) a description of the processes for **monitoring condition and performance**; and
- (h) an outline of **stakeholder engagement processes**, including procedures for obtaining further information.

Public summary – Forest Management Plan

The forest manager shall:

- i. **periodically review and update** the public summary; and
- ii. **ensure that stakeholder views are considered** during the review.

The public summary:

- Describes the **strategic direction** for the forest manager.
- **Describes the forest estate** and
- **Outlines the management objectives**
- **Requires stakeholder engagement** during its development and periodic review

Performance evaluation

9.1 Monitoring and evaluation

9.1.1 General

The forest manager shall **monitor, measure, analyse and evaluate its performance**.

For the relevant requirements of the Standard, the forest manager shall determine:

- (a) what needs to be monitored, its performance criteria, and appropriate indicators;
- (b) the methods for monitoring, analysis and evaluation, as applicable, to ensure credible and valid results;
- (c) when the monitoring shall be performed; and
- (d) how the results from monitoring shall be analysed and evaluated.

The forest manager shall ensure that calibrated or verified monitoring and measuring equipment is used and maintained, as appropriate.

The forest manager shall communicate relevant performance information both internally and externally, as identified in its communication process(es) and as required by its compliance obligations.

The forest manager shall retain appropriate documented information as evidence of the monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation results.

The forest manager **shall make available to interested parties the monitoring methodology and results** of monitoring, (excluding confidential information), upon reasonable request.

Biodiversity monitoring

- **11.3.7 Monitor biodiversity**
- The forest manager shall **monitor biodiversity priorities, using a scientifically based monitoring methodology developed in consultation with relevant experts and stakeholders**, to determine if values are being maintained or enhanced within the defined forest area. Biodiversity priorities for monitoring will be clearly described and quantified, and be drawn from general biodiversity, structural elements and/or SBVs.
- The forest manager shall **document biodiversity monitoring objectives and methods**. The monitoring results will be used to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the biodiversity management.
- Note: The **results of biodiversity monitoring should not be regarded as confidential** (See 9.1.1) except where there is risk of causing harm.



Identification and protection of Cultural values

Sustainability Objective 6:

Forest management shall protect and maintain, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, their natural, cultural, social, recreational, religious and spiritual, and heritage values and rights.

11.6.1 Heritage values

The forest manager shall identify, protect and maintain cultural, religious, spiritual and social heritage places and values.

The forest manager **shall regularly consult** with appropriate bodies to:

- (a) **identify and record** the significant cultural places and values; and
- (b) **protect and maintain** these cultural places and values in a way that takes due regard of their significance.

Identification and protection of cultural values

11.6.2 Indigenous peoples' rights, responsibilities and values

The forest manager shall **recognise rights, responsibilities and values** of Indigenous people based on their recognised connection and ownership, where applicable, to the forests and land, including but not limited to the established framework of legal, customary and traditional rights such as outlined in ILO 169, the Treaty of Waitangi and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These rights shall not be infringed upon without **free prior and informed consent**.

The forest manager shall identify and respect the rights, responsibilities and values of Indigenous peoples. This shall include:

- (a) providing for Indigenous peoples' **input into decision making**. In New Zealand, this shall include the rights of tangata whenua in decision making to ensure continued protection of those values;
- (b) acknowledging and applying **Indigenous peoples' knowledge** of sustainable development and management of forests with informed community consent;
- (c) applying **practices and protocols** that are consistent with Indigenous peoples' cultural and spiritual values that support and endorse sustainable development and management of forests;
- (d) where appropriate, **communicating** to the wider community Indigenous peoples' rights, interests and knowledge;
- (e) **supporting** Indigenous peoples' economic and social aspirations in sharing benefits from the management of forests; and
- (f) **respecting** Indigenous peoples' cultural and traditional customs.

Identification and protection of Cultural values

11.6.3 Indigenous cultural values

The forest manager shall **identify, record and protect** Indigenous peoples' cultural, religious, spiritual and social heritage places and values, respecting requirements for confidentiality and intellectual property.

The forest manager **shall consult with the relevant Indigenous peoples** or their representative bodies to:

- (a) **identify and record** the significance of Indigenous peoples' cultural places and values;
- (b) **protect** these cultural places and values, wāhi taonga, wāhi tapu and treasures of national heritage;
- (c) identify areas fundamental to meeting the health and subsistence needs of Indigenous peoples and communities, and
- (d) **manage these areas in a way that takes due regard of their significance.**



Operational planning and notification

7.4.3 External communication

The forest manager shall externally communicate information relevant to the forest management system, as established by the forest manager's documented communication process(es), and as required by its compliance obligations.

The forest manager shall use reasonable efforts to **identify and notify affected stakeholders prior** to the commencement of any operations that are likely to directly impact them.



In summary

- Proactive engagement is required at both the strategic and operational levels.
- Engagement in the operational planning phase is not the same as a pre-operational notification

AS/NZS 4708 - Summary of the most relevant changes

- New requirements to **consider risk factors in audit planning**, and where necessary, to provide additional audit time for the auditing of activities considered as higher risk.
- Revised sampling methods for the auditing of **group forest management schemes**.
- Revised and simplified audit sampling, with the focus shifting away from auditing a sample of forest areas, to auditing a sample of **forest management activities**. This may impact slightly on audit duration. An updated Audit Duration Calculator is under development.
- A new requirement to **announce upcoming audits to stakeholders 30 days prior to an audit**. The announcement may be made either by the certification body or certified organization.

What I asked Chat GPT

- Describe all the mechanisms a forest manager must consider in relation to stakeholder engagement in order to comply with the requirements of certification to AS/NZS 4708:2021, and provide examples of how such engagement should be conducted.
- Explain the requirements with respect to stakeholder engagement at both the strategic and operational planning phases.

Thank you

- Questions and discussion