

# Job market success for forestry graduates



*Graduates from the School of Forestry class of 2002 (Photo Yannina Whiteley).*

## Where are the School of Forestry 2002 graduates working?

The previous Journal editor, Hugh Bigsby, noted in his final editorial that as a profession we need to "get out a sustained message that forestry is positive...". Along these lines it is worth reporting the job-market success of the students who completed their studies at the School of Forestry at the end of 2001 and who recently graduated.

A breakdown of the area where the 30 B.For.Sc. graduates are now working:

<b>Job area</b>	
Forest management and planning	7
Harvest management and planning	6
Logistics/Transport despatch	5
Sawmill	1
Market research	1
Forestry consulting	1
Forest inventory	1
Environmental certification	2
GIS application	1
Postgraduate study	5

Of the five students who are doing or planning postgraduate study, two have returned to the University of Canterbury – one to do a Masters in Forestry and one to do a Masters in Engineering Management. One student is doing a Masters in Environmental Management at Lincoln University while the other two are currently looking to study overseas.

Two of the 25 graduates with full-time jobs are working outside the forestry sector – one in environmental certification and one in a GIS application. The employers of the 23 graduates who are working in the forestry sector are split between forestry companies (12 graduates) and companies that provide services to the corporates (11 graduates). Two students are currently working off-shore – one in Singapore and one in Tonga. Another

two students are about to head overseas to commence their O.E. – one is heading off to follow the professional surfing circuit – further evidence, if it is needed, of the multi-talented nature of forestry graduates!

To complete the good news story – what about starting salaries? The University Vice-Chancellors Committee survey of 2001 reported that 80% of the year 2000 graduates were in full time employment with an average starting salary of \$34,840. The results will be even better when the graduates of 2002 are surveyed. Based on anecdotal information to hand, starting salaries for the 2002 graduates were typically in the range of \$37,000 to \$42,000.

It is a similar story for the six University of Canterbury forestry engineering graduates in 2002 – four have positions while two have continued with post-graduate study. The increase in harvest volumes means that the level of roading and harvest planning is increasing. Consequently there were more forest engineering jobs (both with corporate and consultants) than there were graduates.

One of the ironies is that, at a time when industry demand for forestry and forestry engineering graduates is increasing, the number of students is decreasing. Perceptions about forestry as a career have no doubt been influenced by such factors as the Asian crisis and its aftermath, forestry companies' financial results and share prices, together with the CNIFP receivership. The smaller class sizes that are a consequence mean that the needs of industry are unlikely to be met.

Clearly we need to make secondary school students more aware of the diverse and rewarding career prospects that exist for forestry professionals.

**Bruce Manley**