

President's comments

Leadership opportunity beckons



As the year 2003 drew to a close there will have been a number of foresters who breathed a sigh of relief. While the end of one year and the start of another are of no great moment in nature, psychologically it holds a place amongst the human species as more than a turning point in the calendar.

In two months time the NZIF will mark a turning point in its own calendar. The AGM and Conference will be held in Gisborne in April and, as is laid down in our Articles of Association, this year we will be electing a new Council and office bearers. You will already have received notice of this and invited to nominate members to Council.

Two years ago the NZIF was fortunate enough to be able to have an election for Council. I say fortunate in the sense that there were enough members willing to put forward their names that we required an election. As it so happens we have been able to make use of all the names that were put forward, even of those who were not elected, and at the last AGM put in place a provision to be able to second members to Council.

At the time of writing I do not know how many Councillors will be standing for re-election in 2004, although I am hopeful that a majority of them will. I do know that I will be standing down as President but do so aware that there are others who have indicated a willingness to step up to

the mark.

If there is one lasting impression that I will take with me from the last two years it is this – the willingness of members to put their names forward to help out. Surely this must be the true mark of an organisation when its members are available to put in so much of their own time and energy. I would like to record now my thanks for all those who have helped the NZIF in so many ways over the past two years in the various boards, committees and other activities that make up the NZIF.

AGMs are a funny business. They are a great opportunity for members to meet with their elected representatives and put forward views and provide direction. Yet often people avoid them. As dry as they are, I would like to recommend that members who are attending the NZIF conference in Gisborne do make an effort to get along to the AGM. This year the Council will be recommending an increase in membership fees to the AGM, surely a fact that will be of interest to members!

I could not finish this piece without making note of Peter Berg's New Year award - Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to forestry. In amongst his many forestry activities Peter is a former President of the NZIF, a position that he held for two terms, and is also a Fellow of the NZIF. Congratulations Peter, an honour well deserved.

Tim Thorpe

New Year honour to Peter Berg

Members of the NZIF will have been pleased to see Peter Berg named in the New Year Honours list – he was a very worthy recipient of Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to forestry. Peter has been involved with the forestry industry for over 30 years and is widely regarded for his commitment to the sector and its people and for the leadership that he has provided.

Peter has been a member of the NZIF since 1969, a Full Member since 1972 and was elected a Fellow in 2000. In 1998 he was elected President of the NZIF a position he held for four years (two terms) until 2002. During this period he also held the position of Chairman of the NZIF Registration Board. He remains a member of the Registration Board to this day.

Under Peter's leadership the NZIF implemented a range of initiatives and made a number of significant submissions on government and industry issues – including climate change, indigenous forestry and Timberlands West Coast. In some instances these submissions were at odds with other forest industry positions which

reinforced the NZIF's role as a body representing the forestry profession not the forestry sector. Peter was also active in encouraging local section activity of the NZIF. As Chair of the Registration Board, Peter was paramount in promoting the values of the registration scheme, which was established in 1996, to the forestry sector and to those requiring forestry advice. He also led a review of the scheme in 1999/2000. Peter has a particular interest in the people side of the NZIF notably its older members, continuing professional development and the code of ethics.

Peter has also been a long-serving President of the NZ Forest Owners Association, a role that he continues to hold. He was President of the New Zealand Branch of the Commonwealth Forestry Association for 12 years and is deputy chair of Tane's Tree Trust, which is devoted to planting native trees. Added to these achievements are the senior positions that he has held within the forest industry and the books that he has written on forestry, particularly its people and history. Peter is a deserving recipient of a civic honour.