

SAFETY PANEL NEEDS YOUR INPUT

THE INDEPENDENT FORESTRY SAFETY REVIEW PANEL WILL COMPLETE ITS NATIONWIDE SERIES OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS IN JUNE. THE PANEL HAS BEEN SEEKING VIEWS ABOUT HOW TO DRAMATICALLY REDUCE INJURIES AND FATALITIES AMONG WORKERS IN THE INDUSTRY.



If you work in the bush, the independent safety panel wants to hear from you

It has released a public consultation document which sets out the panel's take on the key issues impacting on health and safety in the sector, along with options for change. It poses a series of questions based on its initial observations and these form the framework for the public consultation meetings. Because its questions are open-ended, those who disagree with these observations will still have a voice.

The review, which was initiated by the Forest Owners, Farm Forestry and Forest Industry Contractors Associations, has the support of the Council of Trade Unions. It follows a tragic upswing in forest workplace deaths in 2012 and 2013.

A totally independent initiative, the review will cost up to \$1 million with the bulk of its funding coming from the voluntary contributions of forest owners. Worksafe New Zealand is providing the secretariat for the three-person panel.

The FOA has strongly encouraged forest owners, contractors and their workers to participate in the consultation meetings and for employers to make this possible. The meetings are being – or have been – held in Balclutha, Christchurch, Rotorua, Whangarei, Gisborne and Nelson.

In addition to the public meetings, the panel is asking forest workers to contact them for private meetings. It has also called for written and on-line submissions, and there is a worker questionnaire on the panel's website www.ifsr.co.nz.

"The panel is looking for the insights and ideas of those who work in the bush. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to use your experience in the industry to recommend changes that could save lives," says FOA president Paul Nicholls.

He says he is encouraged that the panel recognises that forest safety is a complex

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2
National's policies awaited



PAGE 3
More dollars from your trees



PAGE 5
Hi-tech claiming the slopes



issue that will need a multi-stranded approach in order to improve the situation.

"One of the challenges the panel highlights is a lack of consistency across the industry when it comes to training, application of Codes of Practice, safety standards and regulatory oversight. While the sector is very diverse, there is no reason why a high standard of safety cannot be uniformly applied in all our forests.

"We welcome practical options for achieving this. As the panel acknowledges, there is an opportunity to learn from good practice and apply it more widely. We are also pleased to note the emphasis they place on an appropriate safety culture as a vital ingredient in achieving the outcomes that everyone wants.

"Ensuring that health and safety requirements are supported and incorporated into the contracts between forest owners and managers, and those who tend and harvest their forests, has been identified by the review as an important underpinning of a safer system. We agree."

The panel has based the framework of its review on the work of the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety that followed the Pike River Disaster. The Taskforce said there were three key features (the workplace, people in a workplace and work organisation), which combine to determine the safety culture within a workplace as well as its health and safety outcomes. These three themes are being used to create work streams for the review.



NATIONAL'S POLICY PLATFORM AWAITED

IN ORDER TO REPRESENT OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS, THE FOA MUST WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAY, REGARDLESS OF ITS POLITICAL COLOUR.

Under Labour, forestry minister Jim Anderton supported our drug and alcohol-free workplace initiatives. His government supported the NZ Wood campaign and was making tentative moves to permit trials of high-productivity vehicles. They also agreed to put import barriers in the way of illegally logged timber.

On the other hand, we had to do public battle with them to get the property rights of Kyoto forest owners recognised in the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). While we succeeded in this, Labour was obdurate in its refusal to adequately compensate pre-Kyoto forest owners for effectively locking them into existing land-uses.

Policy wins and impasses are the reality of the FOA's world. The National Government which came into office in late-2008 is no exception to this rule.

We have worked well with Nathan Guy and more recently Jo Goodhew, in their roles as associate ministers with special responsibility for forestry. National's first round of RMA reforms was welcome, as was its support for high-productivity vehicles.

