

# Lakes to be cleaned



Lake water quality is highly valued by society – research shows that the presence of forests in a catchment helps keep lakes and waterways clean.

**Nitrate trading is the fairest way to reduce nutrient pollution of Lake Taupo, say forest owners. However, this means 'rights' to discharge will have to be initially allocated – a process which is expected to be politically fraught.**

"Allocation decisions will ultimately determine the uses to which land can be put and therefore significantly alter the value of the primary assets of all land owners," says NZFOA executive director Rob McLagan.

A paper outlining the options, including how initial discharge rights might be allocated, is due to be released in June. McLagan says this allocation needs to be made regardless of how nitrate discharges are regulated in the future.

"Imposing a Resource Consent requirement on dairy farmers, or sewerage treatment plant operators, to control nitrate-emitting activities is ultimately an allocation of nitrate assimilative capacity to those activities."

In recent months, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture (MAF), Ministry for the Environment (MFE) and EW, have been working on a Lake Taupo discussion document.

When the *Forestry Bulletin* went to press, the

document was tentatively scheduled for release in mid-June.

"The paper will look at a number of issues, such as the legality of nitrate trading under the RMA, how initial allocations might be made, and how trading might be monitored," says Phil Journeaux of MAF, who is a member of the officials' group.

He says the team has looked at options both in New Zealand and overseas. While there are useful examples of trading systems, it is hard to find any that deal with nutrients, which brings a special set of issues such as measuring and monitoring diffuse discharges, he said. Meanwhile Environment Bay of Plenty (EBOP) has followed Environment Waikato (EW) in initiating a programme to manage the pollution of Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti along with separate plans for some of the smaller Rotorua lakes.

In early May, forestry representatives attended the first EBOP meeting held to discuss


nutrient pollution of the Rotorua lakes. They now have one representative on the 20-person working group that was set up (Kit Richards) and another as an observer (Colin Maunder).

Maunder says while the fundamental issues of water quality are the same, there are some significant differences between the Taupo and Rotorua situations.

Rotorua and Rotoiti, shallower and smaller lakes linked by the Ohau channel, are both much more polluted already and the initial work is expected to be physical clearance of weed and the possible building of diversion structures by the council. Phosphorus (P) as well as nitrogen (N) are pollutants in these lakes.

Unlike Taupo, a large amount of preliminary scientific work has already been done for these lakes.

"Despite these differences, one important issue is clearly the same. Both local authorities will be aiming to cap the current inputs of nutrient from land uses around the lakes. This has implications for property rights if land use change is restricted," Maunder says.

He says the NZFOA will be following up on a suggestion of a combined land users/owners group for the Rotorua catchment areas which could give opportunity for ongoing dialogue between forest and farming interests. 

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# In my view

## Are they really listening?

**At a time when the forest industry and the Government is in full agreement on the need for increased investment in further forest product processing in New Zealand, the Government's policies are too often heading in the opposite direction.**

New Zealand has fallen to 18<sup>th</sup> in the world competitiveness rankings – down two places – while Australia moved from seventh to fourth behind Canada, Singapore and the United States.

A recent report from KPMG claimed that Australia's and New Zealand's corporate tax regimes are moving further apart, making New Zealand relatively less attractive for new investment.

At the same time, our largest forest company is raising serious doubts about the value of investing in further processing in this country.

Adding to industry frustration is a growing belief that the Government's definition of consultation is very different from that of the private sectors.

Far too often, the Government presents the private sector with a policy fait accompli with little opportunity for two way dialogue.

The Government decision to "fine-tune" the Resource Management Act is a case in point. In spite of fundamental flaws in the Act – flaws which are seriously discouraging new investment of benefit to all New Zealanders – the Government's announcements suggest that the only areas needing

attention relate to process and certainty.

Of course these areas need to be greatly improved, but it's equally – if not more – important to get a better balance between protecting the environment and encouraging development. But there is absolutely no mention of this in Government announcements. Consequently the private sector, while hoping for the best, will not be surprised if the "fine-tuning" ends up as another window dressing exercise.

Another example is the less than four weeks the public had to prepare and make submissions to local government about Long Term Council Community Plans – plans which will effectively determine council policies and activities for the next 10 years. This, from a Government which has made such a play on the importance of public consultation under the Local Government Amendment Act.

Probably the worst recent example of the Government turning a deaf ear to well-researched submissions was the Employment Relations Bill. The perverse results, if the legislation is enacted in its current form, will be less investment in New Zealand and increasing resistance from employers to take on additional staff.

