



**Submission by the
Forest Industries Association of Tasmania**

to

**The Forest Stewardship Council of
Australia**

in respect to

**Framework for Assessing High
Conservation Values**

19/02/2010



Forest Industries Association
of Tasmania



Forest Industries Association
of Tasmania



Executive Summary

The Forest Industries Association of Tasmania welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the framework for assessing high conservation forests in controlled wood risk assessments in Australia, and has made a range of comments and recommendations.

Throughout the document the terminology “high conservation values” (HCV) is used in lieu of “high conservation value forests” (HCVF), this is because it is a phrase which more clearly describes the aims of Principle Nine, and the management outcomes which arise from implementation of the framework. FIAT requests that the misleading “HCVF” terminology is dropped in favour of “HCV”.

The burden of voluntary or compulsory regulation should only be added to where there will be a demonstrable benefit to society, the environment or the economy. The proposed FSC framework for assessing high conservation values in controlled wood risk assessments in Australia must recognise existing legislation and FSC principles, and be assessed to ensure there is no duplication or inconsistency between such systems. For some high conservation values existing legislation and voluntary codes are more effective than the frameworks suggested “tools” in protecting high conservation values. This is an example of inconsistency as ‘best practice’ is actually represented by existing arrangements not the proposed ‘best practice’ framework.





In assessing the framework against the stated principles FIAT found that a range of tools are inappropriate, and a range of the high conservation value classes are either unnecessary or unclear. Changes to tools are discussed in the submission body, suggested changes to classes include:

- **High conservation value class one** should be modified to: “National or state-listed threatened species and ecosystems and, underrepresented IBRA bioregions.”
- **High conservation value class two** should be modified to: “Forest Areas containing large landscape level forests greater than 50,000ha which are un-fragmented, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.”
- **High conservation value class five** should be modified to: “Cultural heritage sites in accord with existing legislation and regimes.”
- **High conservation value classes three and four** should be removed.

It is essential that the framework recognises existing voluntary standards and their achievements, in particular timber certified by credible third party certification schemes such as PEFC and AFS should immediately be recognised as meeting the criteria for FSC “Controlled Wood” status.





The proposed framework and framework development process place strong emphasis on stakeholder consultation, yet FIAT feels there is a lack of supporting material on this front and recommends that;

- Clear and defensible processes are established for forest managers engaging and incorporating stakeholder feedback.
- FSC should clearly define acceptable tools for identification and management of high conservation values in the standards development process, and not require the forest manager to undertake stakeholder consultation on appropriate tools.
- A guideline document should be developed stating that affected parties should always be given priority over interested parties.
- An extra round of consultation should be undertaken for both the controlled wood assessment and HCV framework.
- Terms of reference for standard setting stakeholder engagement should be developed with clear explanation of process and concepts such as “substantial stakeholder approval.”
- The process by which the interpretation of the certification body can be tested must be clearly documented, independent, fair and equitable for all parties; a detailed description of the conflict resolution process should form part of the framework.

FIAT believes a consistent approach should be taken to HCV management across all land including small and low intensity managed forests.





Executive Summary	3
Preamble	7
Introduction.....	9
Tools not Rules Approach	10
The Role of Existing Legislation and Other Voluntary Standards .	10
<i>Existing Legislation</i>	11
<i>Voluntary Standards</i>	14
The Terminology of “High Conservation Value Forests”	16
Stakeholder Consultation.....	18
<i>Incorporation of Stakeholder Consultation in the Framework</i>	
<i>Development Process</i>	19
<i>Stakeholder Consultation in the Framework Implementation</i>	
<i>Process</i>	20
Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF)	23
Appropriateness of High Conservation Value Classes and Tools.	24
<i>High Conservation Value 1</i>	25
<i>High Conservation Value 2</i>	27
<i>High Conservation Value 3</i>	29
<i>High Conservation Value 4</i>	30
<i>High Conservation Value 5</i>	32
In Conclusion	34





Preamble

The Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (FIAT) would like to thank the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for the opportunity to comment on the framework for assessing high conservation values in controlled wood risk assessments in Australia (the framework).

