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New Zealand Institute of Forestry
Te Pūtahi Ngāherehere o Aotearoa Incorporated

BRIEFING


FOR THE INCOMING FOREST MINISTER

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New Zealand Institute of Forestry
Te Pūtahi Ngāherehere o Aotearoa Incorporated

This briefing provides an overview to the incoming Minister from The New Zealand Institute of Forestry.


The briefing includes an overview on:

- The current state of our forests (both exotic and native).
- Strategic Opportunities and Challenges for our forests and forestry.
- Matters which require urgent Ministerial attention.



This briefing should be read in conjunction with the Forest Pan Sector BIM. NZIF is fully supportive of the Pan Sector BIM, however we have additional points which are outside the Pan Sector remit. Rather than repeat that document this brief will only cover additional points which NZIF feel are important.

NZIF strongly believes there is a need for a National Forest Policy which covers all forests and is intergenerational.



The New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) first met in 1927 and was incorporated in 1929. It has approximately 900 members who are individual professionals in forestry. The NZIF's objects are to advance the profession of forestry in New Zealand and to be an independent advocate for forestry.

The NZIF members are concerned with the professional management of all forests, plantation, indigenous, conservation, protection and commercial. They can be found in forestry companies, consulting businesses, research institutes, educational facilities, government departments, local authorities and providers of specialist services, including providing advice on the ETS, the NES, establishment (native and exotic), marketing, silviculture, sustainable land use, wood processing and all other areas of the forest sector.

The NZIF is committed to serving the practice of forestry and the wider community through education,

accountability and its code of ethics and performance standards. It fulfils a quality assurance role, setting the benchmark for professionalism and the quality of advice and practice by which members and others in the profession are measured.

The NZIF provides independent policy input on behalf of its members when required.

The NZIF supports the development of its members through an Annual Conference including targeted professional development courses, an active network of local sections, a fortnightly newsletter, a quarterly journal and a Forestry Handbook. The NZIF also maintains working parties and special interest groups in areas such as the Forest Valuation, Carbon Forestry, Future Foresters and Fire. NZIF also aligns with similar professional bodies internationally to foster the exchange of ideas and information on professional forest management.





The NZIF maintain a registration scheme for those qualified and experienced forestry professionals providing professional forestry advisory services. The requirements for registration are the most demanding of any NZIF membership category, including a requirement to participate in professional development and to make an annual declaration concerning professional indemnity insurance and compliance with the Code of Ethics and the Rules of the Institute. Registered Members are also subject to a formal professional review every five years.

The NZIF's Registration Scheme has been in place since 1966. In 2017 the NZIF was successful in an application for Registered Members to be exempted from the Real Estate Agents Act (2008), the first organisation to get such an exemption. The Real Estate Agents (Exemptions) Regulations (2017) came into effect on 1 November 2017.

It enables Registered Members to undertake real estate transactions involving forests provided certain conditions are met. It should be noted Registered Members provide a wide range of services specific to an individual's professional competencies so only a proportion of Registered Members utilise the functionality the Real Estate Agents (Exemptions) Regulations (2017) provide. As part of its responsibility under The Real Estate Agents (Exemptions) Regulations (2017) the Registration Board of the NZIF provides an Annual Report to the Ministry of Justice, and NZIF is required to gain the approval of the Ministry of Justice prior to implementing any changes to the Rules of the NZIF.



BRIEFING FOR THE



INCOMING FOREST MINISTER

NZIF would like to see this Government:

- Forming and finalising a National Forest Policy.
- Encourage the planting of more native and exotic forests.
- Stabilising the constant change in policy settings around the ETS.
- Recognise the importance of Professional forest advice and the role NZIF plays in this.
- Recognising the role forests play in population health and well being, in biodiversity, in meeting carbon goals and economically.



BRIEFING FOR THE



INCOMING FOREST MINISTER



NZIF advocates for all forests, native, plantation, woodlot and urban. NZIF currently believes all our forests are under attack.

Native forests are generally of deteriorating health as a result of lack of funding, poor pest management, changing climate and introduction of pathogens.

Plantations and woodlots provide fibre to the world, however recently investment in these forests has paused as a result of mixed policy messages, increasing regulation and fees, and a lack of clear direction of the future of forestry within Aotearoa.

Urban forests have the ability to provide a useful tool in our fight against climate change as well as provide numerous health benefits to our urban dwellers. However these forests are rarely thought about and there is no national plan to establish and grow these forests.



- The development of a National Forest Policy by 2026.
- A minimum of 300,000 hectares of new native forest established and growing well by 2040.
- An average of 25,000 hectares of new exotic forest planted each year between now and 2035.
- The development of an urban forest plan for all of NZ by 2026.
- 1000 professional foresters registered by 2026.
- Forests and forestry is the most trusted of all land users by 2030.





