

Nelson 2018 conference

Chris Goulding

This issue includes a short report on the AGM, the Forester of the Year and Thomas Kirk awards, and the 2018 NZIF conference held at Nelson in July. Andrew McEwen describes the activities of the NZIF Foundation including the 2018 awards – ‘more awards, more applications and a record level of distributions’ (\$44,500). Peter Wilks of the conference organising committee provides ‘The last word’. He comments that in the 30 years since he graduated many new wood products have been discovered; in his local hardware store sawn ‘4 by 2’ at \$6.45/linear m is in competition with engineered laminated veneer lumber (LVL) at \$6.20/linear m.

The opening address of the conference was given by the Minister for Forestry, the Hon Shane Jones. After the extended period of years when the production forest sector relied entirely on market forces, it is a pleasure to have a Cabinet Minister with an interest in forestry. This interest is not for forestry itself, but rather for what it should be able to do for the benefit of the regions and for New Zealand. However, the Minister warned that the plantation forest industry’s licence to operate is totally dependent on the opinion of the general public, opinion that will turn against pine forests should there be more of the logging debris disasters, as at Tolaga Bay. In 1987, it was evident that opinion had turned against the NZ Forest Service. I have always thought it ironic that Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and recently Caroline Spelman (Conservative, UK) were unable to disestablish their equivalent public service organisations, nor were they able to sell off their state-owned forests thanks to public opinion, whereas a New Zealand Labour government did so with hardly a murmur of public protest.

The lead paper in the issue is from Julie Collins, acting head of Te Uru Rākau (Forestry New Zealand) which is now up and running, re-establishing a government forestry service to support and promote forestry. She stresses that this starts with ‘a shared vision to transform our future’, with the organisation providing focus for the government’s forestry goals.

Forests and wood do have a great deal to offer. The May issue featured a paper from British Columbia on the construction of an 18 storey, 54 m tall mass-timber building demonstrating the new potential of wood in high-rise buildings. The NZIF conference field trip culminated in a visit to the new Nelson Airport Terminal under construction that uses LVL and plywood in combination to provide a striking building, somewhat more inspiring than the corrugated iron cladding of the airport terminal in the Editor’s former home town of Rotorua. The construction of the Nelson terminal is described in a paper by Novak et al., which the authors hope will increase producer awareness of the issues of using engineered timber in buildings.

Similarly, the drive towards mechanisation of forest operations has not only resulted in increased productivity, but also increased safety and a reduced rate of severe accidents. It has also stimulated a New Zealand-based, high technology machinery manufacturing industry with a thriving export component. There were two presentations at the conference on this subject. Dale Ewer described a mission to change logging, to fell and retrieve a tree at the push of a button, illustrated by the Falcon felling carriage shown on the front cover.

Keith Raymond’s paper describes the Steepland Harvesting research programme. He notes that collaboration between research, industry and government through the Primary Growth Partnership improved commercialisation and reduced the investment risk to logging contractors. This innovative machinery development is only possible now that the level of the New Zealand harvest is sufficient to provide a substantial base home market for the products.

The paper about forestry in Indonesia by Kuru and Wood should be read with more than passing interest. Their forest industry is changing rapidly, with significant problems to overcome. Disease and pests have caused 500,000 ha of *Acacia mangium* plantations to be transitioned to *Eucalyptus pellita* in a very short time. Management of peatland soils is contentious with the proposed retirement and restoration of four million ha significantly affecting wood supply. Although the forest land is government owned, in reality all plantation forestry in Indonesia is community-based and each forestry company has a department devoted to community relations that must work with locals for the management and protection of the concessions. With pulpwood plantations totalling 2.5 million ha, five to seven-year rotation lengths and mean annual increments of 23–25 m³/ha/year, and a further equal area of rubber and teak plantations, this ‘developing’ country exported a grand total of 59,000 m³ as unprocessed logs. Almost all the log harvest is processed within Indonesia.

Each of the Indonesian problems above has its parallel in New Zealand conditions, even if the risk to the health of radiata pine is currently only a risk. The Minister for Forestry has stated that increasing the amount of domestic processing at the expense of log exports is a key objective, perhaps not to the low level of log exports as in Indonesia. Reconciling the competing interests between forest growers and landowners anxious for the best possible net log price with forest processing companies hoping for competitive log supply costs will occupy the thoughts of Te Uru Rākau. The industry itself is on notice that it must greatly improve its community relations, and not just for logging debris or merely through a PR assault.



Need professional forestry advice? Use a Registered Forestry Consultant

Registered Forestry Consultants

- Are all professionally qualified and experienced
- Abide by the NZIF Code of Ethics
- Comply with NZIF standards
- Are Registered Members of the NZIF
- Hold a current Annual Practising Certificate
- Are subject to regular peer review
- Engage in continuing professional development
- Are subject to a complaints and disciplinary process

For more information go to www.nzif.org.nz
Or contact
The NZIF Administrator on admin@nzif.org.nz
Phone 04 974 8421



New Zealand Institute of Forestry
– Te Pūwhiri Ngarāherehere a Aotearoa Incorporated –