

Forestry Insights – end of an era

All of those involved in the Forestry Insights project are getting ready to celebrate. Those within the forest industry will celebrate because Project Manager Gendie Somerville-Ryan will no longer be ringing them up to ask for increased sponsorship money; those involved in development and production of the materials will celebrate because the project has been completed.

The forest industry has invested \$3 million in Forestry Insights over the last four years and in the life of the project more than 35,000 boxes of material have been given free to schools.

The end-of-project celebration will be held on September 6 with the Minister of Forestry, Hon. John Falloon, addressing the guests.

The last theme, Science & Technology follows The Forest, Processes, The Environment and The People, and focuses on the innovations in the forest industry and how the industry uses existing technologies to meet its needs.

A broad range of topics are covered in the Science & Technology theme, including maths, general science, physics, chemistry, biotechnology, economics, information technology, social studies and design technology. All materials are designed to fit within the New Zealand Curriculum, and in particular the Draft Technology Curriculum that has just



Gendie Somerville-Ryan, Project Manager, looks forward to celebrating the completion of a successful project. Gendie needs a new challenge – if you have one she would love to hear from you!!!

been released.

Writers for Science & Technology visited Carter Holt Harvey Packaging, Waratah General Engineering, NZ Forest Research Institute, LIRO, PAPRO, Tasman Pulp & Paper Mill, Tasman Nursery, Kinleith Pulp & Paper Mill, Waipa Sawmill, Fletcher Wood Panel's Melteca

and MDF plants, Jaymor Industries, and Carter Holt Harvey's Forest Biotechnology Centre to see for themselves the technologies available within the forest industry.

Posters for this theme also look at applications of science and technology within the industry, including the genetic engineering of trees, the chemical pulping process, three-dimensional views of forestry machines, and the use of barcoding technology.

The final theme, Science & Technology, brings to an end the four-year partnership between the forest industry and the educational sector. Gendie has particular praise for the forest industry: "Over the past five years the industry has offered continual support to Insights, whether it be in the form of sponsorship, hosting regional launches, talking to writers or providing resources. This has ensured that the project is a resounding success, and industry will reap the benefits of enhanced public awareness for years to come."

Forestry Insights has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Forestry and the Forest Industry Training and Education Council, but in September responsibility for maintaining the project will pass to the Forest Industries Council, which hopes to put in place a programme of activities to complement the materials already produced.

Crown forestry licences – rent rise

The Crown's tabling of legislation enabling it to introduce massive rent increases for cutting rights to its forests has attracted a barrage of criticism from the forestry sector. Some representatives of the industry are even querying whether the move is constitutional.

The issue revolves around the purchase of State Forest cutting rights by a number of companies in 1990. Nearly 70 Crown forestry licences were issued. Each is valid for at least 35 years, and subject to a rental review every three years.

The agreements ran into trouble at the first review in October 1993, because of a disputed interpretation regarding the structure of the rental fees. The Government wants to increase the rentals by as much as 100%, based on licences which state that the annual rental should be charged at seven per cent of the unimproved value of the land.

However the Crown Forest Assets Act, under which the licences were granted, states that rentals should be set at market rates for the land in its unimproved state, taking into account the terms and conditions of the licence. The difference is quite dramatic: Forestry Corporation, for example, faces a rental increase of \$5 million, and General Manager (Resources) Russell Dale says the company has been negotiating with the Department of Survey and Land Information (DOSLI) for two years in an attempt to resolve the matter.

The dispute came to a head in September 1994 when Carter Holt Harvey took the issue to the High Court to clarify the situation. The Court ruled in favour of the licensees, pointing out that Section 29(1) of the Crown Forests Assets Act was mandatory: the "market rates" would take precedence and the licence agreements were wrong.

Despite this development, the Finance Bill No 4 was introduced into Parliament.

In December 1994, it proposed a number of amendments to the Crown Forests Assets Act. Among these is a clause which in effect says all of the 1990 licences (with their seven per cent rate) will be deemed (retrospectively) to comply with the proposed new legislation.

Strangely, in January 1995 the Crown then filed a statement which admitted that Carter Holt Harvey's contentions had been correct, but denied the remedy that Carter Holt Harvey and the other licence-holding companies had been seeking.

A number of licensees – including Forestry Corporation, Juken Nissho and Carter Holt Harvey – made submissions on the Finance Bill No 4 to a Parliamentary Select Committee.

Reprinted from NZ Forestry Bulletin, NZFOA.