Too often organisations making submissions to Parliament's Select Committees are confronted by MPs who seem to have made up their minds before the hearings even commence. This can easily be interpreted as indifference at best and arrogance at worst.

What our MPs should appreciate is that most organisations wishing to participate in the consultation process are made up largely of volunteers or people who are prepared to participate in industry wide activities over and above their normal jobs. Unlike ministers, these organisations rarely have teams of officials to undertake research and prepare submissions.

It is time for the politicians to demonstrate that they really do want meaningful consultation rather than a sham process, and that they really are prepared to listen. ■

### Industry Services

## Boards consider levy

**A joint industry working group has asked the boards of the three main industry organisations – the NZ Forest Industries Council, NZ Forest Owners Association and the NZ Farm Forestry Association – to endorse the concept of a commodity levy for the forest industry.**

If this endorsement is given, further work will be undertaken to develop a proposal to take to all potential levy payers. At this time background explanatory materials will be prepared and circulated, and regional meetings will be held.

The idea of a levy was endorsed by a report by international forestry consultants, Jaakko Poyry. During his research for the report, early this year, author John Pettengill consulted widely with all sectors of the industry.

NZFOA board member Lees Seymour, who chairs the CLA Working Group, says he expects the levy to be vigorously debated.

"The levy is not a foregone conclusion. It needs to be thoroughly thrashed around, so that the greatest possible number of participants reach agreement on the industry's future direction and how we are going to get there.

"Under the Commodity Levies Act, no levy can be struck without the overwhelming support of potential levy payers." ■

# Research funding boost

News that the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) will provide \$327,000 a year for fire research projects has been welcomed by the forest industry.


The projects will allow researchers to take full advantage of leveraging opportunities such as working with the Australian Bushfire Collaborative Research Council. One example is the \$100 million, 10-year grassland curing project which is being led by a New Zealand research team.

"This level of funding was crucial to ensure that a very successful research programme can continue and develop. Contributions from rural fire partners bring our total funds to \$500,000," said Kerry Ellem, chair of the Forest Owners Fire Committee and a member of the Forest and Rural Fire Research Advisory Committee (FRFRAC).

FRFRAC put a four-part proposal "Protecting New Zealand from Rural Wildfire" to FRST for consideration under the Natural Physical Hazards output area.

The proposal was to address the "four Rs" of fire risk management: Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery. Funding has been granted for objectives 2 and 3, Readiness and Response. The other two objectives have been put "on hold", and may be funded once government budget decisions are known.

Ellem says the major fires in Canterbury earlier this year showed how critical it is to move forward on research into the Reduction and Recovery objectives as well.

"We are very hopeful of additional funding for these two objectives, which affect the rural-urban interface." 

## Fire fighting futures

**A far-reaching review of all New Zealand's fire fighting services has major implications for forest owners, who are asked to make their views known.**

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has been asked to develop comprehensive new fire and rescue legislation to replace the Fire Service Act 1975 (which governs urban fire-fighting) and the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.

One scenario is that both urban and rural services will come under the same legislation, and are funded on the same basis, unless compelling arguments are made to keep them separate. This would be a big change for forest owners who, for the past 10 years, have chosen to stand outside the rural fire system and taken full responsibility for the management and costs of fire on their property.

Forest owners need to make their views very clear, says Kerry Ellem, chair of the Forest Owners Fire Committee. They should carefully consider whether one nationally standardised service is possible or appropriate, and whether costs would increase unacceptably if it was no longer possible to contract for fire fighting.

"The forest landscape has changed considerably in the past decade, with more small owners and farm foresters," he says. "There may not be one solution for everyone, but we want to represent the views of all forest owners."

Kerry Ellem says while it might seem a simple solution to have one national fire service, any benefit might come at unnecessary cost.

"The rural environment is so different from the urban environment. Skill sets and knowledge, even tactics, are very different."

He also points out that at present there are

issues of unclear accountability where rural and urban services overlap.

The NZFOA is already preparing for a meeting with DIA in July. "We have a clear and current view of our position and we can back our case with facts, thanks to all those forest owners who responded to our recent national survey of resources, equipment and training," Ellem says.

Contact: Rob McLagan, email [robmcl@nzfoa.org.nz](mailto:robmcl@nzfoa.org.nz) 



There may be benefits in having one national fire service, but costs need to be managed and the differences between rural and urban fires need to be recognised.

