

MEDIA RELEASE

24th November 2008 – for immediate release

Companies Exploiting Consumer Naivety on Forest Management Certification

A3P, the peak national body representing the plantation products and paper industry is concerned by the efforts of some companies to deliberately exploit the limited understanding of forest management certification among consumers and the public generally.

Forest management certification is an assessment of the performance of the forest manager against a standard, generally covering environmental, economic and social criteria. Chain of custody is merely a means of ensuring that the origin of wood can be traced along the manufacturing and marketing chain so that consumers can be informed about the source of the wood in the end products they are buying.

Most consumers are unlikely to understand the fundamental difference between forest management certification and chain of custody certification. This distinction is vital, and far more important than the minor differences in specific forest management requirements between the two major certification systems, the PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council).

A3P CEO Richard Stanton said "The fact that a mill or a company has chain of custody certification says nothing about its environmental performance. Only if that mill or company is able to source a sufficient volume of its wood from a certified forest can it make a claim about these credentials of its products."

"Importantly, chain of custody certification does not tell consumers anything at all about whether a company operates legally or meets international labour or human rights standards."

"We are strong supporters of sustainable forest management certification. The majority of our plantation grower members have achieved certification against either the Australian Forestry Standard (which is endorsed by Standards Australia and the PEFC) and/or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Increasingly our members in the pulp and paper and solid timber industry are taking advantage of the fact that a large proportion of their wood supply is certified and are marketing certified products to their customers."

This concern was raised after the PEFC chain of custody certification of certain operations in Indonesia and A3P notes that there is no PEFC certified forest or plantation in Indonesia because there is no PEFC endorsed Indonesian certification scheme.

In order to produce PEFC certified products these mills in Indonesia must use PEFC certified fibre imported from certified forests elsewhere in the world. This is a legitimate activity under credible certification procedures with the additional caveat that imported PEFC fibre can only be combined with other fibre that has been obtained from sources which are not "controversial" if any of the output is to be marketed as PEFC certified.

- ENDS -

Further information

Richard Stanton, CEO A3P – 0421 310 758

Natalie Loudon, Communications Officer A3P – 0401 757 172



29 Torrens Street
Braddon ACT 2612

T +61 2 6273 8111
F +61 2 6273 8011
W www.a3p.asn.au