MEDIA RELEASE

FSC Australia response to VicForests Announcement

**FSC Australia encourages forest managers in pursuit of FSC certification**

**Australia 31 January 2017**: VicForests today confirmed their commitment to become FSC certified with an announcement of plans to seek FSC Controlled Wood certification in 2017. While VicForests have not achieved certification, FSC Australia CEO Adam Beaumont said he was encouraged that the state-owned forest manager was again exploring moving to full FSC Forest Management certification.

VicForests plan to follow a step-wise strategy to enter the FSC system. “The step-wise approach is not uncommon for forest managers of VicForests size. In this method the first step is to become certified to FSC’s entry-level forest management standard, Controlled Wood” said Beaumont.

FSC Controlled Wood is not the same as FSC Forest Management Certification but does require VicForests to engage with their stakeholders and undertake a review of important high conservation values across their estate.

FSC Australia is encouraged by VicForests decision to enter the FSC system and look forward to the outcome of their audit later this year. VicForests will undergo an independent audit against the FSC’s Controlled Wood standards.

Controlled Wood is something very different to Full Forest Management and is an entry level standard, and not designed as full assurance of responsible forestry. As such, Controlled Wood certificate holders are not allowed to make promotional claims. Despite being the entry-level standard, Controlled Wood certification still has an impact on the way this production forest will be managed in the future, over and above any government regulatory scheme, legal requirements or other certification schemes.

Beaumont said despite VicForests already holding Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) and Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) approval, VicForests are currently aiming to obtain the entry-level FSC standard, Controlled Wood, which highlights way FSC’s member driven standards remain the most stringent in the industry.

The FSC’s green tree ‘tick’ logo has become the most highly sought after seal of approval for manufacturers and forest managers in Australia. The logo can’t be bought and must be earned through independent auditing against FSC standards. The Controlled Wood forest management standard does not allow the use of the FSC logo. However, FSC Australia looks forward to seeing VicForests progress and taking the first step, becoming Controlled Wood certified, on their journey to Full Forest Management.

The desire to achieve certification reflects supply chain demands that are driving non-FSC certified forest managers to gain certification to access the growing environmentally conscious markets both locally and internationally.

FSC certification is carried out by independent auditors that are internationally monitored and accredited by Accreditation Services International (ASI). FSC Australia is not involved in decisions about who receives FSC certification or in the appointment of auditors.
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FSC Australia response to Forestry Tasmania audit result
Encourages forest manager to continue certification pursuit

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Media enquiries:

Adam Beaumont – 0435 072 672 / a.beaumont@au.fsc.org

Prepared Questions and Answers for reference

What is Controlled Wood?

Controlled Wood is material that can be mixed with the certified material during manufacturing FSC mix products. Controlled wood has enabled manufacturers to manage low and fluctuating supplies of FSC certified forest products while creating demand for FSC certified wood. Click here to learn more about the difference between Controlled Wood and Full FSC Certified Wood.

Can the Controlled Wood Certificate Holders label wood sourced from this area with the FSC logo?

No. Timber sourced from the Controlled Wood Sources are not fully FSC certified, and therefore they cannot label their wood with the FSC logo or make any promotional or marketing claims about meeting the Controlled Wood standard.

No claims of ‘FSC Controlled Wood’ are allowed for promotional purposes, and no labelling is allowed for products sold as ‘FSC Controlled Wood’.

Only FSC certified processors and manufacturers could mix ‘FSC Controlled Wood’ into their products with fully FSC certified or recycled sources. Only under these conditions can the final product be labelled as ‘FSC Mixed’.

Notes to producers/editors

- VicForests have announced they are seeking Controlled Wood certification
- A copy of VicForests press release and announcement was published on their website on Tuesday 31 January 2017 – see link here.
- There are two different levels of assessment in the FSC System: (a) Full Forest Management and (b) Controlled Wood
- Full Forest Management certification is based on FSC’s 10 Principles and Criteria that sets the rules of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management.
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- **Controlled Wood** ensures the avoidance of wood in FSC Certified products that come from unacceptable sources such as:
  - Illegally harvested wood
  - Wood harvested in violation of traditional and civil rights
  - Wood harvested from forests where High Conservation Values are threatened
  - Wood harvested from forests being converted to plantations or non-forest uses
  - Wood from forests in which genetically modified trees are planted

- No claims of 'FSC Controlled Wood' are allowed for promotional purposes and no labelling is allowed for products sold as 'FSC Controlled Wood'. FSC certified processors and manufacturers can only mix 'FSC Controlled Wood' into products containing FSC certified or recycled sources under specified conditions. These products can be labelled 'FSC Mix'.

About FSC Australia:

- **FSC Australia** is a registered charity and national office of an international non-government, non-profit organisation that promotes responsible forest management practices through multi-stakeholder standard setting and an internationally-recognised certification labelling program.
- FSC certification assessments are carried out by accredited certification bodies, such as SCS, SGS, Soil Association, that are internationally qualified and managed by Accreditation Services International (ASI).
- FSC Australia is not involved in decisions about who receives FSC certification or which independent auditor undertakes the certification – we are the guardian of the scheme and organise the membership to set the standards.
- In Australia 1.25 m hectares of forests have been certified to full FSC Forest Management standards.
- Globally the FSC has certified more than 193 million hectares of natural and plantation forests in more than 80 countries with just over 1,400 certified forest managers. See FSC Internationals website (fsc.org) for more facts and figures.
- Natural forest dominates the FSC-certified forest area Internationally at 65 percent, while plantations make up just 8.2 percent of the global FSC certified area.
- FSC Australia has tasked nine representatives from economic, environmental and social backgrounds with developing the first unique set of Australian owned forestry standards. A draft National Standard is currently being finalised for submission and consideration by FSC International.