**Phytophthora taxon Agathis** (PTA)

Commonly known as PTA, *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* is a soil and water-borne microscopic oomycete (a disease causing agent) that only affects the 'Lower risk/conservation dependant', kauri (*Agathis australis*) causing foliage yellowing, canopy thinning, and development of lesions on the lower trunk and roots and tree death. Recent research suggests that PTA is a distinct and previously undescribed species of *Phytophthora*.

*Phytophthora taxon Agathis* has been isolated from the margin of bleeding lesions it induces and from the soil underneath both healthy and unhealthy trees (Beever et al. 2009).

*Phytophthora* causes a number of symptoms, more commonly known as 'kauri dieback disease' or 'kauri collar rot' (Beever et al. 2009) in kauri forests in New Zealand. Symptoms affect both old and young trees (Waipara et al. 2010) and include yellowing of foliage, loss of leaves, canopy thinning and dead branches. Bleeding lower trunk and root lesions may also develop, resulting in excessive bleeding of resin (gummosis). These lesions may eventually girdle the trunk, leading to tree mortality (Beever et al. 2009). The selective mortality of kauri caused by this disease may lead to changes in forest composition, with forest dominance likely to shift towards unaffected podocarp species such as rimu, Dacrydium cupressinum (Beever et al. 2009).

The native range and known introduced range outside of New Zealand of *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* is unclear (Beever et al. 2009). Information on long distance dispersal methods is therefore lacking. It is thought to be spread via the movement of contaminated soil from footwear and equipment.

References: