

NATIVE FOREST — ECOLOGICAL THINNING

1662. Hon Steve Martin to the Minister for Forestry:

I refer to the Forest Products Commission (FPC), and I ask:

- (a) can the Forest Products Commission Half Year Review it is indicated that the ecological thinning trials were almost complete. Can the Minister advise:
 - (i) are those trials complete, and when will the results be published;
 - (ii) if the trials are not complete, what impact will such a delay have on the commencement of ecological thinning under the new Forest Management Plan (FMP);
 - (iii) has the FPC and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) determined when ecological thinning will commence under the new FMP;
 - (iv) If yes to (iii), when will that be;
 - (v) if no to (iii), why not;
 - (vi) has the FPC prepared any estimates of likely timber yields from ecological thinning;
 - (vii) if yes to (vi), will these be published;
 - (viii) if no to (vi), why not;
 - (ix) what timber production activities are expected to occur from 1 January 2024?;
 - (x) if it is not known when (ix), will occur, when does the Minister expect to be advised of this issue critical for the remnant timber industry;
 - (xi) has the Minister asked the FPC to produce a strategy for the future native forest timber industry; and
 - (xii) if no to (xii), why not?

Hon Jackie Jarvis replied:

- (a) (i)–(xii) The draft Forest Management Plan 2024 –2033 (FMP) provides for ecological thinning to be implemented under an adaptive management approach and silvicultural prescriptions will evolve over the first few years of the FMP, therefore trials such as Hamilton will be ongoing.

Trials undertaken thus far have been on a small scale and utilising several methodologies, so any data is not indicative of operational production. Ecological thinning is based on forest health outcomes, not timber production, and the type and volume of any residues produced will vary across the different forest types.

A level of ecological thinning for forest health based on contractor capacity will be able to occur once the FMP 2024–2033 is finalised and comes into effect. The FMP is currently being assessed through the EPA process.