The Rainforest Alliance is conducting the FSC forest management and chain of custody Reassessment of Hancock Victorian Plantations Pty Limited (HVP). The forest area under the scope of this certificate (SW-FM/COC – 001128) is located in Victoria and comprises a total area of approximately 245,000 ha.

The audit will be implemented from the 2nd to the 6th of December 2013.

Scope of the Reassessment 2013 – The forest management certification audit will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the plantations using the Rainforest Alliance Interim Standards for Australia. To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact Rainforest Alliance by telephone, email or the website listed below. The 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. The Rainforest Alliance evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders.

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

♦ Audit organization – The Rainforest Alliance team will assemble in Melbourne on 2nd of December 2013.
♦ Field audits – The team will visit sites managed by HVP from 3rd to 5th of December, 2013.
♦ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the field work, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding HVP forest management in towns surrounding the forest area. This might include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
♦ Final audit briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with HVP 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 circulated for comment to HVP. This should occur 30 days after completion of the audit.

♦ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from HVP forest managers and other general stakeholder comments, Rainforest Alliance will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by late January 2014.

Your Input Sought – As a part of the forest audit process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Hancock Victorian Plantations forest management in relation to conformance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above as well as comments on the HVP’s 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 assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the assessment, during the assessment, or prior to 6th December 2013 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 Anita Neville, the Rainforest Alliance person responsible for coordinating this audit, for arrangements.

2) Call and give comments to Anita Neville, Representative and Communications Advisor for the Rainforest Alliance in Australia.

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-alliance.org

Contacting Rainforest Alliance

Email: aneville.consultant@ra.org

Telephone: Anita Neville +61 (0) 431 913 214

Website: www.rainforest-alliance.org

Post: Rainforest Alliance,
Newport West LPO
PO Box 3174
Newport VIC 3015