

AS4708 GN02–2013

**Sustainable Forest Management –  
Guidance for the certification of group  
forest management  
(Guidance Note 02 to AS4708–2013)**



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  - Institute of Foresters Australia (IFA)
  - Planet Ark
  - Timber Communities Australia (TCA)
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Australian Forestry Standard Limited wishes to acknowledge the participation of the expert individuals that contributed to the development of this Standard through their representation on the Committee.

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# Guidance for the certification of group forest management

## Section A

### *The Australian Standard<sup>®</sup> for Sustainable Forest Management*

#### **FOREWORD**

The certification of a group of forest owners is an approach to forest certification which allows forest owners to become voluntarily certified under one certificate and share the financial obligations arising from forest certification as well as the common responsibility for forest management. This approach aims at improving information dissemination and co-operation in forest management among individual forest owners and reduces the risk of non-compliance.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The objective of the Australian Standard<sup>®</sup> (AS 4708-2013) for Sustainable Forest Management (AFS) is to provide forest managers and forest owners with economic, social, environmental and cultural criteria and requirements that support the sustainable management of forests for wood production.

Independent, third-party Certification against the AFS provides a clear and unambiguous statement that wood production in a particular defined forest area was managed in accordance with a set of predetermined and clearly defined environmental, economic, social and cultural performance requirements that support sustainable management of forests.

Guidance for native forest and plantation ownerships to the AFS is provided by Guideline GN01.

In Australia there are significant numbers of small forest holdings. The limited financial income of small forest owners; periodicity of their management activities and revenues; limited access to information and knowledge; as well as limitations relating to their conformity with some of the criteria for sustainable forest management which cannot be achieved in small forest areas, represent significant barriers to forest certification.

This Guideline has been prepared to assist forest managers and forest owners of small scale native forest and plantations in developing and adopting an operational group management system that would aim at meeting the requirements of independent third party certification to AFS. It is informative only and provides information for forest owners and auditors. Alternative methods may be suitable for forest managers to demonstrate the control required to meet the AFS.