FIAT is an industry association formed in 1983 to represent the interests of processors of Tasmanian forest products. FIAT was formed out of a predecessor Association, the Tasmanian Timber Association (TTA). FIAT and TTA collectively have provided representational services to the Tasmanian timber industry for in excess of 60 years. Our members' activities are diverse and include:

- the production of veneers, hardwood and softwood timber, pulp and paper
- woodchip production and export
- plantation and native forest management.

FIAT's 15 member businesses include all of the State's larger processors of forest products. They utilise a significant proportion of the crown sawlog output as well as all of the veneer logs produced in the State. FIAT Members' activities account for more than 75% of the gross value of production in the forest and wood products industry in Tasmania.

Included within the FIAT membership are the State's largest industrial forestry companies that account for the vast bulk of plantation development and management enterprises on private land in Tasmania. Our members are all committed to sustainable forestry





practices, and as such are interested in the development of forest certification schemes.

FIAT's role is as follows: -

In addressing its first objective, FIAT's role is characterised by helping to create the right external environment within which industry has to operate. This has two main dimensions - the policy environment and the public image of the industry in the eyes of the community.

The policy environment centres on government legislation and regulations; as well as engaging with voluntary codes of conduct, environmental management systems and certification standards. The policy environment must be tackled at the National, State and Local Level.

Industry's public image rests on public opinion and the various factors which influence that opinion. This is important because public opinion has a strong bearing on the development of policy.

In addressing its second objective, FIAT's role is to facilitate discussion and joint action among its membership, and to project membership position in wider forums as appropriate.



Forest Industries Association
of Tasmania



Introduction

The burden of voluntary or compulsory regulation should only be added to where there will be a demonstrable benefit to society, the environment or the economy. Voluntary certification and environmental rating schemes need to be easily interpreted and precise; ill-defined systems risk creating perverse environmental and economic outcomes. Ultimately the Forest Stewardship Councils High Conservation Value framework for controlled wood in Australia (the framework) needs to meet these tests.

FIAT makes this submission to bring attention to ways in which the framework can be modified to ensure its application effectively and efficiently maintains or enhances high conservation values in Australian forests.

The submission starts with general discussion regarding: the tools not rules approach; the role of existing legislation and other voluntary codes; the term “high conservation value forests” and its accuracy; and, the process of stakeholder consultation at both the framework development level and then as part of the working framework.

The submission then discusses: the reasonableness of the different HCV ratings; the effectiveness of the assessment tools; and, comments on the appropriateness of the approach for small and low intensity managed forests. Throughout the submission the Tasmanian situation is used as a case study to provide extra explanation and clarity.





Tools not Rules Approach

FIAT is supportive of the “tools not rules” approach.

FIAT recognises that the framework is based on the Pro Forest¹ framework for assessing high conservation values. The Pro Forest framework was designed taking into account the need to be effectively applied in developing nations² that only have limited legislation protecting conservation values.

Australia has extensive legislation covering conservation values as discussed below. As such the framework requires careful evaluation and interpretation to ensure the most appropriate processes and tools are adopted within it to avoid duplication between existing legislated systems and those proposed by the “generic” framework. Or the framework could take a spring-boarding approach, and choose to build off existing legislation.

The Role of Existing Legislation and Other Voluntary Standards

FIAT believes it is important to recognise existing legislation and voluntary codes and standards, and the role these play in addressing the core FSC goal of maintaining or enhancing high conservation values in forest areas.

¹ www.proforest.net

² Rayden, T; Jesse-Dodoo, J; Lindhe, A; Buffoe, A (2006) *An interpretation of global HCVF Toolkit for use in Ghana.*





Existing Legislation

In the response to submissions on the *FSC Australia Controlled Wood Risk Assessment Draft 1.5*, key point 1 notes FSC international advice is that national or state legislation controls can be accepted if:

- a) A (national) legal system of protection is in place (and this is widely accepted by stakeholders as providing adequate protection)
- b) The effectiveness of law enforcement in the country can be demonstrated through a high rating ($\geq 75\%$) in the World Bank “rule of law” index (www.govindicators.org).

FIAT notes that Australia easily meets criteria b) with a consistent rating above 94%. However criteria a) was not met, as there was not found to be wide stakeholder acceptance that current legislation offers a ‘strong system of protection’ for high conservation values. This failure to meet requirement a) has in effect led to the development of the proposed framework. Discussion on the role of “substantial stakeholder acceptance” and how this is established is discussed in the “stakeholder consultation” section.

