

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**01 MARCH 2023**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Ministerial Review Terms of Reference, will result in Scapegoats but not Solutions**

The NZ Institute of Forestry (NZIF) welcomes the Government's intention to investigate the management of forestry land use in the East Coast. However President James Treadwell says "we are concerned the terms of reference for this inquiry are too narrow and the time frame too short to find long term solutions to the impacts of storm events in this region. The issues are challenging and complex and extend beyond just forestry. We strongly advocate this inquiry be widened to include all land use in the region from the mountain tops to the sea."

"The goal of the review must be how to mitigate the downstream effects of land use, to help build climate resilience and avoid the catastrophic impacts of extreme weather events associated with climate change such as caused by Cyclone Gabrielle. This should include a review of decisions by councils on where to allow buildings and infrastructure to be built" says Treadwell

The NZIF is deeply concerned at the downstream impacts caused by current land use practices, including commercial forestry and pastoral farming. These impacts have been exacerbated by the increasing frequency and intensity of storm events caused by climate change. Science based solutions are needed to mitigate these impacts and the Institute fully supports an enquiry into land use in erosion-prone catchments in the East Coast region, with a focus on increasing climate resilience.

The environmental benefits of forest cover, exotic as well as indigenous, in reducing soil erosion were very evident following Cyclone Bola in 1988. As a result the Government introduced the East Coast Forestry Scheme in 1992 to help encourage further afforestation. Treadwell says "due to the intensity of these storm events and the highly erodible geography of the East Coast, it will be impossible to stop all erosion and movement of woody debris downstream - regardless of species and forest management, we have seen large areas slip into rivers taking everything growing on it with it, be it native trees, exotic trees or grass".

From a forestry perspective the NZIF considers the inquiry should investigate which forests are most at risk and what changes are needed to protect downstream infrastructure like roads and bridges, homes and communities, other land uses and livelihoods and to protect our threatened environments. In highly sensitive areas existing harvesting practices may no longer be appropriate and changes to forestry regimes and harvesting practices may be the only options. Species suitability and the restoration of permanent indigenous forest cover should be included in the review.

“It is time we stop looking for scapegoats and started having a full and frank discussion on the causes of sedimentation and wood debris and plan solutions to mitigate downstream effects of these storms to ensure no one else is killed by future events.” says Treadwell

Ends

Media contact:

**James Treadwell.**

President NZIF

Tel: [+64 \(0\) 220434511](tel:+640220434511) Email: [president@nzif.org.nz](mailto:president@nzif.org.nz)