Other important reforms initiated by National have focussed on the CRIs and industry training organisations. Both sectors are now much more responsive to the industries they are set up to serve. Biosecurity policy and structural reforms are also very welcome.

But like Labour, National initially did not listen to the FOA's concerns about the hollowing out of the government's safety inspectorate and tepid official support for higher safety standards. Pike River and the tragic spike in forest deaths have changed that.

A huge disappointment has been National's decision to allow the ETS to wither into irrelevance. Forest owners who acted on the prime minister's 2007 promise to "incentivise more planting and less cutting" as part of a drive to "tackle the greatest environmental challenge of our time" will take quite a lot of persuading by any future government before planting trees to sequester carbon.

This has been compounded by the recent late night changes to regulations that have

unfairly penalised Kyoto forest owners.

As we go into another election, it is refreshing to see forestry policies put on centre stage by both Labour and the Greens. That's totally appropriate. Forestry has more potential for expansion, increases in added value processing and skilled employment than any other major industry.

This year it will generate \$5.1 billion in export revenues, but with the right policies this could increase to \$12 billion in eight years, as per the Woodco Strategic Action Plan (SAP). The Wood Council has identified these policies in a manifesto recently published on its website. It is also working with MPI and MBIE to address many of them (see www.woodco.org.nz).

Labour's forest policy mix has much that's good from an industry point of view.

Having a national forestry policy is something the FOA has been calling for. A pro-wood strategy for new government buildings is also supported, along with other policies designed to add more value to our log production through wood processing.

Of course, an assured wood supply is absolutely critical for anyone making a major investment in wood processing. Current deforestation trends mean there is no such assurance.

But Labour's solution – the use of suspensory loans to cover the costs of planting new forests – is unlikely to win forest owner support. The sentiment behind the policy is good, but in practice it is likely to result in trees being planted in the wrong places for the wrong reasons.

A better solution is to make the ETS work. By recalibrating the scheme to give forest owners a price incentive to increase plantings – in addition to the value of the trees themselves – two needs will be met: an assured future wood supply for processors and a reduction in the nation's carbon emissions.

The Greens see the ETS as broken and want it replaced with a carbon tax. While carbon taxes can incentivise good behaviour as effectively as cap and trade systems, replacing the ETS would be very time-consuming and costly, and run counter to what's happening in other countries.

One aspect of the Greens' carbon policy with real appeal is its proposal to give an independent commission the levers to reduce the country's carbon emissions – much as the Reserve Bank manages inflation.

The ETS aside, National has done many good things in its two terms since winning office in 2008. But it is the only major political party not to have released its forest policy for election 2014. We look forward to seeing it.



The FOA has successfully worked with Labour and National to bring high productivity vehicles onto our roads

RESEARCH

BREAKING THE PROFIT BARRIER

YOU PLANTED YOUR TREES 15 YEARS AGO. NOW YOU ARE LOCKED IN, WITH NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY OR PROFITABILITY.

Right?

Wrong.

Scion scientists believe there are many opportunities to dramatically increase the earning power of existing and future forests. So does the Forest Growers Levy Trust, which is channelling half of its research budget into a programme known as Sustainable Intensification.

To compete for land for new plantings and to justify keeping existing forests on farmable land, much more wood of a better and more consistent quality needs to be harvested from each hectare. But it must be done sustainably if forest owners are going to have freedom to operate and enjoy access to high-value markets.

Doubling productivity and improving wood quality are targets of the forest industry's Science & Innovation Plan. Forest Research Committee (FRC) chair David Balfour says these are ambitious goals, but with funding from government and forest growers, they can be achieved.

"Forest owners will directly benefit. And it will give wood processors greater confidence to invest in high-tech wood processing – which is also in the long-term interests of forest owners," he says.

"I envisage that our largely passive forest management systems will be replaced by ones that are more hands-on. These will use latest advances in sensor technology, tree physiology, genetics, forest ecology and complex problem-solving, an approach known as 'precision forestry'.

