

Media Release



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Sustainable Timber Tasmania's FSC journey

Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT) is pleased to announce that SCS Global Services will conduct an audit commencing 20 May 2019 against the new Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Australia Forest Stewardship Standard.

Suzette Weeding, General Manager Land Management at Sustainable Timber Tasmania, is looking forward to the audit process commencing.

"We recognise the value of independent third party certification of our Forest Management System as a means of providing confidence to consumers that the forest from which their products are sourced is managed responsibly," she said.

"Sustainable Timber Tasmania is seeking FSC certification and our staff have been working hard to prepare for this upcoming audit.

"STT is focused on sustainably managing the forest estate, supplying timber and growing our business."

Interested organisations and individuals are encouraged to have their input into Sustainable Timber Tasmania's planning and operations with information about operations available on its website, www.sttas.com.au.

"Our auditors will soon be calling for input into the audit process and we encourage stakeholders to participate," Ms Weeding said.

A key document supporting Sustainable Timber Tasmania's management approach has recently been updated. The new High Conservation Value Assessment and Management Plan is now available from the website.

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FAQs

What changes has Sustainable Timber Tasmania implemented since the last audit?

Old growth

Sustainable Timber Tasmania has phased out clearfelling of Coupes Containing Old Growth (defined as coupes with greater than 25% by area of mapped old growth forest), consistent with Sustainable Timber Tasmania's announcement in July 2015. This is an important and significant change to Sustainable Timber Tasmania's operations.

Threatened species

Sustainable Timber Tasmania is committed to the protection and management of threatened species and has been working with the Forest Practices Authority (FPA), Department Primary Industries Parks Water and Environment (DPIPWE), researchers and species experts to identify ways to reduce the potential impacts of harvesting operations on species such as swift parrots (that nest in hollow bearing trees). The swift parrot work has focused on identifying potential nesting habitats across the landscape and excluding these areas from harvesting.

In addition, since October 2015 Sustainable Timber Tasmania has implemented a precautionary approach of not harvesting on Bruny Island, which is free from predatory sugar gliders, pending the completion of an evidence-based strategic plan for the conservation of swift parrot habitat in Tasmania.

High Conservation Values (HCV)

Sustainable Timber Tasmania fully revised its HCV assessment process, conducted further engagement with experts on HCV identification and management, sought stakeholder input in early 2017 and published a new High Conservation Value Assessment and Management Plan.

The new Plan has significantly increased the number of HCVs identified by Sustainable Timber Tasmania in Tasmania and on Permanent Timber Production Zone (PTPZ) land. The Plan identifies HCVs and the management measures to maintain and/or enhance them in the landscape. High Conservation Values identified include: threatened species; threatened forest communities; old growth forest communities; forests in town water catchments; and large landscape level forests.

Landscape management approach

Sustainable Timber Tasmania has refined its landscape management approach to include evaluating the context of harvesting operations at a mid-landscape scale (~ 20,000 ha). This enables Sustainable Timber Tasmania to maintain and recruit appropriate levels of mature habitat, such as trees with hollows, standing dead trees and coarse woody debris. This builds upon the management that is also conducted at the local scale (1 km radius) and the operational scale (within harvest areas) to maintain and/or enhance forest values in the landscape.



Is Sustainable Timber Tasmania confident that it will achieve certification and what will it mean if it is achieved?

Achieving FSC Forest Management certification is not easy – and nor should it be. Sustainable Timber Tasmania is committed to the journey and believes the required effort will be worth it. In addition to meeting increasing market demands for this certification, Sustainable Timber Tasmania is determined to genuinely improve its operations.

Who will be auditing Sustainable Timber Tasmania?

SCS Global Services, an independent auditing organisation, will conduct the audit against the new Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) National Standard. This is the same organisation that undertook the previous audit of the business.

How long will the audit take?

The audit will take two weeks, commencing 20 May 2019 and will include presentations, site visits, inspection of operations in the forests and engagement with stakeholders.

When will the result be known?

Auditing a large organisation like Sustainable Timber Tasmania against the FSC Australia Forest Stewardship Standard is a complex task and the process is managed by the auditors. It is Sustainable Timber Tasmania's expectation that the result of the audit will be reported in late 2019.