Membership Committee Report

In Issue 31/1 of New Zealand Forestry the needs and expectations of members, as outlined in the report, was published. The full report has also been sent to members (Special edition of the Newsletter for 59th AGM). In this issue the major recommendations for membership categories and the discussion at the AGM in Wellington last May are summarized.

Committee Recommendations

Chartering was rejected by the committee as being impractical and in conflict with the principle of a voluntary membership.

Recognition of Merit

The committee believed three separate classes of merit could be recognized:

- for outstanding contributions to service to the Institute or the practice of forestry, as defined for Honorary membership.
- for long and dedicated service to the Institute but not necessarily outstanding service.
- for consistent demonstration of good or excellent forestry practice, but not necessarily an outstanding contribution to the practice of forestry.

Neither of the last two is currently recognized.

Alternative structures

Current rules

Honorary → Full
Associate ← Student

- Affiliate members cannot advance if they do not have a tertiary qualification, or if they are not employed full time in forestry.
- Advancement from Associate to Full is automatic.

New Membership Structure Options

1. First alternative

   Honorary → Fellow → Full (Companion)
   Associate ← Full
   Student ← Associate

   a) Student and Honorary membership remain as currently defined.
   b) Associate — An applicant for admission or advancement to the class of Associate Member may be anyone with an interest in forestry, but shall be a person who, in the opinion of Council, will be able to contribute to the advancement of forestry.
   c) Full — An Associate Member shall be entitled to advance to Full Member when that person has been an Associate Member for at least two years and has either:
      i) completed five years in the practice of, teaching of, or research in some branch of forestry, or
      ii) occupied, in the opinion of Council, a position of some standing or experience in the field of forestry for at least five years.
   d) Full (Companion) — A Full Member shall be granted the order of Companion if he/she has been:
      i) nominated for such honour by two Full members;
      ii) 12 years as an active member of the Institute during which time he/she must have been seen as an integral component for the successful functioning of the Institute or a local section of the institute.

Curt Gleason Memorial Prize

The NZIF Council is pleased to announce a new prize to foster communication with non-professionals, in memory of the late Curt Gleason. Funding for the prize has come from surplus AGM money and is due to the excellent work of the Committee that ran the event.

This annual prize will be awarded for the first time since 1981 and entries should be submitted to the Secretary, N.Z. Institute of Foresters, P.O. Box 12-314, Wellington North, before April 1 next. Any queries should also be sent to that address.

Background and conditions of entry:

- The objective is to foster creative communication in forestry.
- First prize $500.
- Merit awards (up to three in number) $100 each.
- Open to New Zealand Institute of Foresters members 30 years of age or under.
- Submission date April 1. Prizes will be awarded at the Institute's AGM.
- Submissions receiving prizes or merit awards will become the property of the Institute, which will have the rights to use them in any way.
- Entrant may choose any topic within the broad field of forestry and can use any tangible communication techniques (writing, film, video, painting, display, etc).
- The entrant may specify the audience.
- Entries will be judged for their ability to communicate the subject chosen by the entrant to the wider public or the specified audience (non-forestry profession).
- The quality of the material will be assessed by two judges, both appointed by Council. One judge should be a communication expert, the other an expert in forestry.
iii)elected by a majority vote of a meeting of Council.

c) Fellow — A Full Member shall be entitled to advance to Fellow when that person has:

i) been nominated by two Full Members;

ii) been a Full Member for at least five years;

iii) at the time of his/her application had at least 15 years' experience practising forestry;

iv) submitted in writing a curriculum vitae and a supporting statement as to why the applicant should be considered for this honour — Council may require an interview with the applicant, if necessary;

v) in the opinion of Council, achieved eminence in the profession;

vi) been elected by a majority vote of a meeting of Council.

Fellows of the Institute would be entitled to publicly make known the fact by using the letters of title Fellow, NZIF after their names. An application fee or an extra annual fee would be charged for this distinction.

2 Second Alternative

Honorary

Full

Associate

Companion

Student

a) Student and Honorary membership remain as currently defined in the constitution.

b) Associate — same as for the first alternative.

c) Full — An Associate Member shall be entitled to advance to Full Member when that person has:

i) been nominated by two Full Members;

ii) been an Associate Member for at least two years;

iii) at the time of his/her application had at least five years' experience practising forestry;

iv) submitted in writing a statement in support of his/her application and one reference from an employer or colleague of some standing which manifests the applicant’s allegiance to the Institute’s Code of Ethics;

v) in the opinion of Council, achieved eminence in the profession;

vi) been elected by a majority vote of a meeting of Council.

d) Companion — This would be along the lines discussed in the first alternative with appropriate modification for its relationship with Associate as well as Full membership. In this alternative, it would need to be a distinction within these two classes, rather than a class on its own.

Implications

1 Guidelines would need to be drawn up on which to assess the submissions. Council might wish to appoint a committee to vet applications and make recommendations to them.

2 The introduction of a fellowship class will enable a register to be kept and widely published. This would suggest a reassessment of the role of recognizing consultants.

3 The Code of Ethics may need to be reviewed and extended.

4 Disciplinary procedures need to be set up to enable complaints of non-ethical behaviour to be heard.

5 Positive publicity should be given to a merit category.

Preferred Option

The membership committee preferred the first option because it avoids the need to grandfather or regrade current Full Members.

In the discussion, at the AGM the following points of view were put forward by members:

- Several preferred Option 1 and supported the recognition of merit.
- The suggestion that only Fellows and Consultants should swear allegiance to the Code of Ethics was questioned. Full Members could well be required to do this also.
- It is perhaps inappropriate to charge an application fee or an extra annual fee for the distinction of being a Fellow.
- Use the term ‘Members’ rather than ‘Full Members’ and ‘Companion’ rather than ‘Companion Member’.
- Suggestion that the current automatic rise from associate to Full Member had led to a downgrading of the latter’s status and is part of the present problem.
- A problem with Option 1 is that it could be difficult to administer and run the risk of introducing rifts and arguments. Option 2 would be easier.
- Are these ‘internal changes’ overlooking the basic problems of increasing membership?
- Accreditation might be another way to ensure professionalism, increase membership, and the public standing of foresters.
- Should we consider recognizing excellence in a particular field? Would the category of Fellow do this satisfactorily?
- Some of the wording suggested for various membership categories could be almost impossible for the Council to administer.