FIAT also notes the argument by FSC in the aforementioned document that, as a peak voluntary best practice standard, FSC should not be limited to current regulatory requirements. FIAT agrees that FSC should not be limited to specifying current regulatory requirements, but believes that for the proposed framework to be more appropriate than recognition of existing State and Federal





legislation, it must be shown that the tools drawn upon in this framework are more effective than the current legislation in maintaining or enhancing recognised conservation values. If this is not the case, there would be an argument that “best practice” is demonstrated by following current regulatory requirements, or a combination of current regulatory requirements and additional criteria.

These tests and the evaluation of stakeholder feedback must be assessed objectively, not subjectively and must have regard for the standards applying in other countries if this process is not going to devolve down to one of NIMBYISM.

There are many different Federal and State legislations applicable to forest management aimed at creating a strong system of protection for high conservation values. For example the management of threatened species in Tasmania falls under: *The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)(EPBC)*, *The Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act (1995)*, *The Tasmanian Government Policy for Maintaining a Permanent Native Forest Estate* and *The Regional Forest Agreement*.

These legislative tools provide mechanisms for

- Identification and listing of species and ecological communities as threatened.
- Identification of RFA Priority Species Requiring Consideration.
- Recognition of key threatening processes.
- Development of a register of critical habitat.





- Development of conservation advice and recovery plans for listed species and ecological communities, through consultation with a scientific advisory committee and a community advisory committee³.
- The development of a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative Reserve System in RFA areas, which protects at least 15% of the pre-1750 extent of each forest ecosystem, 60% of each ecosystems old growth element and 90% of defined wilderness areas.
- Specific provisions for recovery plans and threatened species management to be implemented in RFA areas.
- Provisions for environmental management.
- The retention of 95% of the 1996 native forest estate and 75% of each forest community at a bioregional level.

The Tasmanian Forest Practices Act (1985), provides for all forest practices to be conducted in accordance with the Forest Practices Code. The Forest Practices Code recognises and implements all threatened species legislation and provides prescriptive advice to forest managers to ensure the implementation of species recovery plans and conservation advice. In fact the Tasmanian Forest Practices system has been found to be one of the most prescriptive in the world with expansive and detailed requirements for threatened flora and fauna, and soil and water values⁴.

³ [http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/LJEM-6VM76U/\\$FILE/Accepted%20Forty%20Spotted%20Pardalote%20RP.pdf](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/LJEM-6VM76U/$FILE/Accepted%20Forty%20Spotted%20Pardalote%20RP.pdf)

⁴ (2007) McDermott, C.L; Cashore, B; Kanowski, P. A Global Comparison of Forest Practice Policies using Tasmania as a constant case. GISF Research Paper 010, Yale University





A recent independent review of both the EPBC Act and the role of RFAs found that these were effective in their aims, and have the continued support of the Federal Government⁵. A full list of legislation and brief descriptions of their purposes can be found as Appendix B of The Australian Forestry Standard AS 4708-2007. FIAT is supportive of the current legislative environment, and believes it offers a strong system of protection for high conservation values in Australia's forests.

Voluntary Standards

The Australian Forest Industry is committed to sustainable forestry and continuous improvement of forest practices. In Australia the majority of native forests for timber production and plantations are third party certified by the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), which is in turn internationally endorsed by the Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification. In addition many companies have ISO accredited environmental management systems and additional sustainability policies.

Timber from AFS certified forest areas meet a range of criteria complementary to the Forest Stewardship Council Criteria such as; not coming from areas of forest or woodland being converted to plantations⁶, and requiring the maintenance and protection of:

- biological diversity (criteria 3);

⁵ 22/12/09 Media Release, David Llewellyn Minister for Energy and Resources, Vote of confidence in Tasmanian Forestry Practices.

⁶ <http://www.forestrystandard.org.au/files/Standards/4708.pdf>
Australian Forestry Standard Criteria 4.2.3.





- productive capacity (criteria 4);
- soil and water (criteria 6); and
- cultural heritage.

