

Last word

David Evison

Economic commentators (e.g. Giles Beckford on Radio New Zealand) have been suggesting that as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic there is an opportunity to shape a different economic future, where we are less dependent on dairy, tourism and immigration. The latter two of these have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and that doesn't look like changing any time soon.

Greater domestic use of timber can contribute to reshaping and diversifying the New Zealand economy and will mitigate GHG emissions at the same time. The potential to use wood in a wider range of construction projects has been proven by New Zealand timber engineers. Multi-storey buildings, which have traditionally been built out of steel and concrete in this country, have been designed and built using a range of engineered timber products, particularly laminated veneer lumber (LVL), glu-lam and cross-laminated timber panels (CLT).

CLT panels can be used in a number of applications where tilt-slab concrete panels are currently used. Tilt-slab concrete panels are climate-unfriendly and weigh about four times as much as the equivalent timber panel. CLT has been used recently to build rest homes, student accommodation, community centres, multi-unit housing, university buildings, commercial and office buildings, and social venues in New Zealand. But a significant proportion of the CLT used in these buildings is imported, mostly from Europe, and there is currently no domestic supplier of this product in New Zealand.

This situation is slowing the adoption of timber engineering technology in New Zealand. Why are local suppliers important? When developers are considering what materials to use, and when lenders are considering whether or not to fund these projects, they will favour products with multiple local suppliers because



Erection of CLT panels, Hornby Club site, 10 September 2019



Hornby Club, 28 September 2020

this minimises the risk of supply disruption. Also, of course, radiata pine is an excellent material from which to make CLT, and local supply also provides greater opportunities for prefabrication.

We urgently need to invest more in local processing capacity. Red Stag are in the process of building a CLT plant in Rotorua, but we need more than one supplier to meet New Zealand's needs (and potentially those of Australia and other countries).



Appeal for Funds



Please help us to help NZ Forestry?

The NZIF Foundation was established in 2011 to support forestry education, research and training through the provision of grants, scholarships and prizes, promoting the acquisition, development and dissemination of forestry-related knowledge and information, and other activities.

The Foundation's capital has come from donations by the NZ Institute of Forestry and NZIF members. With this, the Board has been able to offer three student scholarships and a travel award each year. It has also offered prizes for student poster competitions at NZIF conferences.

To make a real difference to New Zealand forestry, including being able to offer more and bigger scholarships and grants, the Board needs to grow the Foundation's funds. Consequently it is appealing for donations, large and small, from individuals, companies and organisations.

The Board will consider donations tagged for a specific purpose that meets the charitable requirements of the trust deed. A recent example has seen funds raised to create an award in memory of Jon Dey who was known to many in New Zealand forestry. Donations for that award are still being sought.

The Foundation is a registered charity (CC47691) and donations to it are eligible for tax credits.

To make a donation, to discuss proposals for a targeted award or for further information, please email foundation@nzif.org.nz or phone +64 4 974 8421.



Make a donation today.

