

Research flair

Students from Waiariki Institute of Technology show flair in research presented at the annual NZ Institute of Forestry conference.

For the first time, four students from Waiariki Institute of Technology presented findings from their research during a formal poster session at the NZIF annual conference. Their research focused on the practical use of lasers in modern forest management - from the air or on the ground - and drew considerable interest during the formal poster evening at "the Tree house" on Wednesday as well as throughout the conference coffee-breaks.

Two students - Hayden Yates and Chris Carter - are in their 1st year of the newly redeveloped Diploma of Forest Management and used an opportunity to examine the accuracy of airborne lasers (LiDAR) to gain experience in research and project management that will stand them in good stead when they attempt their Forest Industry/Research Project course in 2011. The other two students



The poster evening at the NZIF Conference, with NZIF President Andrew McEwen (left) and Waiariki School Director Jeremy Christmas (right).

- Tarna Lasini and Simon Honour - are in the final year of their Forestry Diploma and used their opportunity to examine a practical operational issue (whether ground-based lasers are

faster or more useful than alternatives for plot measurements). Presenting the research as posters at the NZIF Conference allowed these students to interact with those of the profession they anticipate joining in the near future. The posters also allowed these same professionals to see the quality of work that polytechnic students produce and the potential to get this calibre of students to answer some operational research of interest as part of their Diploma training.

With the success this year, we are expecting even greater student participation in the 2011 Conference. The School Director - Jeremy Christmas - agreed to fund attendance by any of the Diploma students to the next NZIF Conference (in Auckland) if they also "go the extra mile" and develop a Research Poster. The Chair of Forestry - Cris Brack - will continue to work with the students to enhance their ability to engage in meaningful operational research, and also welcomes interaction with any of the industry who would like to become engaged with these students and/or make suggestions about topics for the Forest Industry/Research Project course.



The field trip - whole-tree logging in Kaingaroa.