"To compete for land, we need to do what sheep farmers have done. Twenty years ago most farmers had low productivity management systems. Since then, many of them have incorporated new genetics and are being more precise in their pasture management and animal feeding. As a result, lambs produced per ewe have greatly increased, along with farm profitability."

The forest managers of the near future will target points in the forest growing cycle where they can intervene to increase productivity. To inform these interventions, they will have access to data about the performance of their forests, based on remote sensing technologies.

These technologies now allow individual trees to be identified in LiDAR images. When this information is overlain with information about the attributes of these trees – such as their genetic origin, the characteristics of the site and management

history – scientists, tree breeders and forest owners will be able understand how all these factors interact to affect productivity and wood quality.

This process, known as forest phenotyping, will enable trees to be selected on the basis of their performance in different locations – aspect, altitude, climate and soil type.

It will also help provide insights into how sites and stands can be manipulated to increase the volume of wood at harvest. This may involve applying fertilisers or endophytes; weed, pest and disease treatments; or better matching of tree genetics to a particular site. An early project will be to estimate the gap between current levels of productivity and the potential, or in other words 'the size of the prize'.

Because of public and market concerns about the sustainability of land-use systems – witness the dirty dairying campaign and concerns about forest debris flows following harvesting on steep land – the research will take a close look at the impact of forest management systems on soil, water and biodiversity.

The annual budget for the six-year programme is \$5.12 million, with \$1.6 m of this coming from levy funds. Up to 50

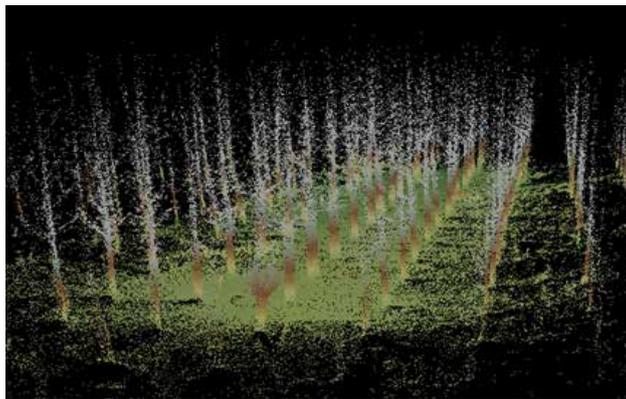
THE SIZE OF THE PRIZE?



This photo, supplied by Dr Eric Jokela, University of Florida, shows the visual response of loblolly pines to different fertiliser treatments. In New Zealand, there is historic data showing responses in radiata to boron, magnesium and phosphate.

In the *sustainable intensification* project, fertilisers, endophytes and other interventions will be tested on a wide range of sites. The aim is to get a precise measure of the potential productivity of radiata and how the gap between potential and current productivity can be closed. The trials will also assess the impact of these interventions on wood quality and a range of ecological measures.

REMOTE EYES



An explosion in the development of new sensing technologies means forest scientists can now remotely 'see' and measure individual trees within a forest.

In the *sustainable intensification* project, airborne and terrestrial sensors will provide information on the attributes of individual trees such as crown dimensions, branch characteristics, diameter, height, stem form, foliar health. This information will be used to support tree breeding, pre-harvest assessment, forest health monitoring and segregation.

researchers will be involved at any one time. Scion, the principal research provider, is collaborating with a number of local and international scientists who bring specialist skills to the programme.

In Scion's bid for public-good science funding and on its website, this project is referred to as Growing Confidence in Forestry's Future. To make the objectives of the project clear to growers, the FRC and the Levy Trust refer to it as sustainable intensification.



WE ARE SHRINKING

Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) figures for tree stock sales show the plantation forestry industry is shrinking. The removal of a meaningful carbon price incentive is likely to be the main cause.

