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INSTITUTE NEWS



President's Comment

For the last two decades the Institute has 'recognised' the professional ability of a number of its members, and most recently the constitution has provided for the registration of members who have achieved, and are pledged to maintain, a level of attainment within the forestry profession.

A corollary of such recognition is the setting of consistent standards, and periodic confirmation that these are being achieved in practice and over time.

A great deal of this responsibility falls on the shoulders of the Registration Board, and in particular the Chairperson, a role filled

very ably by Bruce Manley for the last six years. Bruce and the remainder of the Board have worked hard, building on the body of practice and precedence of former Board's to ensure present registration procedures are both appropriate to our profession and rigorous enough to provide some assurance of the performance of registered members.

For registered members (of whom most are registered consultants) recognition by the Institute conveys to the wider community some proof of capability in practice, an attribute often of some value to those registered.

For all parties this process imparts a significant degree of responsibility. For the Board and Council:

- Maintenance of entry standards. It is not axiomatic that all applicants will at first succeed, although those that are fully committed virtually always achieve registration.
- Maintenance of standards in practice. The Board have established procedures to ensure all registered members' performance is audited at least 5-yearly.
- Handling of complaints. From time to time the Board is asked to review the practice of a registered member, and has established procedures that do so as fairly and efficiently as possible. Although there have been few cases that the Board has had to deal with, the precedent developed is valuable.

For the registered member responsibility for maintenance of professional capability and adherence to the Institute's relatively undemanding standards are the main requirements.

The records of the Board show that there have been very few issues raised relating to the conduct of our registered members, a record that reflects well on both the Board's processes and those members. Nevertheless prudence requires that a level of vigilance is maintained, and as the number of members registered with the Institute increases this will become an increasingly important aspect of the Board's work.

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Recognition of the attainment of members is an activity not just of importance to

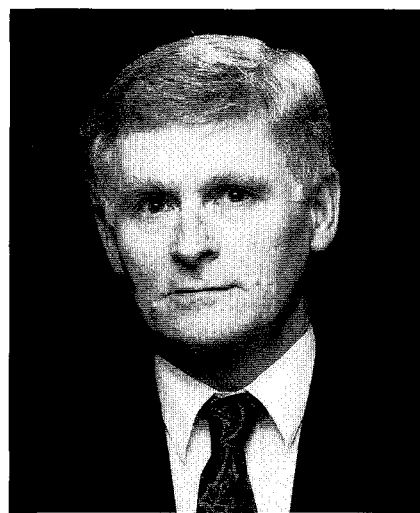
those of us within the Institute. The Queens Birthday Honours included important awards to two of our members, with John Holloway and John Valentine receiving awards for services to forestry.

In Dr Valentine's case the award recognises his important leadership role both within and outside the forestry community. As Chief Executive of the Ministry of Forestry his contribution to both national forestry policy and development of the sector have been noted, and his commitment to representing New Zealand's case in international fora has ensured the contribution of plantation forestry to sustainability goals is not overlooked.

John Holloway's award is for his contribution to forestry and conservation, reflecting John's quiet determination to achieve wider recognition that good practice in the one case was invariably good practice in the other. Throughout a life time career in the former Forest Service and Department of Conservation embracing planning, management and science this tenet has been at the forefront of his work. John has also been particularly active as Councillor, Journal Editor, and member of the Registration Board over a long period.

Both Johns are graduates of Aberdeen University from the mid to late 1960's. While recognition of individual achievement in this way is to be admired, it also reflects well on our Institute that two of our senior members have thus been recognised. Congratulations to you both.

Peter Berg
President



John Holloway



John Valentine

Maintaining Professional Standards

"Uniformity for its own sake is inconsistent with professionalism. If all that Foresters are expected to do is to follow the prescriptions contained in a book of rules, they are not acting as professionals. They are merely practising a trade like a plumber or electrician. It is of the essence of a profession that a high degree of judgement is required in its practice. This is as true of doctors and lawyers as it is of Foresters. One of the main purpose of standards in any profession, is to increase the probability that the expert judgement of a series of different practitioners will result in similar decision on how to deal with a particular problem." (Stamp 1980).

The NZIF Council is currently reviewing the role it takes in maintaining the professional standards of its members with a view to developing a Council policy on this matter. The Council has initiated this

review following the receipt of letters expressing concern regards professional standards. The current Registration Board has a discipline process, however its only related to formal complaint against a registered member. There is currently no appropriate process to deal with this in the absence of a formal complaint. This incident has highlighted to the Council the need to develop a policy for the general issue of when formal disciplinary process against a member should be commenced.

To assist the Council with this task, a report by Katherine Fraser of Kinetics on maintaining professional standards was commissioned in February this year. The report reviews the disciplinary and counselling processes of six other high profile NZ professional bodies. Most of these bodies have formal complaint and discipline procedures specified in their rules.

Those professions with statutory recognition have independent registration boards which handle discipline separately from the main professional body. The following recommendations were made in the Kinetics report.

1. That the NZIF Council debates the role of discipline within the achievement of its stated goals and objectives. The recommendation of the report is that an effective discipline process, accompanied by proactive steps in the form of quality assurance mechanisms, publication of guidelines, education and counselling are consistent with the goal of maintaining and raising professional standards.
2. The establishment of a quality assurance function within the Institute at either the Council level or Registration Board with the purpose of being pro-