



## Sustainability Benefits – Certification Schemes

Forest certification schemes independently verify timber as being from a forest that has been managed sustainably as per an agreed standard. Chain of Custody Certification schemes then provide an auditable system to track wood products from the certified forest, through the processing and marketing channels, to the final user. Both the forest certification schemes and the chain of custody certification schemes work towards reducing illegal logging activities globally.

### Certification and Sourcing Sustainable Timber

Appropriate management of forests is important for sustainable development. They provide multiple benefits to communities, including employment and economic opportunity, improvement of water availability, enhancement of biodiversity, and carbon sequestration. Forest certification has developed as a way of

**demonstrating the implementation of sustainable forest management practices.**

The certification of a sustainably managed forest requires an audit by an independent, accredited third party certification body. The audit assesses the forest management practices of a forest manager or owner against the standard for certification. Certification is available for both native forests and plantations.

The sustainable management of forests ensures that a wide range of forest values are maintained, including ecological, economic and socio-cultural values. Certification schemes aim to ensure that factors such as biodiversity and ecosystems, the rights of workers and Indigenous peoples, and compliance with legal requirements are all addressed.

In Australia, popular certification schemes are the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Responsible Wood and Programme for the Endorsement of

Forest Certification (PEFC). The FSC was created to ensure the sustainable management of forests throughout the world and it has set a series of standards for the environmental and social sustainability of forests and timber supply chains.



Figure 1 Forest Stewardship Council <https://au.fsc.org/en-au>

Australia has its own Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) defined in the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme which is endorsed by the PEFC.



Figure 2 Responsible Wood <http://www.responsiblewood.org.au>



Figure 3 Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification <http://pefc.org>

PEFC endorses national certifications worldwide allowing these standards to be recognised

globally. The list of certified Australian forest managers can be found on the Sustainable Forest Management Certification Register maintained by Responsible Wood.

Chain of custody certification verifies the distribution chain of wood material or wood products from a certified forest to the end user. Chain of custody certification substantiates claims that wood or wood products come from a certified forest. In Australia, chain of custody certification is available within FSC, Responsible Wood and PEFC.

Timber processors take responsibility for obtaining chain of custody certification for their products. This demonstrates that the timber purchased and processed is from certified forests managed using agreed sustainable practices. Certified timber processors can be found on the Register of Certified Organisations maintained by Responsible Wood.

Increasing the use of sustainably sourced timber in building construction is a priority for many designers, architects and builders as they want to increase their sustainable living credentials.

## Further Reading

Australian Forestry Standards. (2010). *Australian Forest Certification Scheme*. Retrieved from [www.responsiblewood.org.au/standards/](http://www.responsiblewood.org.au/standards/)

Australian Forestry Standards. (2010). *Register of Certified Organisations*. Retrieved from [www.responsiblewood.org.au/find-certified/chain-of-custody-certified/](http://www.responsiblewood.org.au/find-certified/chain-of-custody-certified/)

Australian Forestry Standards. (2010). *Sustainable Forest Management Certification Register*. Retrieved from [www.responsiblewood.org.au/find-certified/sustainable-forest-management-certified](http://www.responsiblewood.org.au/find-certified/sustainable-forest-management-certified)

Forest & Wood Products Research & Development Corporation. (2006). *A review of forest certification in Australia*. Retrieved from [www.fwpa.com.au/images/marketaccess/Final%20Certification%20Comparison%20Report%20September%202006v2.pdf](http://www.fwpa.com.au/images/marketaccess/Final%20Certification%20Comparison%20Report%20September%202006v2.pdf)

Forest Stewardship Council. (2017). FSC. Retrieved from [www.ic.fsc.org/en](http://www.ic.fsc.org/en)

HQPlantations. (2018). *HQPlantations*. Retrieved from [www.hqplantations.com.au](http://www.hqplantations.com.au)

PEFC International. (2017). *Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification*. Retrieved from [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)

## Case Study – HQPlantations

HQPlantations sustainably manages 340,000 hectares of land throughout Queensland including softwood and hardwood plantations that produce up to 2.5 million cubic metres of plantation log timber annually, supporting both domestic and export customers. HQPlantations managed forests also provide a range of conservation, community and other values.

HQPlantations are committed to safe and environmentally responsible commercial management practices. These management practices are independently certified to internationally recognised Responsible Wood and Forest Stewardship Council standards, providing customers, stakeholders, neighbours and other forest users with the assurance that the plantations are managed sustainably. (HQPlantations, 2018).



Figure 4 HQPlantations Southern Pine nursery (Image courtesy of HQPlantations)