These criteria address the values identified under the FSC high conservation value forest Principle Nine. In fact there are very few differences between AFS and FSC, and these can mostly be explained by the fact that AFS was written specifically for the Australian legislative environment and takes into account strict existing laws on topics such as genetically modified organisms. For further discussion on this topic see (Crawford 2006), *a review of forest certification in Tasmania*⁷.

Approximately 10% of the world's forests are certified, by openly supporting certification systems organisations are supporting world's "best practice". FIAT notes that although FSC allows a component of uncertified legally harvested wood to be included as controlled wood, other sources of certified wood are not immediately recognised, this is a seemingly contradictory stance by FSC.

FIAT entreats the Forest Stewardship Council to give immediate recognition to AFS and other internationally endorsed certification schemes as legitimate sources of controlled wood, and to formally engage with these schemes in negotiations to consider full mutual recognition.

⁷ Crawford, H (2006) A review of forest certification in Tasmania.
<http://www.fwpa.com.au/Resources/RD/Reports/Final%20Certification%20Comparison%20Report%20September%202006v2.pdf?c=4>





The Terminology of “High Conservation Value Forests”

FIAT does not believe that the terminology “high conservation value forests” (HCVF) appropriately describes what the FSC is aiming to protect under Principle Nine which is “high conservation values” (HCV).

The term “high conservation value forest” first appeared in the FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship in January 1999, having evolved from the earlier concept of “high conservation values”.

In the Australian public domain the word “conservation” is often misunderstood to mean reservation, and to the majority HCVF is therefore forest which should be in conservation reserves. This is not the intent of Principle Nine as forest harvesting can still be undertaken in “HCVF” areas under FSC certification.

HCVF implies that an entire undefined forest area requires maintenance and enhancement, whereas it is the high conservation value itself which requires maintenance and enhancement. For example a well managed and certified forest area may contain aboriginal heritage sites, the intent of Principle Nine is to maintain and enhance the aboriginal heritage sites, not to maintain and enhance the forest without a focus on these sites. HCVF also implies a forest could be a HCVF without containing any of the defined ‘high value’ attributes, which is certainly how the term has come to be used in some situations. FIAT suggests that Principle Nine and





terminology resulting from it use the terminology “Maintenance of high conservation values”, not the confusing “Maintenance of high conservation value forests”.

Another key point supporting the clarification of the terminology is the very general use of the term HCVF. In Tasmania the term HCVF is currently being used by, but not limited to:

- The Wilderness Society⁸
- The Federal Government’s, Department of the Environment Water, Heritage and the Arts⁹
- Still Wild Still Threatened¹⁰
- Australian Conservation Foundation¹¹
- The Australian Labour Party¹²
- Tasmanian Greens (Forests of high conservation)¹³

All these organisations use the term in a different context and would provide a different definition or description of areas they would argue as being HCVF, in addition to different management or reservation outcomes which they would deem to be appropriate. Given that these organisations are stakeholders in Tasmania’s forests it makes the process of stakeholder consensus regarding HCVF unwieldy.

⁸ Tasmania’s high conservation value forests: world heritage woodchips? (1995)

⁹ <http://www.environment.gov.au/land/forestpolicy/fcf/index.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.stillwildstillthreatened.org/form/write-politicians>

¹¹ http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news_id=2111

¹² http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/partypol/250E6/upload_binary/250e62.pdf;fileType%3Dapplication/pdf

¹³ <http://www.tas.greens.org.au/policy/forests>





FIAT recommends that the terminology HCVF be dropped and HCV be used in its place. Tools can then be utilised based on the type of conservation value in the forest area. This will improve the clarity of the Principle, and help reduce conflict between stakeholders regarding the rating of forest areas.

Stakeholder Consultation

As a founding member of the ISEAL alliance stakeholder consultation is a key component of the FSC system at: the international and national certification and standards development phase; the certification body forest management evaluation stage; and, the forest manager standard implementation stage; these are three distinctly different processes of stakeholder engagement, with different initiators and different stakeholders.

What is common to all consultations is the need for a clear and defensible process of stakeholder consultation and feedback utilisation. This is especially relevant when dealing with parties that may have unrealistic expectations, vested interests and entrenched ideologies - an area which may be considered a weakness of the current national level stakeholder consultation process.

Two different levels of consultation are relevant to this process, 1) standards development consultation and, 2) forest manager consultation with stakeholders on high conservation values, these are discussed further below.