# Don't stop the rain

**Canterbury foresters want the chance to challenge the science which Environment Canterbury (ECAN) claims underpins its Natural Resources Regional Plan.**

In the latest version of the plan, ECAN is proposing that forestry be limited to between 5 and 15 per cent of land holdings in so-called 'sensitive catchments' which are drained by rain-fed streams with low summer flows.

"This may be OK for farmers with a small interest in forestry, but the formula doesn't work if you are a forestry company with plans to afforest 5000-10,000 hectares," says Peter Weir, a forest hydrologist who is co-ordinating the NZFOA's submissions on the issue.

"What we want to see is the scientific justification for the 5-15 per cent restrictions. We are in full agreement that tall vegetation intercepts more rainfall than pasture, but our science tells us that changes in stream flow are not detectable below 20 per cent and are minor below 30 per cent.

"Foresters want ECAN to justify where the lines are being drawn on the map. Vast parts of an upland catchment do not contribute to low-flows. It's the low-flow generation areas that should be avoided in sensitive catchments."

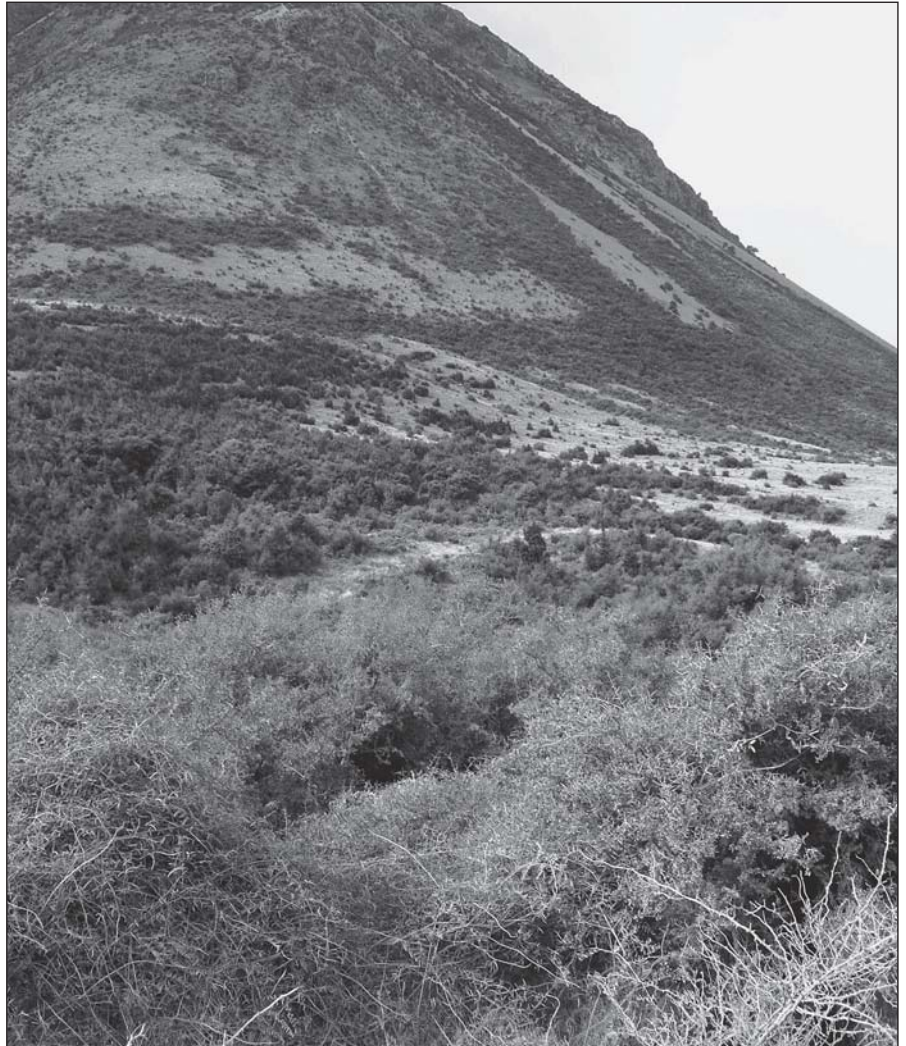
Weir says forest owners have tried to keep discussions with the regional council as amicable as possible, but after two and a half years they are getting frustrated.

