



Conclusion

We are confident that the Department's three-year harvest plans are based on and consistent with modelling for the FMP that aims to ensure sustainable harvesting. However, harvest planning is a highly technical and specialised field of work and the Department is still to finalise operational harvest planning guidelines that it started developing in 2008. When developed this material will increase the transparency of the three-year harvest planning process and support the Department's succession planning.

The Commission's monitoring of harvest contractor compliance with contractual obligations is limited and current monitoring is unlikely to ensure compliance and high standards of performance. Ongoing breaches of environmental standards and failure to optimise forest resources place the forest under increased pressure. Effective monitoring and compliance programs increase public confidence and support government agencies in performing complex and challenging roles.

We also saw room for improvement in how the Commission sells forest product. While sales at the start of the 10 year FMP were generally competitive and transparent, we found this to be less the case during the later years. At least 60 per cent of product is sold under private treaty contracts. Private treaties provide the Commission with flexibility in how it sells product. However, the private treaties we reviewed did not involve a competitive and transparent process and may contribute to a perception that the Commission is unfairly allocating this limited and sought after product.

Page last updated: June 26, 2013

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