

President's comments

November/whiringa ä rangi 2005

Peter Allan - NZIF secretary

Peter Allan passed away in September after succumbing to melanoma. At our first working meeting in April 2004 he made light of the tests he was undergoing. At his funeral I, and many other NZIF members, found out how rich his life had been and how many lives he had touched.

Leaders come in many forms. There are the "Winston Churchills" who lead from the front and there are the "Peters" who lead by example with the gritty determination to make a difference. Peter found that by holding the pen he was able to motivate and help "steer the ship". His passion for Maori and biculturalism are the best examples I can think of. He wanted the Institute to "walk the talk" and ensure we used our two official languages in our name, *Te Putahi Ngaherehere o Aotearoa*, and everyday communications.

We made Peter a Fellow in a short ceremony a few weeks before he died. Beforehand, Patricia had cleared away Peter's papers so we all could fit into their bedroom. That night I noticed his often referred to Maori dictionary beside his bed. Peter showed me that "paths are made by walking". In his memory I will follow his example and encourage Council to do so as well. Here is one of the many Maori translation websites I found <http://translator.kedri.info/translate.php>.

Support for Forestry

Jim Anderton (ranked 3 in cabinet) is holding the Forestry, Agriculture and Biosecurity portfolios in the new Government's line-up. The combination of these sister portfolios under one Minister will, in my view, be beneficial. Hon Mita Ririnui (Associate Minister of Forestry) spoke ably at our conference awards dinner this year. It's pleasing to see that both spokespeople are continuing with their portfolios.

At the successful NZIF pre-election forestry policy evening in mid-August, Jim Anderton and Greens co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimmons were refreshingly positive about forestry, as were the other political parties. Another strong forestry supporter, National MP Brian Connell, was also supportive. This was a boost for an industry which continues to look for signs that we have found the bottom of the trough.

At the NZ Forest Owners Association industry forum in mid-October, Jeanette Fitzsimmons again acknowledged the non-wood values and benefits of forests. In her addresses she listed peak oil and the sustainability of the land use as two major drivers that will benefit forestry. These benefits include bio-energy, bio-materials (e.g. plastics), carbon sequestration, water quality and quantity, soil conservation, nitrogen offset, biodiversity, environmentally friendly products (e.g. wood, sphagnum moss). This will also be the theme of our NZIF conference in April 2006.

Gender and forestry

In early August, thanks to assistance from the Mavis Davidson bequest, I attended a pre IUFRO congress meeting

on gender and forestry at Lamington National Park near Brisbane. The title of the conference was *Knock on Wood* and was attended by 20 participants from Sweden, Norway, Australia, Germany, Indonesia and New Zealand.

As the papers were presented and discussions took place it became clear to me that New Zealand lacks policies that encourage greater gender balance in forestry. Australia and NZ have an unrecognised gender imbalance which we accept as the norm. In 2003 the ANZSIC code for forestry and mining showed a 12% participation rate for women.

The New Zealand Forest Industries Labour Market Analysis 2005 shows a gender balance of 83.9% male and 16.1% female. This ranged from 30% women in Forest Health and Biosecurity to a low of 9.6% in the contractor workforce.

Gender balance means actually striving for diversity in the workforce. This does not mean to say that the balance needs to be 50:50. Sweden has a target of 40%; we could aim for half of this. It does mean reporting on the basic gender balance statistics above.

In New Zealand even though the participation rates for younger women within training and the industry are increasing their retention rate is not good. Many leave the industry from their mid 30s onwards. We need to encourage these women to stay through pro-gender policies and existing legislation (e.g. family friendly policies and Equal Employment Opportunities).

The Australian and New Zealand participants decided that the best place to start was within our professional organisations, IFA and NZIF. To this end we will work towards a plenary session at the joint ANZIF 2007 conference. Currently we have a draft gender and forestry component in the NZIF business plan. We will develop a business case and action plan.

Other ideas include establishing a mentoring scheme for women and to foster networks (plans are in place for the 2006 NZIF conference) and using the website.

Sustainable Procurement is catching on in NZ

Watch out for a new trend gaining momentum with Central and Local Government and their agencies! It's called sustainable procurement. These organisations have a combined purchasing power of \$3.5 billion per year. They will be asking for products that are better for the environment as well as products with recycled content. The forest industry needs to take note of these trends. They present opportunities for the forest industry. There will also be some downside such as specifying that CCA may not be used in areas where there will be human contact.

More than 40 central government agencies are committing to this policy. This work is being led by the Govt3 team in the Sustainable Industry Group of the Ministry for the Environment. For more information visit the website <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/sustainable-industry/govt3/index.html>
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