"Sure, we have had successes. If you mill a forest, you are now allowed to replant as of right. You are now allowed to replace other tall vegetation, such as gorse and broom, with plantation forestry. ECAN has also been more precise with its mapping.

"But at the end of the day we are talking about rights to use rural property in a way that has been acceptable for over 100 years.

"Restricting established rights, with obvious financial implications, should at the very least be supported by a watertight scientific case. If ECAN can restrict any land owner's right to catch rain, what next – a resource consent to use CO<sub>2</sub> or sunshine?"

Weir says the NZFOA accepts the need for year-round minimum flows to ensure that streams remain healthy, but had assumed that the costs associated with meeting this 'environmental bottom line' would be shared by all land owners equitably.



Tussock grassland reverting to scrub in the high country – it would be a bitter irony if land owners can't plant trees because scrub is being allowed to grow on former high country pastures.

"ECAN argues that Canterbury's water resource is over-allocated. Land use regulation in the headwaters is illogical if the problem is too much irrigation lower down in a catchment.

"Where is the incentive on irrigators to use water responsibly if the cost of maintaining water in the catchment falls on someone else?"

"To the extent that forest owners are being used to address problems created by someone else they are facing a loss not for the common good, but for the private benefit of others."

He says forest owners are astonished that at

the same time ECAN is proposing its controls on tall vegetation to increase irrigation water the Government is proposing to remove large areas of high country tussock grassland from grazing, so it can revert to tall vegetation.

"Scrub intercepts rainfall as effectively as forest, but because it is a 'natural' process, ECAN can't or won't regulate it," says Weir.

"It would be a bitter irony indeed if land owners were restricted from making economic use of their land because big chunks of the high country were reverting to gorse and broom." 🌱

# Falcon success in Guide

Rare New Zealand falcons are breeding freely within the Kaingaroa Forest, thanks to some simple protective measures.



Workers are keen to protect the endangered NZ falcon - a new guide to protecting native species is now being developed

Only 3000 of the endangered species are thought to remain, 1000 of them in the North Island, so the successful rearing of chicks from some 30 nest sites at Kaingaroa last year is

cause for celebration. Falcons are attracted to cutover areas where the insect and bird species they feed on are plentiful. However, their habit of nesting on the ground and

inability to see well at night, makes the falcons vulnerable to attack by possums and stoats, and at risk from forestry operations.

To protect the birds, Kaingaroa Timberlands, advised by Wingspan – a Charitable Trust established to care for falcons and other raptors – now limits operations on cut-over land with nesting sites during the two-month breeding season, and is maintaining a pest control programme, which has other environmental benefits. Workers, having been introduced by Wingspan to a trained falcon, wholeheartedly support the protection programme.

This is typical of the practical suggestions for protecting endangered species found in forests, to be published in a guide now being developed by the NZFOA Environment Committee, with industry financial and in-kind assistance, plus funding from the Sustainable Farming Fund.

Colin Mauder of Kaingaroa Timberlands, a member of the FOA Environment Committee, says the guide aims to give "simple and straightforward management ideas with widespread benefit for little cost".

Colin Mauder says while the guide has been primarily developed for Forest Stewardship Council certification, he hopes that smaller forest owners and farmers will also find it useful. 📄

## Added value

# Pruned pine conference to assess competition

Future options for pruned pine and clearwood products in the key US market, and an assessment of competing producer activities will be discussed in Nelson on June 29–30.

Organiser Brent Apthorp says that the conference will be New Zealand's largest gathering of international marketing, processing and management expertise on clear pine, at a time when there have been significant changes and developments around the world.

Key findings from a comprehensive market analysis of the US clearwood market will be

released just before the conference. Author Russell Taylor will present key findings on the outlook for clearwood lumber and the US moulding and millwork sector through to 2008.

New analyses from the other major clear pine producing countries will be given, along with an update from Ken Fenner, CEO of Global Forest Products from South Africa.

Representatives of Weyerhaeuser Corporation, which manages stands of pruned pine around the world, and Tenon Ltd will discuss recent joint ventures and strategic alliances.

Sixty-seven percent of New Zealand's planted forest estate (1.1 million ha) is either pruned or expected to be pruned.

More: [brent.apthorp@fiea.org.nz](mailto:brent.apthorp@fiea.org.nz) 📄

# Line access progress

**Transpower's detailed commitment to safeguard the rights of property owners during the development and maintenance of the national grid has been welcomed by the NZFOA.**

In contrast, the Association is concerned at the apparent slowness of the electricity network companies to commit themselves to better consultation with customers. These companies provide the lines which link directly to consumers.