Working out whether the industry has grown or shrunk in a given year is difficult, because of the timing of replanting decisions. Some forest owners replant immediately after harvest, others leave the decision for two or three years, in the meantime putting a question mark over the use of the land.

The best data comes from MPI's annual survey of forestry nurseries. These show year-on-year increases in seedling sales from 2010 until 2012 when they peaked at 72.5 million – more than twice the level of five years before.

By 2013 carbon prices had collapsed, leading to a 25% fall in tree stock sales despite strengthening log prices. Based on these figures, MPI provisionally estimates that 49,000 hectares of forest were planted in 2013, of which 4500 ha were new forest.

“We can't be precise, but in 2012 and 2013 around 57,000 ha a year are likely to have been harvested. When we compare this with the number of seedlings sold, it looks like deforestation is now running at more than 10,000 ha a year,” says FOA senior policy analyst Glen Mackie.

“Converting from forestry to farming may be a sound business decision for those involved, given that carbon prices are minimal and there is no way to earn an income from soil and water conservation. But if the non-timber benefits of forestry were monetised, the planting statistics might look very different.”

RESEARCH

R&D HAS A NEW FACE

THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMMODITY LEVY MEANS THE WAY THE FOREST GROWING INDUSTRY FUNDS RESEARCH HAS CHANGED.

This has coincided with changes to the way research is managed.

Expect better communications and wider consultation with growers, both from those who are overseeing the research and from the scientists who are being funded to get results.

The Forest Growers Levy Trust has allocated about half the levy funds that will be raised in 2014 to research and development. Based on the recommendations of the industry's Forest Research Committee (FRC), the FOA and FFA, six research programmes are being funded: bio-protection, emerging species, fire, foliar diseases, phytophthora and sustainable intensification.

The people in charge of the new regime are FRC chair David Balfour and FOA research manager Russell Dale (see profile p8). Balfour has overseen the establishment of the FRC as well as the technical subcommittees that handle the detail of the research projects.

Other FRC members are deputy chair Grant Dodson (City Forests), Patrick Milne (FFA), Glen Murphy (Waiariki Institute of Technology), Ian Hinton (Timberlands), Philip Elworthy (Matariki Forests) and Dave Lowry (Hancock). Scion CEO Warren Parker is not a member, but he attends all committee meetings.

“Committee members have been appointed as industry experts and not as representatives of their employing organisation. This is an important distinction,” says Balfour.

“Our main focus is to ensure our research programme delivers benefits to both current and future levy payers. This means achieving the outcomes targeted in the industry's Science and Innovation Plan.”

With the committee and subcommittees working smoothly, his focus is now on putting milestones in place against which payments are made to Scion and other research providers.

The industry has a tradition of voluntarily funding research by coalitions of the willing. This will continue alongside research that is co-funded by government, levy payers through the Forest Growers Levy Trust, Scion and others.

Current examples are research into radiata breeding and genomics, weed control and steep slope harvesting. These did not make the cut for levy funding, because of a lack of funds, but the programmes are continuing

with the support of consortiums of forest owners, government and Scion.

The steep slope programme, funded by the Primary Growth Partnership, Scion and Future Forests Research (FFR) is now being managed on contract by the FOA through the R&D manager. The intellectual property (IP) from this research will continue to be held by the FFR consortium.

The weed research is funded by the Sustainable Farming Fund, Scion and a consortium of forest owners. It also is being managed on contract by the FOA through the R&D manager.

The Radiata Pine Breeding Company's research programme will remain independent, but Balfour says the two

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Levy-funded research is managed by four technical sub-committees made up of representatives from the Forest Research Committee, the FOA and FFA.

The technical sub-committees and their convenors are:

Forest biosecurity: Dave Lowry

Emerging species: Patrick Milne

Fire: Murray Dudfield, NRFA

Sustainable intensification: Ian Hinton

organisations will keep in close contact so that research effort is not duplicated.

