

The changing climate of forestry

Presidents comments

Austrian pride in their timber

My final column for 2004 - 2006 comes to you from Fiss, a delightful Austrian village in the Tirols. It is nestled on a plateau at 1436m with the treeline at about 1900m.

Spruce, pine, larch, birch and alders are managed to provide recognised and valued environmental services. The local haus are constructed in wood, which is featured at every opportunity, even down to the ski racks outside the wood/concrete Masner restaurant at 2,400m (see photo).

Environmental services and climate change policy

Our upcoming conference on the non wood values of forestry aims to spell out the environmental services provided by our forests. It's not surprising that there are too many topic areas to squeeze into two days.

One topic area is climate change and it is shaping up to be fiery point of contact between the forest growing industry and government officials. Just this month forestry representatives walked out of a meeting upon hearing that the current forestry climate change policy is still an option under consideration.

This walk out is significant. Early in February Radio NZ rang me for an independent view on what were the 'real' points of contention between the forestry industry and government? Also, did the provision of plantation monitoring information indicate a 'warming' in the relationship' between the two parties?

For the forestry representatives no change in government policy is untenable. It indicates the Government does not acknowledge the environmental services provided by plantation forestry or understand the impact of the deforestation cap.

The Government's pre-Christmas backdown on carbon tax must encourage our industry that with sufficient lobbying changes will result. How is it that the most identifiable and easily monitored industries are targetted when non-point greenhouse emissions slip under the radar?

How can we have a situation where the conversion of large tracts of forest lands to dairying, a net methane and carbon dioxide emitter, carries no penalty for the new intensive landuse?

During the run up to the 2005 election we listened to numerous politicians sing the many praises for forestry. As 2008, the beginning of the first commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol, draws ever closer, time is running out to ensure that the full potential of forestry is recognised.

Our government is not alone internationally in struggling to find the right policy settings for climate change. We will only find it by working in partnership with the forestry industry.

NZIF Climate Change Policy

Thanks to Andrew McEwen, and many Institute members adding to the debate by email, our policy on climate change is taking shape. One area we underestimated was the impact of the deforestation cap. We will also suggest policy



Wood is featured in the construction of this Austrian ski resort restaurant.

initiatives that incentivise new planting.

Thanks to the outgoing council

Finally, my thanks to Council for giving the many voluntary hours it takes to run the NZIF. It has been a pleasure to lead such an enthusiastic team.

Over the last two years our newsletter has gone from strength to strength - thanks to Andrew's amazing capacity to get things done.

Bruce Manley is stepping down as Journal Editor and handing the reigns over to Euan Mason. Bruce, we have appreciated your contribution. You have worked hard to make the journal authoritative and reflect the professionalism of the Institute.

To the outgoing council members, Stephanie Rotorangi, Rob van Rossen and Rob Miller, it has been great working with you. The increasing membership of the Institute is proof of your significant contributions.

Ron O'Reilly has effortlessly taken over from Peter Allan, following his untimely death in September 2005.

It has been a rewarding experience leading the council, so interesting I'm keen to stand again!

I encourage you all to attend our April conference in Wellington. I'm sure it will be a great success. It will provide a very timely forum to debate New Zealand's forest policy.

Jaquetta (Ket) Bradshaw