

References

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institute news

Forests, boundaries and the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme

President's comment

The boundary around forestry has changed forever with the recognition that our climate is changing and the advent of the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme. We have talked for years about recognising the environmental benefits of forestry and that time of recognition is now upon us. We have also talked about sustainability, initially from a sustainable wood supply viewpoint and then moving onto sustainability in social, environmental and economic terms.



It has been fascinating to see environmental issues move from the side to centre stage over the last year as the government has positioned New Zealand to become a carbon neutral country followed closely by their intention to implement the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme.

The NZIF has asked for flexibility around land use and equitable treatment for all land users. In doing so the forest growing industry has been unwittingly used by government to "fight" the agricultural lobby because we have pointed the finger at our agricultural industry and said if "we" have to then "they" must too. This is the same group of people, who like foresters, are the custodians of soil and water - resources we are increasingly realising are our most precious resources and ones that cannot be created by technology.

At this time of considerable change the Institute needs to be flexible and adjust to the "new forestry" and to accept that what is and what is not forestry is going to be much more difficult to define. In my view there is no need to define it because our objective must be to be the best custodians we can be of our precious resources, including carbon.

As a person whose core business is sustainability I have decided that I need to put my energies into working with businesses and households to reduce our emissions and use resources more efficiently. At this stage I believe this is more important than planting trees to "pay for our sins" because emissions continue daily whereas carbon can only be sequestered once.

I strongly believe all land users must, and eventually will have to, work together. I find the "us" and "them" approach unconstructive and dislike the thought that we are being used by government. In the future I'd like to play a key role in leading a team with an inclusive approach for all land based industries. By this I mean taking a more intuitive and feminine approach to working through the issues.

We need more women to take leadership roles within our industry. Forestry has a gender imbalance and it will remain this way for some time to come. Even though we're training many young women their numbers decrease as their career develops.

As the outgoing first elected female president I encourage other women in the organisation to make a difference by standing for the NZIF council and helping to shape our organisation. The NZIF will need a flexible structure that is inclusive of the many different people who will be involved in the "new forestry".

Kia kaha, kia ora
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 President
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 Te Putahi Ngaherehere o Aotearoa