



Public Briefing Paper for

## Forest Management FSC Certification Annual Audit 2013 of Hancock Victorian Plantations Pty. Ltd in Australia

April 18, 2013

**Introduction** - The Rainforest Alliance is conducting forest management and chain of custody Annual Audit of Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP). The forest area under the scope of this certificate (SW-FM/COC-001128) is located in the state of Victoria, with a total certified area of approximately 240,000 hectares.

At this Annual Audit 2013, the audit team will visit a sample of sites in the Gippsland and Western Regions of Victoria state from the **21<sup>st</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of May of 2013**.

**Scope of the Annual Audit 2013** – The forest management certification audit will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forests and plantations managed by Hancock Victorian Plantations, using the *Rainforest Alliance Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Australia (version June 2008)* and *FM-35 Rainforest Alliance Chain-of-Custody Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FMEs) February 2009*. To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact Rainforest Alliance by telephone, fax, email or website listed below. Please note that the standard may be modified to take account of stakeholder comments. Rainforest Alliance is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®) and this assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

The forest under evaluation contains areas either identified as High Conservation Value Forests or where high conservation values, as defined by the FSC, are likely found. In particular, belonging to the Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia) (HCV1) and forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems (HCV3). Rainforest Alliance evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders

**Audit Team Composition** - The audit team will be led by Mrs. Malory Weston (BSc, MSc Botany, Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology), and will include Mr. Addis Tsehaye, (PhD & MSc Forestry), Mrs. Judy Alexander (BSc Forestry) and Mrs. Anita Neville (BA Journalism).

**Audit Steps and Schedule** – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ◆ Audit organization – The audit team will assemble at the Hancock Victorian Plantations office in Melbourne on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, 2013.
- ◆ Field visits – The team will split in two groups and visit sites managed by Hancock Victorian Plantations in Gippsland and Western Regions during the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 2013
- ◆ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding Hancock Victorian Plantations forest management in towns surrounding the forest area. This may include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ◆ Final audit briefing – On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, the team will meet with Hancock Victorian Plantations managers to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ◆ Draft report production – The audit team will produce a confidential draft report that will be submitted for comment to Hancock Victorian Plantations as well as internal Rainforest Alliance reviewers.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from Hancock Victorian Plantations forest managers and reviewers, and other general stakeholders comments, Rainforest Alliance will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by July 2013.

**Your Input Sought** – As a part of the forest certification process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Hancock Victorian Plantations forest management in relation to compliance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above as well as comments on the management and protection of High conservation Values within the forest under evaluation. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the Audit, during the Audit, or prior to 24<sup>th</sup> of May so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows:

1. Meet with a Rainforest Alliance audit team member during or shortly after the fieldwork. Please, contact Lead Auditor Mrs. Malory Weston for arrangements.
2. Call and give comments to Anita Neville, Representative of the Rainforest Alliance in Australia. If this person is not in the office, please contact Task Manager, Maria R Gismero.
3. Submit written comments by mail, fax or email to Anita Neville. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing Hancock Victorian Plantations.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only the FSC and Rainforest Alliance staff.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access Rainforest Alliance's Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at [www.rainforest-allaince.org](http://www.rainforest-allaince.org).

## Contacting Rainforest Alliance

- ◆ Email: [aneville.consultant@ra.org](mailto:aneville.consultant@ra.org) for Rainforest Alliance Representative in Australia.
- ◆ Email: [mweston@kilter.net.au](mailto:mweston@kilter.net.au) for Lead Auditor Malory Weston.
- ◆ Email: [mgismero.consultant@ra.org](mailto:mgismero.consultant@ra.org) for Australia FM Task Manager.
- ◆ Telephone: Anita Neville: +61 (0) 431 913 214  
Malory Weston: 0427 518 631  
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- ◆ Worldwide Website: [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)
- ◆ Mail address:

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