“If groups of companies wish to voluntarily fund research that is in line with the S&I Plan but not funded by the Levy Trust, the committee is willing to oversee that research. This will ensure it dovetails into research that is co-funded by levies. But I don't see the committee raising additional funds from industry for research.”

Balfour says getting clarity about the ownership of IP is important and setting up systems to manage access to past and future IP is a priority.

“The default position is that previous research papers will be made available to levy payers. The only exception at this stage is the germplasm of Radiata, Douglas-fir and other species, which is restricted to those who funded past research,” he says.



HARVESTING

HIGH-TECH CLAIMING THE SLOPES

NEW AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY IS CLAIMING THE SLOPES, AS THE FRUITS OF THE STEEPLAND HARVESTING RESEARCH PROGRAMME START TO RIPEN.

The research is funded by a consortium of forest owners, Future Forests Research Ltd (FFR), and the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) through the Primary Growth Partnership (PGP). Their vision is 'No worker on the slope, no hand on the chainsaw'.

Before the FFR-PGP project began, steep slope harvesting was identified by forest owners and MPI as the key bottleneck limiting profitability in forestry. The partners wanted to see steepland harvesting costs reduced by 25%, for harvesting jobs to be made safer and more desirable for workers, and for the harvesting equipment manufacturing industry to grow to future-proof the industry.

Four years down the track, the six-year project is fulfilling these objectives. A new steep slope harvester with a low cost on-board navigation system has enjoyed wide media coverage. In addition there's a lightweight grapple carriage and smart cameras that enable operators to see the terrain around them and what the breakouts or grapple are doing.

The FFR contribution is funded by 34 industry members who stump-up a total of \$0.5 million and \$0.1m of in-kind support a year. This is being matched until mid-2016 by up to \$0.6m a year from MPI

through the PGP. No commodity levy funding is being used.

Until the commodity levy was introduced, FFR was the main vehicle for grower-funding of research. "FFR's total focus is now on the steepland harvesting programme," says FOA R&D manager Russell Dale.

The programme retains its own governance structure for intellectual property and commercial matters and Keith Raymond continues in this role as FFR programme manager. High-level oversight of the programme is contracted to the FOA, which does not have access to the IP.

In 2010, Raymond calculated the FFR harvesting research would create savings of an average of \$8/m³ of wood produced, resulting in a reduction in the overall cost of steepland harvesting by over \$100 million a year by 2020.

"The ultimate aim is to create innovative remote-controlled machines that can work on steep slopes and to develop safer high speed cable extraction operations."

The research has three facets:

- mechanisation on steep terrain
- increased productivity of cable extraction; and
- development of operational efficiencies.

The first steep terrain mechanisation output was the ClimbMax Steep Slope Harvester.

Kelly Logging and Trinder Engineers of Nelson commercialised the ClimbMax in 2013 (Forestry Bulletin, Summer 2012/13) with the development of a machine for Kelly Logging. Since then, three more machines have been sold to customers in Nelson, Hawke's Bay and British Columbia, and a fifth is currently being built. (See www.climbax.co.nz).

HarvestNav on-board navigation, an FFR software application for steep slope harvesting machines, is proving popular. The application, which also has application on flatter country, operates on a low-cost tablet computer and has both safety and operational efficiency benefits, says Raymond. It's available as a free download from InterPine Forestry Ltd's website (www.interpine.co.nz).

"With GPS and LiDAR digital terrain models that show harvest area boundaries, slope, and restricted areas, a machine operator using HarvestNav knows his exact location and the nature of the terrain ahead in real-time."

The Alpine Grapple Carriage is an innovation aimed at improving grapple carriage control. This imported lightweight grapple, which can be fitted to existing two drum cable yarders and has been modified to make it suitable for New Zealand conditions, is now commercially available from LogPro Ltd (www.logpro.co.nz).



