



On **5 March 2024** we extended the time to respond to your request.

### **QLDC response**

- The Harvest began in Jan 2020 and was completed in May 2023. The harvesting contractor has been carrying out remedial works and the site will be handed back to QLDC in March 2024.
- The Coronet Forest is some distance from the Mills and Ports – wood was sold to the domestic market, and to China via Port Chalmers and Bluff.
- The Coronet Forest was approximately 175 hectares.
- There was a mix of ground based and hauler operations at the site.
- The total volume harvested from the site was 90,373 tonnes.
- The profit yielded from the site was \$1,895,840.00.
- Log prices varied over the three year period. Fuel prices increased and Covid lock downs occurred.
- The profit and yield include the sale of 6,623 tonnes of firewood.
- Both the profit and yield were higher than predicted at the start of the harvest. One reason was the Chinese market took a smaller piece size than was originally estimated in our forecasting.
- The forest was harvested before maturity, but a considerable wilding seed source has now been removed. A private Douglas fir block neighbouring the Coronet Forest was also felled before maturity earlier this year.
- 6,000 beech trees were planted in a trial site beside the forest last year.
- The planting contractor is to be announced in March 2024. The planting contractor will complete the first native planting at this site in 2025.

We trust the above information satisfactorily answers the relevant components of your request.

### **Decision to withhold remaining information requested**

We have good grounds under the LGOIMA for withholding and refusing some of the information requested. We consider it is necessary to withhold and refuse certain information on the basis of the following grounds:

- s 7(2)(b)(ii) – to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.
- s 17(g) – the information requested is not held by QLDC.

We are withholding harvest or transport costs because the information is commercially sensitivity. If we were to release this data, our contractor's commercial position could be prejudiced by this information falling into the hands of competitors. Ensuring a competitive market in this space is important to QLDC ratepayers, as it ensures cost checks and balances. It is therefore not in the interests of the public to release this information.

QLDC do not hold records of the site prep and replanting costs from the 80's and 90's, nor the details of the original planting and thinning costs. We therefore cannot respond to this part of your request.

### **Public interest considerations**

We consider the interests of the public when making decisions to withhold requested information, including considerations in favour of release, whether the disclosure of the information would promote those considerations, and whether those considerations outweighed the need to withhold the information.

Promoting the accountability and transparency of local authority members and officials is in the public interest, as is the general public interest in “good government”. Where possible, we have favoured the release of information.

However, we do not believe that these public interest considerations mean we should release the information withheld. Maintaining a competitive market in the forestry space holds greater weight than being transparent in this situation. It is therefore not in the interests of the public to release this information.

We conclude that the important section 7 withholding interests identified (e.g. commercial sensitivity), which relate to a subset of the information within the scope of your request, are not outweighed by a countervailing public interest requiring release.

#### **Right to review the above decision**

Note that you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact [Naell.Crosby-Roe@qldc.govt.nz](mailto:Naell.Crosby-Roe@qldc.govt.nz) (Governance & Stakeholder Services Manager).

We trust this response satisfactorily answers your request.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line and a loop.

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Senior Official Information Advisor