

NZIF Newsletter 2017-08 (8 May 2017)

President's Column



Albert Einstein is reputed to have described madness as repeatedly doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome.

The Government is committed to dramatically reducing the nations greenhouse gasses and decoupling the economy from its reliance on fossil fuels. The Government is committed to clean water and an open economy benefiting from NZ's clean green image. Statute has required resource users to 'internalise the environmental externalisations of resource use' (polluter pays) since before 1991.

The chief executive of MFE, Vicky Robertson, told The Local Government & Environment Select Committee climate change is "perhaps the global issue of our time", reflecting a similar sentiment expressed by the PCE a few years ago, albeit without the qualification 'perhaps'. Vicky informed the same committee increasing the number of trees in New Zealand would help in meeting the emissions target, as trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The committee expressed its pleasure "...that the ministry is working to encourage more tree planting in New Zealand."

Which got me thinking.

Is 'working to encourage' something the same as planting more trees and if so why do NZ afforestation rates continue at historically low levels? Why is it necessary to have legislated via the Climate Change Response 2008 to financially penalise anyone looking to remove forests planted before 1990? Could "working to encourage" tree planting extend to penalising landowners whose non-forestry land uses are causing declines in water quality, as evidenced by the flood (excuse the pun) of independent reports which catalogue the results of regional councils regulation of the effects of pastoral land use? Is the regulatory redistribution of the climate change costs of agriculture onto the rest of the economy 'working to encourage' farmers to plant trees?

The [linked article](#) suggests "working to encourage" doesn't extend to tackling the elephant in the roomthe unwillingness, or inability, of Regional Councils to apply consistent rules.

Hopefully MFE will prove me wrong.

Regards

James Treadwell

Institute News

NZIF Conference 2017

The 2017 NZIF conference “ **The Future of the NZ Forestry Sector**” and AGM will be held at the Novotel Lakeside, Rotorua between the **3rd and the 6th September 2017**. Please add this date to your diaries now!

At the 2017 annual conference we invite you to join us to hear from experts and industry leaders and take a glimpse at the future of the forest sector. The conference will focus on connected topics:

- Developing a vibrant, profitable and sustainable sector;
- Meeting the diverse demands placed upon us by society;
- Public relations and human factors;
- Māori leadership within the sector;
- Political perspectives;
- Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce.

If you are interested in sponsoring the NZIF Conference or would like to book a Trade Stand please contact our President, [James Treadwell](#).

Members Voice

I read with interest your recent column in the NZIF Newsletter about organisations calling for large forest establishment and the need for the forestry sector to be prepared to meet this challenge. As you know, Adderley Head has worked with the sector for several years helping to resolve a range of RMA regulatory and compliance issues. We thought you might be interested in our views about the challenge facing the sector regarding the anticipated increase in plantings discussed in your column. In terms of rising to that challenge, we consider it's important that NZIF members understand the RMA requirements that will affect the ability of the sector to undertake a change in land use to facilitate new plantings

Currently plantation forestry activities are regulated under the RMA through various regional and district plans. However, you will be aware that the RMA regulatory framework governing forestry is soon to change with the introduction of the NES for Plantation Forestry (the NES). This new framework will solve some issues for the sector and will create some new issues.

The NES will introduce a suite of rules specific to the forestry sector that will apply throughout the country, with some obvious benefits for the sector in terms of consistency, efficiency and reduced transaction costs. Even so, the NES is likely to contain fairly stringent rules dealing with range of activities that foresters will need to understand. Proposed new forests will need to either comply with these rules or obtain resource consent if they are to proceed under the NES. In some cases it may not be possible to achieve compliance – for example wilding tree spread rules may preclude new plantings in some locations.

Although the scope of the NES is likely to encompass most day-to-day forestry activities, it's important for the sector to understand that some activities will sit outside the NES and continue to be regulated by local authorities under district and regional plans. In addition, the NES will specify when local authority rules can be more stringent than the NES rules. Obvious examples where this is likely to occur include local rules regarding water quality and water quantity, protection of outstanding landscapes and significant natural areas, and management of special or sensitive environments where afforestation is likely to cause significant environmental effects. So these rules will continue to be relevant and the sector will need to be aware of them and also be vigilant when these plans are reviewed so that they don't unduly regulate existing forests and especially potential for new forests.

Further, the introduction of the NES is a significant change which will take some time to bed down. Although the document has been drafted by MPI, local authorities will have responsibility for its day-to-day implementation. This presents a fairly significant challenge for local authorities and there is potential for some initial uncertainty around interpretation of key terms within the NES itself and also around the relationship between NES and district/regional rules. Hopefully this will issue will be mitigated by MPI guidance notes, roadshows and the like however it remains something to be aware of especially if foresters are considering planting new forests.

Chris Fowler

[In the News](#)

Myrtle Rust response underway with MPI, see attached Talking Points for Myrtle rust detection in Kerikeri [Click here for Talking Points](#)

Simpson Grierson

Forestry News Update

Negotiations begin for upgraded Free Trade Agreement

The first round of negotiations over the upgraded Free Trade Agreement (**FTA**) between China and New Zealand were held in Beijing over 25-27 April. The upgrade is an opportunity to modernise the FTA by reviewing its current operation, including a particular focus on issues like non-tariff barriers to trade. Companies currently trading with China or seeking to do so in the future are being encouraged to make submit their views to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. [Link to article](#)

Productivity Commission to consider how NZ can meet carbon promise

The Productivity Commission has been instructed to consider ways in which New Zealand can cut emissions and shift to a low-carbon economy. The government is seeking an analysis of how emissions can be reduced in a cost-effective manner to meeting its 2030 emissions reduction target – being 30% below 2005 levels. The Emissions Trading Scheme is also under review. [Link to article](#)

Worksafe calls for culture change

Worksafe New Zealand is again calling for a change in the health and safety culture of New Zealand workplaces, following seven deaths in a fortnight in April. While the statistics are worrying, Worksafe chief executive Nicole Rosie praised the forestry sector for a dramatic downward trend, fostered by industry-led initiatives. Worksafe has made it clear that while the law change has been effective, it is up to individual businesses to commit to improving health and safety culture. [Link to article](#)

MFE freshwater report released

Last month, the Ministry for the Environment released *Our fresh water 2017*, a report on freshwater that will be used to track the change in freshwater quality over time. The report noted that pressures from agricultural and urban areas is placing freshwater resources under strain, and in particular from increased use of fertilisers, accelerated erosion from forestry and infrastructure development. [Link to article](#)

New report highlights business case for native forest

A report released by Motu Economic and Public Policy Research, commissioned by Air New Zealand, suggests that establishing native forests is both environmentally and economically effective in decreasing risks for companies with high emissions. The paper also considered alternative options of offsetting emissions, such as soil carbon, marine carbon and carbon capture and storage. [Link to article](#)

Storms hinder log supply

New Zealand's recent cyclones have caused significant problems for New Zealand's log supply by damaging trees, slowing production rates and interrupting sea freight. The East Coast and Hawke's Bay have been most significantly affected. [Link to article](#)

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