Incorporation of Stakeholder Consultation in the Framework Development Process

The FSC has a clearly defined 10 step process for the development of the Controlled Wood Risk Assessment, two of these steps call for stakeholder feedback, first on the controlled wood risk assessment matrix and secondly on the framework for assessing high conservation values. The ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards requires that “*The public review phase in the development of a new standard or of the revision of an existing standard shall include at least two rounds of comment submissions by interested parties, where necessary*”. FIAT believes both the Controlled Wood Risk Assessment and the Framework would each benefit from an extra round of consultation.

ISEAL identifies that it is essential to have clear terms of reference, available to all stakeholders, which define the roles and rules of engagement for all stakeholders. In line with this sentiment, prior to potential further rounds of consultation the FSC should provide clarification on: the weighting given to the different submissions by the CWRAT team and FSC Board; how stakeholder weightings were determined; how conflicting submissions were resolved; what constitutes “meeting the test of substantial stakeholder agreement”; and, whether the CWRAT team or the FSC Board had the authority to use their expertise to disregard arguments which were in their opinion not reasonable or relevant.

These “rules of engagement” will significantly enhance stakeholder confidence in the consultation process and ensure increased transparency and accountability.





Stakeholder Consultation in the Framework Implementation

Process

FSC international policy development includes rules for stakeholder consultation as documented in FSC PRO 01 002 V1; rules for national standards development are covered in the temporarily inaccessible FSC-STD-60-006; and, stakeholder consultation advice for certification bodies auditing forest management units are found in FSC-STD-20-006. There is no accessible FSC material to advise forest managers on what is considered appropriate stakeholder consultation.

It is a requirement of Principle Nine as clarified in FSC Advice Note FSC-ADV-30-901 Interpretation of Criterion 9-2, i) that forest managers should consult with stakeholders on the identification of high conservation values and the management options thereof, and ii) the certification body should subsequently evaluate whether the consultation was adequate.

FIAT recognises the potential benefits to both companies and stakeholders of undertaking consultation. FIAT is also aware of some of the disadvantages of stakeholder consultation such as: creation of unrealistic expectations; difficulty in resolving contradictory expectations; cost and time constraints; consultation overload; and, the difficulties encountered where a stakeholder refuses to participate in consultation either at all or in other than a genuine manner.





To undertake successful stakeholder consultation there must be a carefully thought out process and the right type and number of stakeholders actively involved. FIAT requests that FSC develop a guideline document to assist forest managers in undertaking acceptable and defensible stakeholder consultation on the identification of high conservation values and management options thereof. A discussion of key points to be considered when developing the process is below.

Key Points Regarding Forest Manager Consultation of Stakeholders on High Conservation Values

FIAT is supportive of priority being given to affected parties over interested parties in all stakeholder consultations. If there is substantial agreement by affected parties, but not by interested parties then the matter at hand should be considered agreed. This approach is consistent with the identification by ISEAL¹⁴ of affected parties as “Key stakeholders” to be given priority participation.

Stakeholder groups to consult on the identification, maintenance and enhancement of high conservation values could include

- Neighbours (interested party)
- Experts (interested party)
- Individuals or organisations dependant on the forest area for income, especially those directly impacted e.g. apiarists, seed collectors, tour operators, forestry companies. (affected parties)

¹⁴ ISEAL (2007) Emerging Initiatives, Engaging Stakeholders





- Regulators (interested party)
- Interested Parties (interested party)
- Non Government Organisations (interested party)

The framework consistently uses the terminology “*Outcomes of expert/stakeholder consultation is incorporatedin a way that has substantial acceptance by stakeholders.*” It is not reasonable to expect forest managers to be totally beholden to a range of stakeholders in this way. This phrasing creates unrealistic expectations, as it has an unspoken assumption that contradictory ideologies can be aligned by reasonable compromise. The currently proposed framework process would allow stakeholders to use a negative response as a stalling or stifling device, without providing stakeholders with motivation to make a compromise.

It ought not be the case that the opinion of one category of stakeholder can be used as an absolute veto or anarchy would reign.

It is unreasonable to suggest that every time a potential high conservation value is found in a forest management unit, that all stakeholders have to meet to create management plans - this would be consultation “overload”.

