

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NZ Institute of Forestry President Challenges Newshub's Unprofessional Reporting

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) President, James Treadwell, has raised significant concerns regarding the recent reporting by Adam Hollingworth of Newshub. Treadwell condemns Hollingworth's article, published on December 17th, as biased and detrimental to the forest industry, impacting the livelihoods of over 40,000 workers.

Treadwell asserts Hollingworth's piece, seemingly influenced by a report from Ravensdown, accuses pine forests of soils degradation through soil acidification without seeking alternate perspectives or verifying facts. Treadwell highlights the oversight in Hollingworth's approach, stating, "The prevalent belief pines contribute to lower soil pH and this is damaging is misleading. Contrarily, all forest soils tend to be acidic; indigenous New Zealand forests, deciduous forests and conifer forests. Our most acidic soils occur under our mighty Kauri forests."

Citing research conducted by Scion, Treadwell counters Hollingworth's claims by emphasising the positive impact of radiata pine forests on soil quality. He notes instances where radiata pine plantations on coastal sand dunes has accelerated topsoil development, demonstrating an enhancement in soil quality.

Treadwell attributes the misconception of pine-induced soil acidity to the preference of grass for a neutral to alkali pH. He explains, "The transformation of pasture into native or planted forests naturally tends towards increased acidity, especially when reverting from pasture, which is generally top-dressed with lime and fertiliser every few years in perpetuity. This move towards acidity is the soil reverting to its natural state."

Treadwell emphasises the importance of expanding forests in New Zealand, citing erosion control through tree planting and carbon sequestration as key benefits. "NZ needs more forests, not less. We need to reduce erosion via tree planting, and we need to pull carbon out of the atmosphere by growing timber. Every tonne of wood grown represents a tonne of carbon removed from the atmosphere. Nothing else achieves this, and we have the land and species to make a real difference through new planting." Treadwell also points out New Zealand will require more timber in the future, particularly for the construction of mid-rise buildings using wood instead of concrete and steel.

In conclusion, Treadwell firmly criticises Newshub's reporting as unprofessional and uncharacteristic of a reputable media outlet. He discloses having lodged a complaint with Newshub and having numerous times extended a standing offer of expertise from the NZ Institute of Forestry to aid reporters in fact-checking endeavours.

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About the NZ Institute of Forestry:

The NZ Institute of Forestry is a professional association which represents the interests of professional foresters and promotes sustainable forestry within New Zealand of all forest types including indigenous, plantation and urban forests. With a commitment to sound forest management practices and environmental stewardship, the Institute plays a crucial role in advancing forestry knowledge and advocating for responsible forest policies.