The CutoverCam and the view from the cab: Gives the operator with a clear view of the working area and the location of workers before and during a haul



The new Alpine Grapple Carriage: Provides improved control under NZ conditions

The CutoverCam is the most recent work to be commercialised in this part of the programme. Marketers CutoverSystems Ltd, Rotorua, have already sold their first unit (www.cutoversystems.com).

“This project has a very direct productivity and safety focus. Using a CutoverCam on the grapple, the hauler operator can see the entire operation and where personnel are on the cutover before beginning the inhaul cycle,” Raymond comments.

He says the first two parts of the programme have involved further developments of existing technology to get early gains for the industry and to make harvesting on steep land more attractive and safer for workers.

“From now until 2016 we have some really exciting and novel work in the pipeline, looking at innovative ways of harvesting wood from steep land with completely new extraction systems. A development plan and concept design for an innovative yarding system has also recently been completed.”

The remote control of felling machines, the development of a novel biped felling machine and tele-operation – control beyond line-of-sight – are on the list and have already been developed to simulation stage.

From Dale’s point-of-view, the best thing about the programme is that it has “really kick-started” new forestry thinking.

“When we started in 2007, there was little new innovation in harvesting. The programme has been a catalyst to get others to think more innovatively about all aspects of felling and extraction and to deliver improved safety and productivity for the benefit of the whole industry.”

BIOSECURITY

FOREST BUG-WATCH REVAMP

THE FOREST HEALTH SURVEILLANCE (FHS) PROGRAMME IS BEING COMPLETELY REDESIGNED, WITH THE NEW SCHEME EXPECTED TO GO LIVE IN MID-2016.

Since 1 January 2014 the FHS has been wholly funded by the new commodity levy for the benefit of the whole industry. Previously it was funded by a voluntary levy paid by nearly all Forest Owners Association (FOA) members.

The new funding regime provides an opportunity to fully review the scheme, explains forest biosecurity committee chair Dave Cormack. He says that while the scheme is well regarded internationally, it is not as scientifically robust as it needs to be.

“We want to give trading partners and forest investors greater confidence that New Zealand’s forests are safe from exotic pest and disease incursions.”

Until the end of 2013, around two-thirds of New Zealand’s forest plantation area was monitored for biosecurity threats as part of the FOA’s voluntary FHS programme. The proposed new programme promises more focus on areas of high risk and better integration with MPI’s biosecurity systems.

“Data from both the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) High Risk Surveillance Sites (HRSS) system and the FOA’s FHS activity will be analysed to design a new

scientifically valid, statistically solid, cost-effective – and future-proofed – programme, before extending it throughout the country.”

According to Cormack, going nationwide makes sense as incursions don’t necessarily start in your own plantation.

“It might start in your neighbour’s or even in the public park down the road. It’s much better to detect and fight the forest fire while it is still small and in your neighbour’s forest than it is to wait until it gets into yours,” he says.

The redesign will take two years, with the new programme expected to be implemented from July 2016.

“In the meantime there won’t be too much change. We may initially see more intensive high risk plots added to the current programme. Also, depending on how the statistical modelling goes, annual visits to some forests may no longer be needed.”



COMMODITY LEVY

COLLECTIONS WORKING WELL

Six months after the first Forest Growers Commodity Levy was introduced, the collection system is working well.

All forest owners who harvest are now being levied 27¢/tonne of harvested wood by the Forest Growers Levy Trust as their logs pass through the mill gate or when they arrive at the wharf. This is expected to raise more than \$6.5 million a year to fund research outlined in the NZ Forestry Science & Innovation Plan, the Plantation Forestry Work Plan and to facilitate ‘industry good’ collaboration.

FOA senior policy analyst Glen Mackie says the Trust’s cash flow has reached budgeted levels as industry players come to understand the levy system and their obligations.

Levy Systems Ltd is the independent company set up by Integral Limited, the software developers engaged by the Trust to handle the levy collection and associated data analysis. They must also ensure the

gathered information remains confidential.

