



OIA11-488

6 JUL 2012

### RELEASE OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION

I refer to your official information request received by email on 13th June seeking an update on a recent investigation into the unlawful export of indigenous timber including an estimation of when these investigations will conclude.

A number of offshore websites selling indigenous timber, specifically swamp kauri were forwarded to MPI last year that indicated potential breaches to Part 3A 67C of the Forests Act 1949. This triggered a general investigation into indigenous timber exports which is now complete.

The investigation found that the majority of items offered for sale met the definition of either finished products in that they were installed overseas as cut-to-length table tops, or they were from stump material which are permitted export items.

However, the investigation did highlight a lack of consistency in how MPI determines what can be considered as a finished product under the Forests Act. Since completing the investigation MPI has introduced several interventions to improve its monitoring and auditing processes to ensure swamp kauri exports are in accordance with the Forests Act including:

- Introduction of revised guidelines and training of Forestry Officers to ensure a consistent approach in application of the Forests Act export restrictions.
- Introduction of a swamp kauri export factsheet to support voluntary compliance by participants.
- Closer monitoring of swamp kauri sawmilling and export participants.

I trust that this information is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

Aoife Martin  
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