

Changes to the New Zealand Journal of Forestry

David Evison

This issue of the *New Zealand Journal of Forestry* is the first to be produced by Bateson Publishing Limited, now responsible for editing, printing and distribution. I would like to welcome Julian Bateson and his team.

Many thanks are due to Piers Maclaren and Mike Smith for their excellent work in producing the Journal up to the August issue this year. Piers' writings in the Journal have provoked a great deal of thought over a large number of years, and we hope to see some more of his contributions, as time permits. Mike Smith had been responsible for laying out, printing and distributing the Journal since 1999. Our thanks are due to Mike for his diligence and commitment to producing the Journal over this long period.

As noted recently in the NZIF newsletter, we have been busy in other areas, which should help us to continue to improve the Journal.

The purpose of the Journal

The overall purpose of the Journal is to provide a permanent record of matters of significance to the membership and the profession of forestry in New Zealand. This is in contrast to the Newsletter, which is the place for more immediate and ephemeral information. The Journal is the flagship for the organisation, and a significant contribution by the NZIF, both in terms of its cost and the effect it can have on the membership.

We believe we should focus it on –

- Documenting and honouring the significant achievements of the profession and our members
- Providing a record of information of general significance to the profession, information which may be from professionals, researchers or others who have a contribution to make. It will also include material from our annual conference.
- Publicising significant information from forestry educational institutions and from the Council itself.

We have changed the rules

The editor of the Journal does not need to sit on Council. This was done to open up the possibility of a non-member being editor of the Journal. The change has also meant that there needs to be another means of communication between the Council and the editor. That is now through myself, as convenor of the Publications Committee.

Editorial Committee

We have also re-constituted the Editorial Committee, and clarified the process for peer review of papers, where this is appropriate. Over the past year we

have used the Editorial Committee to –

- Develop a rolling one-year plan for Journal themes
- Identify and contact appropriate contributors for each theme
- Identify referees and review referees' comments
- Generally support the editor in producing a high quality and interesting Journal.

A significant cost

We recognise that the Journal is a significant cost for the NZIF. The work we have done to date has been focused on the quality and content of the Journal. Our next task will be to look at costs. We already provide online versions of all past Journal articles, accessible from our website. The distribution of the Journal via post is costly and we could send an electronic version to those members who would prefer it.

With forestry covering such a wide range of topics it is too much to expect that the entire content of every Journal will be of interest to all members, but we will do our best. The most lively debates in this area recently have been around the most appropriate mix of numbers and words in the contributed papers, and the relevance of research papers to the readership.

The current thinking on both of these is –

Words versus numbers

We will focus mainly on the quality of the papers submitted. There is a quantitative dimension to forestry which is inescapable, so data and analysis of data should be expected in some papers. We require papers to be well written, and expect the significance of any analysis to be clearly explained.

We also encourage papers that do not involve data or quantitative analysis. Again, significance and relevance will be the main criteria that guide our decisions on acceptability.

Research papers

The main criterion here should be relevance. Forestry is a profession that relies on, and fosters, experimental science. Contributions from the research community that have a clear relevance to the profession are welcomed.

Overall

James Treadwell has taken on responsibility for the Newsletter, and Chris Goulding for the website. Feedback from members on how we can improve the quality and relevance of all of our publications would be appreciated.