

The view from the boundary

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Last week I had the good fortune to visit various forests in Te Tai Rawhiti. To a forester, a visit to the forestry conurbation that is Tauwhareparae, inland from Tolaga Bay, is to pay witness to a marvel. The natural productivity of the landscape has produced radiata pine forests that have good form and high volumes. A small army of people travel up the road each day to do the work that will provide for their families and put money in their communities (Gisborne and Tolaga Bay). The engineering systems used to harvest wood from these long, steep, broken slopes are way beyond what was originally envisaged when the forests were planted. Eastland Port is now the second largest log exporter in the country, with capacity for three million tonnes per year and an intention to grow that to five million. What has happened within the forest boundary stands as a testament to the skill and capability of generations of kiwi foresters and engineers. The act of faith represented by greenfields afforestation in the 1960s and 1970s has been largely confirmed and rewarded.

However, when driving up State Highway 2 to Tolaga Bay, and then into Tauwhareparae via the road with the same name, you could be forgiven for not having got that part of the story. As you dodge the many logging trucks going up the road, you will see (amongst the pastured roadsides and gamboling peacocks) billboards proclaiming the idea that rural landscapes are for kiwi's, people and birds, not wall-to-wall wood, as if the two are somehow opposite and mutually exclusive within the landscape. If for some reason you decide to do that drive at 2.30 am in the morning, you will not only be dodging logging trucks heading off for their first load, you will be amongst the loader operators driving up from Gisborne to get there before them. The further along the Tauwhareparae Road you travel the greater the consequence to the road itself. Bridges are damaged, some parts are difficult to traverse due to slips, and council roading crews are doing major repairs and maintenance. If you live and farm alongside those roads some of the values that drew you there may well be lost. The vendor at the recently sold Mangaheia Station, located alongside Tauwhareparae, cited trucks and community loss as a reason not to sell the 2,400 ha to forestry interests. The community expressed their gratitude and relief. Few forces are as virulent as shared grief. Empathy provides a pathway that triggers fear in those who could be similarly affected, more so if the

view you used to enjoy over the beach is periodically covered in slash.

Despite all the political rhetoric surrounding the issue, this seems to me to be what the current forestry vs farming stoush is about. The costs being borne outside the forest boundary are socialised, while the benefits are largely returned to those invested in what goes on within the boundary. Everyone's perspective is dictated by where they sit in the landscape relative to that forest boundary. It is a reminder that landscapes are imbued with meaning by those who go about their life's work of building their identity in that place. People are at the heart of a landscape, and if foresters want forests to be part of that landscape we must find a way to engage with those people. If we cannot find a way to engage with the community then regulators stand ready to act.

With this very public fight going on around the profession at the moment, it is a good time to continue our review of the work Scion has been doing by using data-driven evidence as the basis for a sustainable afforestation strategy for the Hawke's Bay Regional Investment Company and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council. That strategy is aimed at using the potential of the land to produce a commercial forestry return, while reducing soil erosion alongside a range of other environmental benefits. Improving the community's social, environmental and economic well-being is the outcome sought by the stakeholders. In the last edition of this Journal, the subject matter was focused on the potential sites, species and non-wood benefits and the biomass and processing opportunities. In this edition, the papers focus on what it will take to convince existing landowners to convert part of their land to plantation forests.

We are also fortunate to have contributions from other authors that fit with the theme of right tree, right place, for the right purpose. Steve Ulrich provides a review of the impacts of harvesting operations in another challenging landscape, the Marlborough Sounds and the Pelorus Catchment. Ian Page has completed an interesting case study of his own experience logging small-scale forest blocks. Chris Perley finishes things off with *The Last Word* on a more integrated approach to development within landscapes. I hope you find something in the edition that is both enjoyable and thought provoking.



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