

take place as quickly as possible, if for no other reason than to curtail the uncertainty which presently exists within the forestry industry. There has been very little new investment in the past three years in forestry and yet we are aware of a number of parties who are wishing to invest but are refraining, given the present uncertainty. This is perfectly natural, given that the State is such a major player in the forestry industry and has decided to quit its direct investment. We therefore believe that the quicker the sale takes place, on a responsible basis of course, the better it will be for the industry.

"It is certainly the intention of Government that the broader terms and conditions of the sales process and the licences are made public so that discussion can take place.

"I understand that the Ministry of Forestry is working on a national forest policy and that this is gradually being formulated. The necessity is recognised for an ongoing national policy making and research ability in forestry, and this is presently located in the Ministry of Forestry. It envisaged that any further changes should be made in this area."

## A national policy for indigenous forests

Government has decided that there is a need to develop a national policy on management of indigenous forests on public and private land. The objective of this policy will be to maintain or enhance, in perpetuity, the current area of indigenous forest, either by protection, sustainable management or reforestation of indigenous species.

A national policy will be based on the following set of principles:

- recognition of the rights and responsibilities of private land owners;
- recognition of the rights and obligations of the Crown to maintain wildlife habitat and to reflect international agreements involving the Crown;
- recognition of the rights and obligations of Maori land owners and the Crown under the Treaty of Waitangi;
- recognition of existing allocations of State forest for production or reservation and associated covenants on indigenous forest allocation for production on the West Coast and Western Southland; and
- efficiency, cost effectiveness and the need to be equitable.

The discussion paper examines the merits of a number of policy and implementation options. Copies are available from the Ministry of Forestry, Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation and the Department of Maori Affairs.

## Australian statement on the environment

In July 1989 the Australian Prime Minister made a comprehensive statement on the Australian Government's new environmental policy initiatives, including environmental investigations and action programmes. The investigations and actions are wide in scope, and cover such areas as biological diversity, endangered species, habitat preservation, oceans and fisheries, Antarctica, the greenhouse effect, ozone, land, water and trees. Many of these impinge on forestry.

In relation to trees, the Australian Government has decided to establish two new programmes to help protect and enhance the native vegetation cover. The first of these is the One Billion Trees Programme, which aims to have one billion more trees planted around Australia by the year 2000. This programme will entail:

- a community tree-planting programme to plant over 400 million trees, including financial support for community groups and land owners, school nursery projects, and major projects involving community, corporate and government organisations;
- a natural regeneration and direct seeding programme to establish over 600 million trees in open areas of Australia.

The second programme is the Save The Bush Programme, which aims to support efforts to conserve the remnant areas of forest, woodland, heath, grassland and wetland which lie outside national parks and reserves. These areas are considered critical to ensuring the future of many species of plant and animal. Funding of \$A1 million is allocated for 1989-90, and a further \$A1.5 million for 1990-91.

The Australian Government has also recognised the need to balance the values of native forests with those of forest industry development, and has adopted several measures in an attempt to secure this balance. These include:

- a commitment to establish a forests accord development of a National Forests Inventory to assess the value of the forests, costing \$A2.9 million over three years;
- provision of a further \$A3.9 million over the next two years to the National Afforestation Programme to hasten the establishment of hardwood plantations and so help reduce the forestry industry's reliance on native forests.

Protection of tropical forests, both nationally and overseas, has also received considerable attention. In this area the Australian Government has:

- added the wet tropical forests of north-east Queensland to the world heritage list;
- allocated \$A1 million to establish and maintain the Institute of Tropical Rainforest Studies in Cairns;
- undertaken to review the implications of restricting or eliminating rainforest timber imports;
- donated \$A250,000 to help establish a 180,000 km<sup>2</sup> ecological reserve in the Amazon basin;
- contributed \$A60,000 through ITTO towards the study of forestry management and practices in Sarawak.

There is no doubt that the above initiatives will have considerable impact on the Australian forestry scene, and that New Zealand will watch developments with interest.

**Ben Everts**

## Australian Forest History Society

At the National Conference on Australia's Forest History held in Canberra in May 1988 it was resolved to form an Australian Forest History Society with the aim of advancing historical understanding of human interaction with Australian forest and woodland environments.

Membership is open on application to any person or organisation supportive of the aim of the Society. The Society is interested in being free of and being seen to be free of any particular interest group.

Copies of membership forms can be obtained from the New Zealand contact person for the Society:

Dr Michael Roche,  
Department of Geography,  
Massey University,  
Private Bag,  
Palmerston North.