Introduction - The Rainforest Alliance is conducting forest management and chain of custody Annual Audit of Elders Forestry Ltd. The plantations under the scope of this certificate (SW-FM/COC-001217) are located in the Green Triangle, Victoria (1,300 hectares) and in Esperance, Western Australia (58,718 hectares).

At this Annual Audit 2013, the audit team will visit Elders Forestry’s offices in Richmond, Melbourne and in Esperance, Western Australia as well as a sample of sites from the 15 to the 17 of April 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 Elders Forestry, 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 critical to local communities’ traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities) (HCV6). 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 Mr. Addis Tsehaye, (PhD & MSc Forestry) and include Mrs. Judy Alexander (BSc Forestry).

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 Elders Forestry office in Richmond, Melbourne on the 15th of April, 2013.
♦ Field visits – The team will visit sites managed by Elders Forestry in Esperance during 16th and 17th of April, 2013.
♦ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding Elders Forestry forest management in towns surrounding the forest area. This may include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
♦ Final audit briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with Elders Forestry managers and other parties 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 Elders Forestry as well as internal Rainforest Alliance reviewers.
♦ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from Elders Forestry forest managers and reviewers, and other general stakeholder comments through April, Rainforest Alliance will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur before the end of May 2013.

Your Input Sought – As a part of the forest certification process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Elders Forestry 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 22nd of April 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 Mr Addis Tsehaye 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 Elders Forestry.

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 for Rainforest Alliance Representative in Australia

♦ Email: Addis.Tsehaye@asurequality.com for Lead Auditor Addis Tsehaye

♦ Email: mgismero.consultant@ra.org for Australia FM Task Manager

♦ Telephone: Anita Neville: +61 (0) 431 913 214
Addis Tsehaye: +64 21798 704
Maria R Gismero: +61 (0) 280 062 515

♦ Worldwide Website: www.rainforest-alliance.org.

♦ Mail address:

Anita Neville
Rainforest Alliance
Newport West LPO
PO Box 3174
Newport VIC 3015
Australia