Australia's illegal logging laws – Information for businesses exporting to Australia

FACTSHEET 1.4

Why have these laws been introduced?

Australia has laws in place to combat illegal logging and support the purchase and sale of legally harvested timber.

The trade in illegally logged timber disadvantages legitimate businesses, has negative social and environmental consequences, undercuts market prices and threatens local investment, profitability and jobs.

Who do these laws affect?

The laws make it an offence to import timber or timber products into Australia that have been illegally harvested in the country of origin.

From 30 November 2014, businesses importing into Australia will be required to undertake due diligence by gathering information, assessing risk, and if the risk is not low, mitigate any risk that the timber they are importing has been illegally logged. The laws will apply equally to processors of raw logs harvested in Australia.

What do Australia's trading partners need to do?

The laws **do not** regulate Australia's trading partners. They only place requirements on businesses importing into Australia and seek to minimise the risk of illegally logged timber being placed on the Australian market.

However, businesses exporting timber products to Australia may be asked to provide additional information about their products to assist businesses importing into Australia to meet their due diligence requirements.

What does 'illegally logged' mean?

Under Australia's laws, illegally logged timber is defined as timber harvested in contravention of laws in force in the place where the timber was harvested (whether or not that place is in Australia).

These laws:

- support trade in legally harvested timber
- place no requirements on Australia's trading partners or their exporters
- establish equal treatment for suppliers of timber regardless of nationality
- apply equally to both Australian grown and imported timber
- are consistent with Australia's trading obligations.

Where do I go for more information?

- The department's illegal logging website is a source of up-to-date information and guidance materials, including answers to frequently asked questions.
- Please visit daff.gov.au/illegallogging
- To receive regular updates on this issue, please join our subscription list using the "Subscribe" link on the website.
- You can also email: illegallogging@agriculture.gov.au, or call 1800 657 313 or if outside of Australia +61 2 6272 3933.

What information is available?

The Australian Government is working with relevant governments to develop a range of Country Specific Guidelines. These will provide importers with additional information on the timber laws that our major trading partners have in place and can assist in undertaking due diligence. These guidelines will be available on the department's website at daff.gov.au/illegallogging.

The development of the guidelines is an ongoing process and guidelines will be released progressively as they are finalised.

Will people or businesses exporting timber to Australia notice any changes?

Businesses importing into Australia may seek additional information from their suppliers about the timber or timber products they are purchasing. This information will help them assess the risk that these products were illegally logged and help guide purchasing choices.

How does this align with action taken by other countries against illegal logging?

Australia is a part of global efforts to stop the negative economic, social and environmental effects of illegal logging.

The United States and the European Union have in place measures similar to Australia's illegal logging laws. In particular, the European Union requires due diligence to be undertaken on a large range of imported timber and many products containing timber such as pulp, paper and wood furniture.