

Editorial

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Traditionally, the November issue is the conference edition. While COVID-19 might have put paid to this event this year, we can still reflect on the key messages those within the conference committee were looking to emphasise in what will now be next year's conference. The idea behind the Masterton conference was to use the passion and engagement we all have in the sector to exhibit some of that pride in what we do. No-one captures this better than loggers. In my day job I spend a bit of time listening to loggers talk about their work and what it means to them. Evident in every conversation is a love for logging and pride in what they can do in the most difficult of circumstances. It reflects something that is consistent in the profession and sector – the people who spend considerable amounts of time beavering away on their own contribution to the advancement of the forest sector generally do so because they love the environment, the people, and the work.

However, as has been the subject of previous conferences and journal papers, that enthusiasm is not necessarily shared by some of our other stakeholders. The aim of the conference was (and now is) to start addressing the differences that arise within rural communities when forestry activity increases. In this issue, Michelle Harnett and Tim Payn address how communication works in the era of social media and what this means for the forest industry. Differences in viewpoints over the benefits of afforestation have, like many other differences in perspectives, become distorted by vested interests using the power of social media to coerce. The authors highlight the benefit of changing the narrative to one of forests delivering a range of ecosystem benefits while introducing some new tools for assisting the process. In introducing the work Scion has done in helping the NZFOA put together evidence promoting the benefits of afforestation beyond the economic, they also put it back on us to change perceptions through kitchen table discussions and personalising the message. No more small talk at parties or hiding in the kitchen.

Of course, none of that will matter if the sector does not prove itself capable of being trusted to manage challenging landscapes at scale. Steve Ulrich and Sean Handley, in the second paper in their ongoing look at the impacts of afforestation on the benthic environment in the Marlborough Sounds, review the history of afforestation within that landscape. They highlight how once planting reaches a certain critical

scale within a catchment, the window of vulnerability to erosion created by clear felling is always open somewhere in that catchment. Forestry is no longer a minor player in that landscape and must assume the responsibility that goes with that position.

How the Government intends to manage the potential effects of land use through the freshwater reforms, proposed national direction for indigenous biodiversity, and the proposed overhaul of the Resource Management Act (1991) is outlined by Chris Fowler and Meg Buddle. Having an impact on these proposals will be something of a test of how politicians and their constituents see the relative benefits and costs of afforestation. It will be a pity if failure to manage the real and perceived negative impacts of 20–25% of a rotation eventually outweigh the real gains made over the other 75–80%.

Fortunately, as a profession we do have some history of regulating our own activities and acting in pursuit of lofty goals. Bruce Manley presents the findings of the annual survey of valuation assumptions and practices, while Bill Libby has submitted a reprint of a presentation to the 2016 Redwood Symposium held in Eureka, California. In this op-ed, he argues for the establishment of coast redwood and giant sequoia 'colonies', to ensure the protection of these species from the changes likely to their natural range as a result of increased climate volatility. Given the recent elevation of the current fires in California to the newly created classification of 'gigafire', Bill was right to be concerned. Finally, as a reminder of where the industry has come from there is a photo history essay from Scion's archives and obituaries for two legends of our own: the late Tony Beveridge and Richard Woollons.

Pride in what we do well, honesty and transparency about what is not done well, and enthusiasm for best practice are at the core of the profession's (and sector's) sustainability. Another consistent theme from the loggers is the role an influential person has in their choice of work and getting the all-important first job. People generally arrive in forestry through someone else. If the sector is to meet its potential contribution to the nation, then the people already here must be able to speak with enthusiasm and have a belief in the value of what they do. We as a journal and an Institute can support that by providing space to celebrate where we have been, where we are now, and where we could go.



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