High conservation values occur across the entire landscape, and in many cases there are existing “Recovery Plans¹⁵”, “management

¹⁵ Threatened Species Section (2006). Threatened Tasmanian Eagles Recovery Plan 2006-2010. Department of Primary Industries and Water, Hobart.





prescriptions” and memorandums of understanding¹⁶ for their maintenance or enhancement which have been developed with stakeholder input. It is essential that these existing plans are recognised as fulfilling the stakeholder consultation requirements of the FSC HCV framework.

Most importantly, when dealing with high conservation values long term, landscape level management, is more ecologically sound than management at the potentially small forest management unit and shorter time frames. This concept is conclusively recognised, discussion on how this long term landscape level system could be applied in Tasmania can be found in “The Review of the Biodiversity Prescriptions of the Tasmanian *Forest Practices Code*”¹⁷ (2009).

Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF)

The Controlled Wood Risk Assessment Team (CWRAT) consideration of not burdening SLIMF managers with expensive and complicated requirements should be a consideration given to all forest managers large and small. The suggested process will in effect lead to the development of two separate standards.

The Australian regulatory environment provides protection to high conservation values across all land tenures and sizes including

¹⁶ Beekeepers and Forestry Tasmania Agreement
<http://www.forestrytas.com.au/news/2009/12/agreement-ensures-ongoing-leatherwood-source>

¹⁷
http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/fileadmin/user_upload/PDFs/Zoology_Ecology/Biodiversity_Review/Biodiversity_Review_ReportApril09.pdf





small and low intensity managed forests. FIAT supports a consistent approach to managing high conservation values across the landscape.

Appropriateness of High Conservation Value Classes and Tools

The section seven *Classes of HCV in Australia and Rationale; overriding note and requirement*, essentially explains a conflict management process for forest managers when dealing with stakeholders and certification bodies.

FIAT requests that the FSC do all that is possible to prevent potential conflict by nominating acceptable levels of assessment (tools) for conservation values at the standards development process, and seeking stakeholder feedback at this level. It would be unreasonable for forest managers to undertake consultation and negotiation on the tools used to assess high conservation values for every forest management plan. FIAT has suggested appropriate generic tools to be used and then gives an example of application in Tasmania for each class of high conservation value below; this exercise would need to be undertaken by the FSC and the results published for each State.

Equally important is the conflict resolution process between forest managers and certification bodies. The process by which the interpretation of the certification body can be tested must be clearly documented, independent, fair and equitable for all parties; a detailed description of the conflict resolution process should form part of the framework.





High Conservation Value 1.

Forest areas containing habitat for national or state-listed threatened species/ecosystems or species/ecosystems of high significance at the bioregional level (IBRA).

FIAT agrees that threatened species and ecosystems are of high conservation value, and again raises the argument that these are the values to be protected and maintained, not the “forest area”. Also it is unclear what “high significance at the bioregional level” means. A better statement would refer to “underrepresented IBRA bioregions¹⁸”. This would provide greater clarity to the meaning and bring the statement in line with existing regulation.

Suggested Class

National or state-listed threatened species and ecosystems and, underrepresented IBRA bioregions.

TOOLS

The assessment tool framework proposed here, leaves some room for subjectivity by the forest manager regarding which tools to apply and therefore may lead to conflict with stakeholders. It also implies that management decisions may be based on inputs from individual sources, such as an expert, or one modelling activity; and, then be applied in only one management unit. It does not acknowledge the importance of landscape level, long term management across all tenures. The identified tools: expert input, analysis of mapped

¹⁸ <http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/nrs/science/bioregion-framework/ibra/index.html>





ranges, statistical modelling and population viability analysis are all appropriate to identifying and managing *class one* high conservation values - but the information they yield needs to be integrated and used in a long term way at a landscape level to achieve the best outcomes.

The existing legislative framework delivers appropriate management prescriptions for HCV1 by utilising all the suggested tools and using stakeholder input to develop acceptable outcomes. The advantage of the Government process, as described in *The Importance of Existing Legislation* section is that it is landscape level, long term, well funded, incorporates a wide range of stakeholders, and operates across states where necessary. In this case implementation of existing legislation is better than the proposed tools, and constitutes “best practice”.

