

Media Release

New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF)

For Immediate Release

NZIF Welcomes Proposed Changes to Crown Research Institutes

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) acknowledges the Government's proposed amendments to the Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) as potentially beneficial, particularly with the introduction of a focus area on the bioeconomy. These changes align with numerous recommendations outlined in the Chief Science Advisor's recent report, although not all recommendations have been implemented.

NZIF supports the removal of the ban on gene technology, provided it is implemented responsibly. This modification offers substantial potential to advance innovation in forestry and related sectors, ensuring New Zealand's continued leadership in sustainable and cutting-edge practices.

Furthermore, the proposal to retain intellectual property (IP) in commercialised outcomes has the potential to drive technological advancements and foster innovation. However, NZIF cautions this approach may also lead to the neglect or underfunding of long-term, critical research areas, such as environmental sustainability and climate resilience, which are essential for the forestry sector and the broader ecosystem.

NZIF raised concerns last year regarding the inadequate funding for science, which has adversely affected forestry research. We support a merger approach which aims to address this issue. However, NZIF remains concerned about the absence of additional funding accompanying these structural modifications. Restructuring initiatives often require substantial resources, time, and staff attention, potentially diverting focus from critical research priorities. This is particularly concerning given the recent Long-Term Insights briefing prepared by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), which highlights the risk of the forestry sector being overlooked in the short-term priorities of bioeconomy science.

James Treadwell, President of NZIF, stated: "While we perceive opportunities in these proposed alterations, particularly with the focus on the bioeconomy and advancements in gene technology, we must ensure critical areas such as environmental and climate



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research are not compromised. The forestry sector plays a pivotal role in New Zealand's future, and it is imperative its needs are adequately addressed in these strategies.

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) strongly advocates for the continued prioritisation of the forestry industry within the development of bioeconomy strategies. Long-term investments in forestry-related research are crucial to fortify the sector's contribution to New Zealand's economic growth, environmental sustainability, and climate objectives."

NZIF remains steadfast in its commitment to collaborating with the Government, Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) / Public Research Organisations (PROs), and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the proposed changes deliver tangible benefits for the forestry sector and the nation as a whole.

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About NZIF

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) serves as the professional body for New Zealand's forestry sector. It represents the interests of foresters, forest scientists, and other professionals involved in the management of all forests. The Institute advocates for sustainable forest management and emphasises the significance of forests of various types and forestry in combating climate change.