

# Defining Leadership

The recent announcement of a bold new "Vision 2020" programme to expand Australia's plantation forest estate by 2 million hectares over the next 25 years would likely fit many people's idea of leadership (see the Vision 2020 article in this issue). It has a grand vision, a bold plan of action and mobilises the energy and talent of a large number of people. In many ways, this type of leadership is what many would also nostalgically associate with the New Zealand Forest Service. The extent to which the current shape of the forest industry is based on past leadership provided by the Forest Service and individuals within it, in areas as diverse as forest establishment, wood processing and research, may be debated, but it is obvious that it had an important part in shaping where the industry is today.

With the passing of the Forest Service and the reduction of the Government's forestry involvement to that of policy advice (see the politicians' views in this issue), this version of leadership has largely been forgone in New Zealand. What is interesting now though, is the effect that this change has had on where and how leadership is manifested today. While the Forest Service, and to some extent the major corporates, provided a focus for leadership via their sheer size, privatisation has meant that there is no longer a platform for this type of leadership. To some, this has the appearance of the industry being rudderless and unable to find a common direction. This is perhaps a poignant feeling since the industry is facing a number of challenges, not the least of which is how to harvest and market a growing wood supply.

I would view the situation somewhat differently than the industry being rudderless. While a strong and focussed leadership can be an effective means of creating change, it does not necessarily follow that the leadership must be centralised or dominant. What we see today is not a reduction in leadership, but rather the emergence of a great number of leadership fora. Rather than channeling leadership through a single organisation, it is spread throughout a number of organisations, in my mind adding depth and variety that would otherwise be stifled. In saying this, it must also be pointed out that my definition of leadership is not confined to individuals, but rather, includes organisations.

The important factor is that leadership emerges from action, not a designation of being a leader as such. While there are many organisations that have been nominated by a large part of the sector to be a leader, such as the Forest Owners' Association or the Forest Industries Council, these are not what I would denote as the industry's "leaders".

I would choose other examples of leadership.

CHH's Millennium forestry programme has touched a raw nerve in many readers, but to me it is an example of leadership. It is not the particular action that I see as leadership as much as the logic and purpose in the action. In much the same way that Fenton and Sutton drove the concept of pruning regimes (including end markets as well as the activity of pruning) as an orthodoxy in New Zealand, CHH is staking its ground on its own vision of the future. The beauty of this type of leadership in today's environment is that it is but one of many visions for silviculture. Perhaps it will emerge as a orthodoxy, but more importantly, it provides an alternative to consider, if not debate.

Craigpine Timber has recently undertaken Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. At a time when many are fence-sitting and waiting to see what will happen in the way of environmental certification, given the range of other systems in the offing, such as Verification of Environmental Performance and ISO 14000, this organisation has gone the other way and staked its path on a particular vision. Its vision includes environmental certification of its forestry practices for the end markets it serves. While the company would likely view itself as pursuing its own commercial interests, its actions have wider implications for the forestry community in New Zealand as a pioneer in this area.

In New Zealand's fragmented forestry sector, the NZIF is also providing a leadership role. The Forest Valuation Guidelines developed by the Institute are a good example of this. The guidelines have become the de facto standards for forest valuation in New Zealand and are now being sought overseas. Surely this is a measure of leadership. Producing the document though is not the same as being a leader. The Institute has also produced the Indigenous Forest Policy, a well written and reasoned document, but which to my knowledge has so far not helped to establish or facilitate the NZIF as a leader in indigenous forestry. So what is the difference? I suspect that the Forest Valuation Guidelines have provided a practical path for leadership that the Indigenous Forest Policy has not.

The NZIF registration scheme for Forestry Consultants also provides an opportunity for the Institute to become a leader. Again, although the registration scheme on paper may be a necessary condition for leadership in forestry, the process alone is not sufficient for this to happen automatically. My intuition says that registration is still not part of the wider NZIF and is still associated with the

"consultants". Something that is not part of a vision shared by the general membership will not flourish or provide a platform for leadership.

As the Institute meets at its 1999 AGM to discuss issues of leadership, it may pay to consider the differences in leadership reflected in the Forest Valuation Guidelines and the Indigenous Forest policy. Does the Indigenous Forest Policy harness the energy of its membership and provide a sense of direction in the same way that is provided by the Forest Valuation Standards? Does the NZIF want to be a leader in indigenous forestry, and if so, what would be required to make it a leader? How can the NZIF become a leader in forestry?

Perhaps it is time to revisit our vision for the NZIF and its potential for leadership in New Zealand's forestry environment.

Hugh Bigsby

## Readership Survey

Helpful suggestions and good feedback on the new layout of the *New Zealand Journal of Forestry* have resulted from the Reader's Survey in the February 1999 edition. The 160 readers who responded generally appreciated the opportunity to offer suggestions.

Of those readers who responded to the question on the Journal layout, 63 per cent of the comments ranged from "good" to "excellent". Some readers commented that the new font on was too light, and these comments have been taken on board in the current edition.

Of the New Zealand-based respondents, more than 40 per cent are based in the top half of the North Island, with a heavy weighting of forestry consultants and a spread between private sector forestry, corporate forestry and government forestry activities. Readers involved in forest management accounted for the main forestry activity (35 per cent) followed by research and planning (20 per cent).

The winner of the draw from survey respondents was Rachel Palmer, Development Officer at Telford Rural Polytechnic. Rachel wins a copy of the 1998 Southern Hemisphere Forest Industry Yearbook, valued at \$540.00. Many thanks to all those people who responded.

Mike Smith, Publisher.