

In the newsletter of 19 October 2020, Howard Moore commented on the motion that James Treadwell and I presented to the AGM, proposing that the size of the NZIF Council be reduced from 10 members to seven. At the 2018 AGM in Nelson, we presented a similar motion, but it failed. This year it was closer to achieving the necessary 2/3 majority but was still lost. To correct one aspect of Howard's item, we proposed a reduction from a Council of ten, made up of six Councillors, President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary to a Council of seven (President and six Councillors). The council would then elect one of their members as Vice-President, while treasurer and secretarial duties could be carried out by paid staff or by co-opting a willing member. One of the issues these changes would address is that the positions of Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer rarely attract nominations other than the outgoing Council putting one person forward for each post. So the outgoing Council effectively appoints those positions rather than them being elected. The 2018 AGM did agree to one change – instead of the Council appointing one of the Council to chair the Registration Board (which is an increasingly important position) the Council now appoints a suitable person who does not even need to be an NZIF member. This effectively freed up one council member. This year there were no nominations for secretary and the duties are being carried out by the administrator. So the proposed change was not much different from the current situation.

The motion also took into account the ability (under the current rules) for the Council to co-opt one or more people to be non-voting members of Council. This is effectively being done with Adrian Loo from Future Foresters being a co-opted member of the Council. The Registration Board has also used its powers to co-opt Elley Mytton to the Board. In both cases, one reason for the co-option is to create opportunity for younger members of NZIF to experience and contribute to governance. NZIF Rules also allow Council to establish committees and/or working parties for specific purposes, which can take some of the pressure off the Council. Further opportunities for relieving Council workload arise from the ability, in the NZIF rules, to establish special interest groups and local sections.

If Council used all the avenues available to it and was able to find members willing to be active on committees, special interest groups, etc., it would have access to a much broader range of expertise than anything it might lose through a reduction in elected members. The Council itself (which could probably be even smaller than the seven we proposed), would be able to focus on governance of NZIF, rather than being expected (by many members) to be both the governance body and undertake all the other activities some members appear to believe is part of the role of the elected members.

Andrew McEwen

Registered Forester