“It was a pretty intense first couple of months,” admits Integral chief executive Andrew Taylor. But he feels the process has settled down nicely, thanks to forest owners, managers and agents who have helped identify data providers.

A few companies protested about the need to provide data. But these concerns eased when the people involved learned exactly what – and how little – information was needed.

Since then, compliance has been great. Taylor says Levy Systems is now tracking down remaining data providers and is also starting to get a handle on the ‘consumer’ end – the firewood and hog fuel operators.

If you are uncertain about whether you should be paying the levy, or know of log owners who are not being levied please let the Levy System’s team know on 0800 002 555.

TRIP HAZARDS IN SAFETY BILL

THE GOVERNMENT'S WORKPLACE SAFETY REFORMS ARE WELCOME. BUT THERE'S A RISK THAT THE NEW LEGISLATION WILL CREATE NEW LEGAL HAZARDS THAT DO NOTHING TO MAKE FORESTS SAFER PLACES TO WORK.

The Health & Safety Reform Bill is now before a Parliamentary Select Committee. It implements many of the recommendations of the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety.

FOA senior policy analyst Glen Mackie says the Bill makes the health and safety responsibilities of those in charge of businesses much more explicit. Penalties for failing to have proper processes in place are more severe. Also it provides for greater worker participation in health and safety decision-making.

“In principle this is all good, but the devil lies in the detail. There needs to be absolute clarity about who is responsible for what. Otherwise we may wait years for case law to clarify where everyone stands. And in the meantime there could be a massive duplication of paperwork.”

He says there are usually several businesses involved in harvest, the most hazardous activity in a forest. A typical set-up would be the forest owner, forest manager, roading contractor, logging contractor and transport operator. Add to that subcontractors and private individuals subcontracted to each of these entities – mechanics, consultants – the list goes on.

In the Bill, primary responsibility for safety in a workplace rests with any ‘Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking’ (PCBU). This is a welcome change from existing law where responsibility lies with the ‘employer’ even though there are other parties who have influence over the safety of each workplace.

“But where multiple PCBUs are involved at a workplace the Bill effectively makes all of them responsible for the safety of all those over whom they could reasonably have some influence. This is unworkable. Instead of advancing safety we would end up with multiple businesses being buried in paperwork, with no clarity about who is responsible for what,” says Mackie.

“The answer is to have one business or person being given primary responsibility for each workplace and for ensuring that their contractors or subcontractors have health and safety systems in place that are relevant to the actual risks their work involves. This would mean that primary responsibilities would rest with those who have the authority and/or specialist skills

to exercise that responsibility.”

Worker engagement is something that forest owners want to encourage. As Mackie says, you can't have a safe team unless everyone is fully committed to the safety of themselves and those around them.

JARGON BUSTER

The Health & Safety Reform Bill comes with new jargon: the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU).

The term, adopted from Australian legislation, will doubtless soon become part of our workplace language, as we battle to improve workplace safety standards.

For Star Wars fans PCBU has another meaning, a Police Cruiser Backup Unit. In many businesses there are also Project Costing Business Units. Hopefully there will be no confusion.

Strangely, the Bill doesn't define ‘safe’ or ‘safety’. It should.

“Our issue is with the definition of ‘workers’. This is far too broad. PCBUs will be obliged to consult with employees of all contractors and subcontractors, regardless of how minor a role they play or how infrequently they attend a PCBU's workplaces,” he says.

The Bill also gives health and safety representatives (HSRs) extensive powers. These, together with the representatives' lack of legal duty, will result in an imbalance of power that could affect employment relations, Mackie observes.

“A provision needs to be added to the Bill prohibiting worker representatives from using their powers for anything other than health and safety in the workplace. For example, an HSR has the power to ‘request’ information from a PCBU. A PCBU should be entitled to refuse to provide information that is legally privileged, commercially sensitive, confidential or unrelated to health and safety.”

