

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — WALLADAR SANDALWOOD BURN-OFFS

3626. Ms M.M. Quirk to the Minister for Forestry:

- (1) Which Forest Products Commission employee gave permission to Walladar (Sandalwood contractors) to light sandalwood bark on Walling Rock Station between 1 November 2013 and 31 March 2014, during a prohibited burning time?
- (2) If such permission was granted in writing, can a copy of that correspondence be provided?
- (3) Which Forest Products Commission employee gave permission to Walladar to burn their rubbish on an annual basis since 2009 on the Walling Rock Station during prohibited burning times and on total fire ban days, without a permit from the Menzies Shire?
- (4) If such permission was granted in writing, can a copy of that correspondence be provided?
- (5) Why has the Forest Products Commission not been in contact with the lease holder of the Walling Rock Station, Mr Keith Mader, when fires have been lit and left to burn unattended?
- (6) Given that it is a prohibited burning time, why has the Forest Products Commission not taken steps to extinguish the fire that is currently burning illegally on the Walling Rock Station?
- (7) Why have Walladar Sandalwood contractors not been charged with sandalwooding on a total fire ban day (i.e. 19 January 2015)?
- (8) Does Walladar have the recommended firefighting equipment (i.e. 5 000 litres of water and 450 litre firefighting unit on a licensed vehicle on the site), and if not, why not?

Ms M.J. Davies replied:

- (1) No such permission was given.
- (2) Not applicable
- (3) No such permission was given.
- (4) Not applicable
- (5) The Forest Products Commission (FPC) is not aware of any such instances.
- (6) The FPC has no knowledge of how the fire started. It is assumed that the fire resulted from the spontaneous combustion of a bark pile, however this cannot be substantiated. A fire break has since been constructed to minimise the risk of the fire spreading into adjacent woodland.
- (7) Agricultural activities, which include forestry, are required to stop operations when there is a Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban. No such ban was in place on 19 January 2015.
- (8) There is no requirement for Walladar to have this equipment on site. The FPC undertook a risk assessment of the operation and deemed a fire extinguisher to be sufficient fire suppression equipment.