

Members encouraged to provide input

This is my first comment in the Journal since being elected as NZIF President for 2008/10. The full Council is Hugh Bigsby (Vice President), Howard Moore (Treasurer), James Barton (Secretary) and Councillors Chris Goulding, Bert Hughes, Euan Mason, Murray Parrish, John Schrider and Geoff Thorp.

I acknowledge the work of those from the previous Council who did not stand for re-election and thank them for their contributions while on Council - Ket Bradshaw who completed two terms as President, Ron O'Reilly as Secretary, and Councillors Peter Brown and Angus McPherson. Peter was also the Council appointee to Chair the Registration Board.

The elections also saw Peter Gorman and Don Hammond reappointed to the Registration Board.

Since the election, the new Council has made two appointments - John Schrider is the Council representative to chair the Registration Board and Sally Haddon has been co-opted as a student representative on the Council, a position she also held in the outgoing Council.

I encourage all members to contact those on Council about issues that you believe are important, suggestions for improving NZIF, or just to keep in touch. While the Council will always act in the way it thinks best for the Institute, it

is up to individual members to make sure that the Council knows what they think.

The AGM and conference in Palmerston North were very successful - good speakers, big attendance at all events, plenty of talk and discussion and great weather for the field trip. During the four days, a number of important NZIF awards and presentations were made: Morgan Williams, formerly Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment was elected an NZIF honorary member; Chris Goulding and I were elected as NZIF Fellows; the Kirk Horn Flask was awarded posthumously to Leith Knowles, the presentation being made at the dinner to Leith's widow Barbara; Kit Richards is the NZIF 2008 Forester of the Year; Stephen Pawson is the recipient of the Balneaves Travel Award; Amanda Farrell and Craig Brown received NZIF undergraduate scholarships and the prize for the best student poster at the conference went to Alwyn Williams.

The AGM approved, with a few alterations, the substantial motion to amend the Institute's Articles of Association. The Council is now implementing the changes, a process that will take some months. I believe that these changes will strengthen the Institute as a professional body and will provide a good basis for the challenges and opportunities of the next few years.

Andrew McEwen

Peter Brown opinion continued...

If you have ever done any work with seismologists or volcanologists, you will know that their whole professional career is centred on studying, assessing, analysing and trying to predict when a disaster will strike. There is nothing they like better than to talk about "When the big one comes" and they can be professional gloom and doom merchants. But at least they have some factual information on which they base their gloomy scenarios. They do not ignore facts and are keen to have their hypotheses challenged and tested by others, the result being of course a better hypothesis to test and perhaps a reasonably sound theory to promulgate.

Not so the Climate Change Believers. They seem unable to accept any data that counteracts their beliefs - as set out by their godhead, the IPCC. If all you closet sceptics - yes I know you are out there - want to have a look at just some of the data that supports and forms the basis of a petition on the subject that has been signed by over nineteen thousand American PhDs and others with tertiary qualifications, go to <http://www.oism.org/pproject/s33p36.htm>. So if my motivation is a desire to buck a trend, so be it. I am in very good - and very crowded - company.

When the mindless rabble chooses one path, I do not just choose the other. But I do instinctively look at both paths and decide which one looks to be the better path to follow based on the available information. I certainly do

not just follow the mindless rabble because of the path that they have chosen, as Piers seems to want us all to do. And is Piers saying that those who are Climate Change Believers are in fact mindless rabble? It certainly sounds like it so at last I may have found something on which, sadly, we may be in agreement!

But because many of these Believers are intelligent knowledgeable people for whom I have great respect, I remain puzzled. What has happened to their enquiring minds? Surely they do not believe the simplistic equation: The herd is always right. To follow Piers' approach I have to think of them as lemmings - with an ingrained desire to follow the mass in spite of the fact that they have been given the evidence that there is a cliff ahead from which they will fall to their deaths into the sea.

It is a pity that this issue is too serious for mankind to indulge such mindless behaviour. The cost in environmental and financial terms of trying to fight climate change has potential to seriously disrupt the world to the detriment of many. Perhaps the names of all the Climate Change Believers should be engraved on a flagstone in Cathedral Square, Christchurch so that future generations can travel there from warmer climes, try to melt or chip the ice away and marvel ...