Suggested Tools

Identification: GIS interrogation for locations and habitats and field surveys where necessary.

In Tasmania identification of HCV 1 would include but would not be limited to interrogation of: the Threatened Fauna Advisor, the Tasmanian Forest Botany Manual, the Tasmanian Karst Manual, The Department of Primary Industries and Water Natural Values Database, helicopter eagle surveys, and ground surveys where required.

Management: Prescriptions should be as developed by a range of stakeholders based on the best available science as represented





by National and State Recovery Plans and conservation advice, and should be regularly reviewed and updated as required.

Management prescriptions implemented would be those defined by the Tasmanian Forest Practices System in deliverance of the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970*, and the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement 1997.

Monitoring: Site inspections throughout and after operations.

This would be undertaken by Forest Practice Officers as part of the certificate of compliance process, and complemented by random audit processes undertaken by Forest Practice Authority Specialists, Environmental Management System Auditors and Certification Body Auditors.

High Conservation Value 2.

Forest Areas containing globally (includes World Heritage), nationally or bioregional significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

FIAT agrees large scale forests are of high conservation value. However the current class description allows for subjectivity in implementation and conflict between stakeholders. It would be better to have a set area at which the conservation value was “activated”. FIAT also notes that this would do away with the confusing and





unnecessary descriptive notes that accompany this class, these appear to list the requirements for any forest operation regardless of its location.

FIAT suggests that the descriptive notes address the key value at stake which is a large unfragmented area of forest. Sustainable native forestry is not a threat to this value, but it should be noted that developments which require deforestation and conversion of native forest do not maintain or enhance this conservation value.

Greenpeace, together with the Rainforest Action Network and World Resources International have created a global database of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) from analysis of satellite imagery¹⁹. They define an IFL as an area of at least 50,000ha of forest that is unfragmented by roads or other forms of man-made disturbance. FIAT recommends that 50,000ha be the standard utilised in the FSC framework.

Another potential source of information to help define HCV 2 is the RFA requirements for wilderness.

Suggested Class

Forest Areas containing large landscape level forests greater than 50,000ha which are un-fragmented, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

¹⁹ Available from www.intactforests.org/.





TOOLS

The suggested assessment tools are poorly defined, with great subjectivity in implementation and therefore opportunity for conflict between parties.

Suggested Tools

Identification: The Global database of Intact Forest Landscapes.

Management: Native forest silvicultural systems only.

Monitoring: Site inspections throughout and after operations as per HCV1.

High Conservation Value 3.

Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations.

Basic services of nature include but are not limited to, water cycling and purification, biodiversity, clean air, soil protection, nutrient cycling and carbon cycling. All forests provide these “ecosystem services”, and the management of these is addressed by FSC Principle Five: *Benefits from the forest* and Principle Six: *Environmental impact*.

Coupling the term with “critical situation” implies that something is on the brink of a significant change that can be somehow altered by a change in management of ecosystem services. FIAT does not believe there are any additional “critical situations” which could be





listed in this context that are not already addressed by HCV1 and/or Principles Five and Six, making the HCV3 class redundant.

If this HCV class was to be adopted it would result in all forest areas being defined as a HCV class, imposing high levels of compliance costs on forest managers across all land tenures.

FIAT also notes the difficulties in developing a Carbon Policy which can be fairly implemented on both small and large native forest and plantation estates. When carbon impacts are estimated they must take into account not just the carbon changes in a forested area, but also the greater global carbon changes associated with societal use of wood based products over non-renewable materials.

Suggested Class

No class.

Suggested Tools

No tools.

High Conservation Value 4.

