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## Rainforest Fibres Found In Chain's Office Paper

*Paddy Manning*

LABORATORY testing of Lazer IT office paper made in Indonesia and sold here by Officeworks reveals it is made up of 84 per cent tropical rainforest fibre, in apparent conflict with the retailer's environment policies.

Fibre analysis of the copy paper by the Wisconsin lab IPS Testing Experts was commissioned by a privately funded environment group, Markets for Change, which is campaigning against retailers of native forest products in Australia including furniture, hardware and paper suppliers.

The copy paper, made by the Singapore pulp and paper giant Asia Pacific Resources International Ltd (APRIL), was bought at an Officeworks store in Canberra earlier this year and sent to the US lab for testing.

The IPS report found the paper was made of 89.9 per cent hardwood fibre by weight, of which 93.5 per cent came from at least a dozen different tropical hardwood species, with the remainder eucalyptus. Another 10.1 per cent of the fibre by weight was softwood.

The product information and Q&A section of Officeworks's website states Lazer IT paper was made at a mill certified under the LEI (Indonesia Ecolabel Institute) accreditation scheme which "ensures the paper meets the particular qualifications of a fair and sustainable forest management standard".

Officeworks, owned by Wesfarmers, has a "Taking Care" policy which outlines its environment and community standards. It has an "environmentally preferable products and packaging" section, although it is silent on procurement.

One priority outlined in Wesfarmers's 2010 sustainability report was for Officeworks to "provide customers with information about office products with a lower environmental impact, and development of product selection criteria by the first half of 2010-11".

In a statement yesterday, the managing director of Officeworks, Mark Ward, said: "We stand by the commitments contained in the report.

While we are making good progress towards the objectives, some of the initiatives have proved more complex than we originally anticipated and as a result may take longer to achieve than originally foreseen. We will be providing a full update on our progress in the next sustainability report, which is due out in November."

At Officeworks's Alexandria store yesterday the Herald bought reams of Lazer IT copy paper (\$3.79), Paper One (also made by APRIL and stamped "100 per cent plantation", \$4.39) and Australian-made Reflex (\$5.17). All were stocked in large quantities. When asked for information about the origin of the papers, the cashier pointed to the company's Business Supplies Directory.

The directory listed Paper One as having "Acacia Chain-of-Custody" accreditation, while Lazer IT had LEI accreditation.

The chief executive of Markets for Change, Tim Birch, said he had never heard of either accreditation scheme.

"It smacks of greenwash," he said. "It is shocking to see the extremely high levels of rainforest pulp in the paper that Officeworks is stocking in its stores.

"Officeworks needs to cancel its contract with APRIL and commit to a company-wide procurement policy that ensures native forests both in Australia and in Indonesia do not end up in the products it sells.

"Markets for Change will be seeking an urgent meeting with Officeworks to discuss these worrying findings."

APRIL's logging operations in Sumatra were featured in a recent episode of ABC TV's Foreign Correspondent. Since that program was aired, Fuji Xerox has suspended its business with the company.

Mr Ward yesterday said Officeworks was conducting a formal review of the allegations against APRIL. "That review is nearing completion and we expect to announce a decision in the near future. Should our concerns not be adequately addressed by APRIL, we will give serious consideration to our future supply arrangements with them."