OPPORTUNITIES

Forests role in fighting climate change and meeting our international obligations.

Our native forests are at a tipping point and could well become carbon emitters. This is in general due to introduced pests destroying the natural growth of these forests. The need for a well financed national pest plan cannot be over stated. Without our forests we will have no home for our native fauna.

Our exotic forests fix carbon at a rate far faster than native, and the Climate Change Commission is clear in its advice, more exotic forest is required to significantly increase the size of the urgently required plantation carbon sink and to smooth the estate age profile to support the permanency of the sink and the required bio-circular economic transformation. Current disjointed policy settings and constant change has resulted in new exotic

planting reducing markedly, to the extent the CCC's goal will not be met. There is an urgent need for clear policy with an understanding there will no be further changes. It is the changes which are discouraging the forest planting our country needs.

NZIF recognises the issue with land conversions of 'good' farm land, but feels there is more than enough land for both foresters and farmers to co-exist. We would also encourage policies which encourage farmers to plant forests on their farms, as long as these plantings are of economic size and well located for future harvesting.

Increased professionalism within forestry management and development programs

With the introduction of the Registered Log Traders and Forest Advisors Act, there has been more emphasis on the provision of professional advice to forest owners. However, there is a long way to go and NZIF question if the current



settings are correct. NZIF has run a professional scheme since 1966 and we believe more needs to be done to ensure there is improved training and development. NZIF is prepared to step up to manage this development program but will need some initial funding to ensure a professional annual program of training is in place. Once set up this program should be self funding.

Greater recognition of the important role forests play for community, health, biodiversity, clean water and economic return

Forests have proven their ability to provide for a healthier population and environment. All forest should be encouraged, be they urban, native or production. This Government need to agree to a long term National Forest Policy which NZIF is very willing to work with you on. This policy must cover all forests and set clear goals including:

- Protecting and enhancing the many significant benefits trees and forests provide to the New Zealand environment, economy, culture and society through developing and implementing a comprehensive, long term and evidence-based national regulatory and decision making environment.
- Sustaining the benefits trees and forests provide, through measures to reduce the risks they face.
- Increasing the contribution trees and forests make to society through a combination of regeneration of indigenous forests, planting new stands of trees and establishing more urban trees and forests.
- Encouraging domestic processing, domestic use and exports of forest products by implementing stable, evidence-based policies and strategies.
- Providing a sound governance environment.



BRIEFING FOR THE



INCOMING FOREST MINISTER



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INCOMING FOREST MINISTER



Review New Zealand's approach to Gene Editing (GE)

NZIF would encourage the adoption of a revised approach to GE in forest management, based on the now well-established science and evidence base. We consider the potential benefits of the technology to be significant and likely to grow. We are concerned opposition to the technology on ideological grounds is now well out of step with established and accepted evidence and cost : benefit based decision making. The potential risks associated with field release of this type of technology can be reasonably managed, including through independent assessment by the EPA.

The benefits for forests of GE include the ability to make our future exotic forests sterile and improvements in forest and wood quality characteristics. GE potentially also offers wider benefits for all forms of forest management through targeted and non-chemical pest control.

Successes here would potentially contribute effectively to NZ's goal of "pest free by 2050" while being able to reduce

or eliminate the use of politically contentious alternative means of pest control, including aerial 1080.

Finally GE could assist in saving our future kauri forests, making trees resistant to kauri dieback.

CHALLENGES

Social Licence to Operate

Foresters need to improve their public perception, which will mean looking at ways to improve some of their practices currently in use. However this work cannot be undertaken by foresters alone. We need support from the Minister to highlight the many positives of forests and forestry. We will need a Minister who is prepared to call out the media when their reports are biased or misrepresenting the facts.

NZIF is more than willing to work with the Minister in regards to the above, both supporting the lead the Minister must take, but also in providing relevant and timely information.

NZIF thank you for the opportunity to provide some thoughts on priorities and challenges for this Government in regards to forests and forestry. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with you in the near future, and to have a relationship with you which allows for regular discussion and exchange of ideas.

Over the almost 100 years we have been in existence, we have built a professional knowledge base which I am sure the Government would like to take advantage of. We are here to advocate for all forests and will continue to do so.

NZIF'S OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Establishing, maintaining and improving standards of professional forestry;
- Contributing to the development and recognition of good forestry practice;
- Recognising, regulating and supporting those demonstrating competence in the forestry profession;
- Supporting forestry professionals in their career development;
- Representing the forestry profession;
- Acting as an independent advocate for forestry;





WE LOOK FORWARD TO
UNDERTAKING THESE
OBJECTS IN CONJUNCTION
WITH YOU.



New Zealand Institute of Forestry

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Yours sincerely,

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