

Trevor Best

I have two memories pertinent to this editorial. One is that the starting point of all adventures is to understand the lay of the land upon which the adventure will take place. That probably came from Lord Baden Powell, founder of the Scout Movement. The second is that the development of any management plan starts with understanding what it is that is being managed. There are no prizes for guessing where that comes from. For foresters, it is one of those things done without thinking. It's a given. So, my intention with this first editorial is to take a moment to reflect on the purpose of a professional journal, introduce the taonga to be found within this edition, and finish with a plea for more of the same.

First, let me start by thanking the previous custodian, Chris Goulding, and the rest of the editorial team (Helen and Jenny). I came into this edition after the hard work had been done. A review of the last five volumes of the Journal also makes it apparent that Chris has set a high standard. For that we owe him our gratitude and the Last Word. Although, hopefully, not the last time heard.

What then, is the purpose of this Journal? In Volume 57(3), our current President (David Evison) noted the purpose 'as providing a permanent record of matters of significance to the membership and the profession of forestry in New Zealand.' Achieving this meant focusing on documenting and celebrating the significant achievements of the profession and Institute members, and providing a record of the working and thinking of researchers and practitioners contributing to the profession's general body of knowledge. Specialised knowledge lies at the heart of any profession. The Australian Council of Professions includes in its definition of profession the acceptance by the community of special knowledge and skills derived from research, education and training. The Journal, then, is the record of one part of the social contract that foresters have with the community in negotiating the right to be considered professionals. Its existence and the standards it has set is a reason that we can stand in front of a layperson, an audience, or a potential employer or client and confidently state: 'Trust me, I'm a forester.'

The second part of any claim to be a trusted professional is the ethical standards that the profession's members are willing to hold themselves

to and the discipline the collective demonstrates in protecting those standards. In her presentation at the recent ANZIF conference, Penny Clark-Hall noted that for the profession to have a social licence to operate the community had to trust that it will 'behave in a legitimate, accountable and socially and environmentally acceptable way.' Ms Clark-Hall pointed to credibility, legitimacy, transparency and respect as critical qualities that influence the negotiation of that licence with the community. Here, too, the Journal has a role to play by recording and publishing the evidence upon which practice is based and the methods by which that evidence is established. Supporting the building of that social licence has clearly been something of a priority for editors and the editorial committee over the last decade. Apart from being the subject of two conferences, topics directly impacting on that social licence have been the theme of 13 editorials (including five on the topic of social licence itself) and 96 different contributions to the Journal. With your help as contributors I am hoping that work will continue.

Social licence could also be considered the theme for this edition. Each of the contributions can claim to be 'community facing'. They are all on topics that sit at the intersection between foresters and community stakeholders. Murray Dudfield and his colleagues offer a critical review of the Pigeon Valley Fire using case studies of previous fires to support their thoughts. Greg Steward makes good on the promise made in Volume 62(2) to continue to extract valuable information (and support the case for indigenous species as a source of valuable diversification) from the work on indigenous forest management started by the NZFS. Bruce Manley and his colleagues continue their critical review of the country's plantation forest spatial database's regional capture of small-scale forests. Each of these papers represents a body of work and knowledge that has been developed over significant periods of time and adds to the profession's credibility and legitimacy.

Finally, the only appropriate way for a suitably daunted and humbled editor to end is to make a plea for more contributions. To ensure the Journal continues to capture the full extent of the challenges faced, the lessons learnt, and the knowledge built in the development of our professional practice, I will happily chat about topics and outlines. Feel free to contact me.



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