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Media Release

Western Australia to pursue Australian Forestry Standard (AFS)

The Western Australian Cabinet has approved in principle the pursuit of Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) certification for native forests and plantations by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and the Forest Products Commission. (FPC).

Cabinet has asked CALM and the FPC, in consultation with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), to investigate the associated costs of achieving AFS certification, including a contribution from industry.

CALM and the FPC will report back to Cabinet for approval to proceed with AFS.

State Forestry Minister Kim Chance said a number of certification schemes and standards now operated throughout the world, certifying that forests were being sustainably managed.

“Along with many other countries, Australia took note of this trend, and developed a forest management standard — the AFS — as the basis for certification. Importantly, the Standard takes into account Australian conditions,” Mr Chance said.

The Minister said the AFS would provide industry, consumers and investors with an independent, third-party assessment of forest management practices against agreed economic, social, environmental and cultural requirements.

Mr Chance added that the Standard would also reassure consumers that they were supporting some of the world’s best forest managers.

“The Standard can be applied to any defined forest area being managed for wood production – irrespective of scale or type of ownership – in native forest or plantations.

“Adoption of the AFS will help Australia to maintain access to its traditional markets for timber and wood products and, perhaps even more importantly, help find new ones,” Mr Chance said.

“It provides a credible response to consumer expectations and should become a familiar and trusted symbol in the international arena, greatly helping Australian exporters maintain access to the world’s markets.”