In addition, the Bill does not set out the minimum requirements for a health and safety representative. The FOA suggests an HSR should be one of the workers.

More: www.nzfoa.org.nz



We need to tread carefully with proposed law changes, to ensure that safer workplaces are the outcome – not just a mountain of paperwork

IN THE NEWS

FOA RESOURCES GROW

Forest owners now have a better resourced national organisation.

One of the most notable changes is the inclusion into the FOA of Russell Dale and Veronica Bennett, the former management team from Future Forests Research (FFR). This makes for a better co-ordinated industry. Both are working from a new FOA office in the PF Olsen building on the Scion campus, Rotorua.

In Wellington, ex-MPI analyst Brigid Jenkins has joined the team. She is working with the environment and transportation committees, providing technical and analytical assistance to members and drafting communications.

Brigid's employment reflects the ever-growing mountain of work that needs to be completed if the interests of forest owners are to be properly advanced in the Capital.



Russell Dale: R&D Manager

Russell was chief executive of FFR from its formation in 2007 until it wound down its operations in March 2014. Previously he has held senior executive roles covering the full spectrum of

forest management activities for the NZ

Forest Service, Timberlands, Forestry Corporation, Fletcher Challenge Forests, Carter Holt Harvey and Kaingaroa Timberlands. Managing change has been a constant through his career. Russell has personal forest interests so understands the perspectives of both corporate and small forest owners. Russell is married with three adult daughters. Personal interests include tramping, boating and cycling.

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Veronica Bennett: Rotorua Office Manager

Veronica has worked in the forest industry since joining the Forestry Corporation in Rotorua as an executive PA in 1991. This was followed by PA roles in Fletcher Challenge Forests before taking time

out to have a family.

Veronica assisted with the formation of FFR and then managed its office, website, member communication and organisation of member meetings. Veronica is married with a teenage daughter and son. Personal interests include skiing, boating, camping, fishing and family activities.

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Brigid Jenkins: Analyst

Brigid is new to the forestry industry, but not to resource management. After majoring in classics and history and gaining her teaching diploma, Brigid spent several years teaching classical studies, history and social studies to secondary school students in New Zealand before travelling to Canada and Europe.

Before joining the FOA, she was employed by the Ministry for Primary Industries as a fisheries analyst, focusing on fisheries management.

Her personal interests include painting, carving and rock climbing.

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POST-ELECTION RMA DEAL?

The Government is making positive noises about achieving consistent environmental standards across the country.

"It has taken on board industry concerns about inconsistent council standards under the RMA. But it is unlikely an RMA instrument will be delivered before the election," says FOA environmental committee chair Peter Weir.

RMA and freshwater reforms have held up the development of the NES (see Forestry Bulletin, Winter 2013). But Weir says associate minister for primary industries, Jo Goodhew, is well aware that inconsistent RMA rules across regional and district councils are adding costs and creating investment uncertainty for forestry. She has also been assured of Environment minister Amy Adams' continued support for resolving the issue.

A new Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI)-led workgroup is exploring planning tools that might deliver greater consistency, while building on previous work on a



Forestry minister Jo Goodhew

potential NES. Officials need to ensure proposals balance both commercial and environmental objectives.

A stakeholder group of nine is working with the workgroup. It includes FOA representatives Peter Weir (Ernslaw One Ltd), Kit Richards (PF Olsen Ltd), Trish Fordyce (Timberlands) and Sally Strang (Hancock Forest Management), along with representatives from Fish & Game, and the Gisborne, Tasman and Bay of Plenty District Councils. The group has made good progress, including further refining the assumptions that underpin the cost benefit analysis, coming up with a suite of planning rules that can be delivered nationally and working out how to improve the way erosion susceptibility classifications are applied.

Goodhew urges the sector to "stay involved and to work collaboratively."

More information on the workgroup's activity can be found at <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/forestry/resource-planning>