

Forest Management System – Summary Audit Report			
Client name:	VicForests	Certificate #:	AFS 703072
Client address	Level 12, 461 Bourke Street Melbourne, Victoria 3001	Website:	vicforests.com.au
Audit type:	Routine Surveillance	Audit date:	2-6 September 2019
Standard:	AS4708:2013	Auditor/s:	Ross Garsden
<p>This document provides a summary of the findings contained in a report to this client with respect to the implementation of the client’s management system as determined during an audit conducted by BSI.</p>			

Scope of certification:

Activities associated with the sustainable management of native forests in Victoria for timber production, including: the planning and supervision of harvesting operations; marketing of forest products and the regeneration of forests post-harvest. The Defined Forest Area consists of ash and mixed eucalypt forests in the east of the State and community forests primarily in the west of the State.

Executive summary:

This report presents the findings of a routine surveillance assessment regarding VicForests’ compliance with the nominated Standard. The audit included an assessment of administrative functions at the Head Office and forest management activities in east Gippsland. Offices visited included Orbost, Bendoc and Woori Yallock.

The audit included an assessment of strategic and operational planning processes and supervision of a range of harvesting operations in High Elevation, Low Elevation and Coastal mixed species forests in East Gippsland. The audit focused on processes for identification and management of significant biodiversity values (including threatened species and old-growth forests) as well as processes for planning the spatial distribution of forest operations in terms of scale and intensity.

There has been no change to the Defined Forest Area since the previous assessment.

The audit included consultation with a number of stakeholders, including individual community members, harvesting contractors and a representative from the Victorian Government regulator, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). A community member submitted a statement of concerns to BSI regarding the organisation’s certification and forest management activities in the Central Highlands. It is noted that these concerns had not been raised directly with VicForests prior to the audit. VicForests has provided a confidential response to BSI in relation to those concerns. The next audit is planned to look at activities in the Central Highlands.

VicForests shares responsibility for management of the Defined Forest Area with several other agencies. DELWP is the agency with primary responsibility for a range of forest management activities relevant to delivering the requirements of the Standard. The Office of the Conservation Regulator has been established within DELWP with responsibility for overseeing regulatory functions in conservation and environment in the State of Victoria.

Significant improvements noted in this assessment include:

- Development of an adaptive management framework to mitigate impacts on identified high conservation values and demonstrated capacity for maintaining structural elements within the forest.
- Development of a policy commitment to protect old-growth and implementation of processes for detection, validation and protection of old-growth components within the landscape.
- The development of the 5-Year Planning framework and associated improvements in coupe planning processes
- Mobile data capture capabilities, including:
 - application development and implementation (Tree Collector) and improvements in the knowledge of the forest assets for both habitat and timber values; and
 - provision of tools and capability for improving contractor compliance (tablets in machines)
- Development of three-dimensional rendition of coupes which allows a realistic representation of operational areas for public consultation on a case-by-case basis.
- The introduction of Tableau and the development and implementation of the Communications Register and associated reporting processes.
- Improved capacity to monitor and manage overloads

The minor non-conformance identified in the previous report in relation to the management of overloads has been effectively addressed and is now closed. No new non-conformances were identified during this audit. However several further opportunities for improvement are noted.

The audit has confirmed the organisation’s commitment to continual improvement in both its operational performance and the systems that support the business.

The next audit is planned to assess the management actions in Ash forests in Central Highlands. The auditor would like to acknowledge the cooperation and constructive engagement of all staff involved in the planning and conduct of this audit. Once again, VicForests staff demonstrated a high level of professionalism and competence and an interest and willingness to actively engage and support the audit process.

The audit has also verified that VicForests continues to meet the requirements of AS 4708:2013.

Defined forest area statement (Forest Management Units)

- FMU 1 – Ash Species / Eastern DFA
- FMU 2 – High Elevation mixed species / Eastern DFA
- FMU 3 – Low elevation mixed species/ Eastern DFA
- FMU 4 – Coastal mixed species / Eastern DFA
- FMU 5 – Low elevation mixed species / Western DFA
- FMU 6 – Coastal mixed species / Western DFA
- FMU 7 – Red gum / Western DFA
- FMU 8 – Box Ironbark / Western DFA
- FMU 9 – Ash Species (Blackwood) / Western DFA

Defined forest area (in hectares):

2,730,419 ha

Advised to AFS Limited on:

15 January 2018

Certificate expires on:	8 February 2022
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Report prepared by:	
Ross Garsden	Lead Auditor – Forest Management Systems
<i>Name of person who prepared this report</i>	<i>Position</i>

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