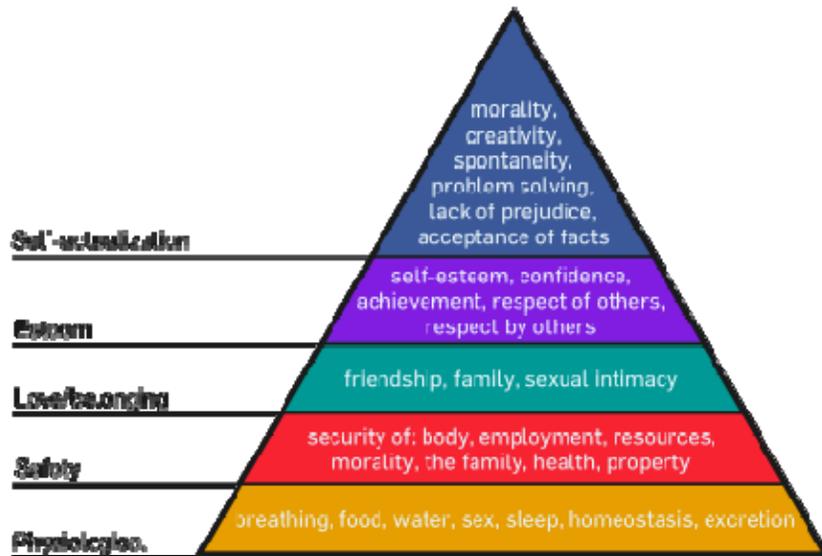
Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities.

In 1943 Abraham Maslow developed a psychological theory in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation*. This theory created a clear picture of human needs and their relative importance. The diagram below shows a triangle with the most necessary and basic needs at





the bottom and the more complex at the top. The theory establishes that an individual will want to reach the top of the pyramid, but will only be able to do so after fulfilling the requirements of the needs below it.



Interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.²⁰

As interpreted from the theory “basic needs” which could be provided by the forest include; breathing – air quality; food – hunting and gathering; water – supply and cleanliness; homeostasis – warmth for cellular function via biofuels, and timber for houses. Amenity, aesthetics, tourism and recreation are not basic needs, and align at the top of the triangle with creativity and spontaneity.

Air quality and water quality and yield are covered by FSC Principles Five and Six. Biofuels and timber supply are outcomes of sustainable

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs





forest management, and result from every forest operation; a forest does not need to be specially managed as “high conservation value forest” to supply these basic needs to local communities.

In southern Australia there are no communities that are dependant on the forest for food supply. There are regulations which allow the hunting of animals such as deer under certain conditions, but this is for sport not survival. In Northern Australia there are Aboriginal Communities which rely on the bush for varying proportions of their diets. However this is covered by complex existing legislation which varies from region to region, and also FSC Principle Three: *Indigenous Peoples’ Rights*.

In Australia there is no need for this high conservation value class, if implemented it would not result in any change to forest management, so does not meet the test of benefitting society, the environment or the economy.

Suggested Class

No class.

Suggested Tools

No tools.

High Conservation Value 5.

Forest Areas critical to local communities’ traditional cultural identity (both indigenous and post colonisation).





Principle Three, sufficiently addresses the requirement of protecting forest areas important to local indigenous communities cultural identity without the need for a “high conservation value” class. However, the same level of protection is not provided for post colonisation cultural heritage or “European” cultural heritage. FIAT understands that there would be unintended political ramifications of addressing only post colonisation cultural heritage as being a high conservation value and believes all cultural heritage sites deserve the same level of recognition.

Suggested Class

Cultural heritage sites in accord with existing legislation and regimes.

TOOLS

FIAT is supportive of the proposed tools, and notes that the framework would recognise existing legislation in Tasmania as maintaining or enhancing cultural heritage values.





In Conclusion

The burden of voluntary or compulsory regulation should only be added to where there will be a demonstrable benefit to society, the environment or the economy. The FSC *Framework for Assessing High Conservation Values in Controlled Wood Risk Assessments in Australia*, could be significantly simplified by, where possible, recognising existing legislation and voluntary standards, and still provide the same or better level of benefit to the environment than the current framework achieves.

FSC processes have a strong focus on stakeholder engagement, much work is required in this area to provide information to stakeholders engaging in the consultation process, and also to help forest managers who will be required to undertake consultation regarding high conservation values. The other key role the FSC can play in ensuring positive stakeholder engagement is through providing clear and concise HCV classes and tools which are stakeholder approved.

A key issue remains the terminology used to describe the classes, in all cases “high conservation values” is more appropriate than “high conservation value forests” and as such should be adopted in all FSC documentation.

FIAT hopes the comments made in this submission are of value and help in the development of a robust and practical framework to be used to ensure maintenance or enhancement of high conservation values in Australian forests.

If you would like more information about this submission please contact petra.strich@fiatas.com.au.



Forest Industries Association
of Tasmania