Transpower, which is about to embark on significant extensions to the national grid, has issued a 15-point *Commitment to Landowners and Communities* "to clearly explain how Transpower will behave while going about its business".

The commitment puts a strong emphasis on communication and consultation with stakeholders. It will investigate and actively mitigate adverse environmental effects; in all cases will give the required notice to land owners prior to entering the land for any reason, including repairs.

Where proposed transmission works impact adversely on the land, Transpower undertakes to negotiate compensation with the land owner.

Transpower will be financially responsible for the control of any abnormal weed growth and, if required, will remove all vegetation including trees that exceed minimum clearances for its lines, meeting all costs involved.

Forest industry representatives and Transpower have for some time been discussing the ground rules for access to forestry land. The forest owners' goal is to have a model easement agreement that land owners can use if they choose.

"The commitment is a move forward," says NZFOA chief executive Rob McLagan. "However our objective is still to have a model easement, and we will be meeting again soon with Transpower to discuss this."

McLagan says the industry has also been asking the lines (network) companies to sit down to discuss a similar agreement.

"But they seem reluctant to engage with us."

Under the Electricity Act, network companies have the right to enter land that was already crossed by lines in 1992. They have to gain easements for new work, although few – if any – of these companies are in expansion mode.

For emergency work, it is legal for the lines companies to gain access, then notify land owners afterwards. This was the source of some friction during the February storms when falling trees were a major cause of power cuts.

A spokesman for one of the lines companies says he knows there were "ruffled feathers"

on both sides following the storms.

"We had all sorts of problems with trees. At the same time there were consumers, many of them farmers, who were without power to their house, pump or dairy shed, for up to six days."

While the storm was an exceptional situation, he says there were some situations where a bigger corridor between trees and power lines could have prevented the damage.

For more information email: [esp@transpower.co.nz](mailto:esp@transpower.co.nz)

## BIA standards

# Douglas-fir solution

**South Island mayors have endorsed the use of untreated Douglas-fir as a preferred framing timber.**

This follows presentations by a group of Douglas-fir growers and millers who want the Building Industry Authority to revisit NZ Standard 3602 which requires the treatment of all external framing timber, unless a local body determines otherwise.

"Untreated Douglas-fir (NZ Oregon) has been used for decades in the framing of traditional-style houses without a problem. It is the framing timber of choice in most of the

South Island, because it's chemical-free, with superior engineering properties," says Peter Weir of Ernslaw One.

The group has developed new, low risk, assessment criteria to enable local bodies to approve Douglas-fir for use under the Building Code's 'Alternative Solution'. Seven South Island local bodies have already adopted the criteria.

More: [www.nzfoa.nzforestry.co.nz/alternativesolution.asp](http://www.nzfoa.nzforestry.co.nz/alternativesolution.asp)



Arnold Smith of Nelson Ede Logging prepares Douglas-fir logs for trucking to the mill.

# Forests save most slopes



The McLeod Estate, Fordell, is looking at a 70 per cent loss and "35 ha of mess" that is worth nothing, and hugely expensive to clear away.

**Forestry proved its worth in protecting steep slopes during the February storms, according to data from Landcare Research. However, in some areas where the wind and rain was most intense, nothing was left standing.**

Landcare mapped close to 50,000 landslides in the storm-hit area, from Raetihi down to Kapiti Island, and monitored the sediment swept down the Manawatu River.

Their analysis showed that very little of the sediment came from native or plantation forest.

This confirms previous findings that a canopy of trees reduces slips by up to 90 per cent on steep land.

However, that's little consolation to Maggie McLeod, of R.H. McLeod Estate, Fordell. They were intending to harvest 50 ha of pines later this year. Now, they are looking at a 70 per cent loss and "35 ha of mess" that is worth nothing, and hugely expensive to clear away.

People with a lifetime in forestry have been amazed at the damage, she said.

"The trees fell like matchsticks. The wind took the biggest and best, then swirled back and smashed down all the others. It created slips and debris, wiping out our fences. We're still losing trees."

Forest recovery co-ordinator Kelly Coghlan says that while Maggie McLeod probably "takes the prize" for loss and damage, there are many others in the region who have been hard hit, some at more than one site.

"Blowdown was worst with trees between seven and 14 years old. Trees of every age from new plantings to 30 year old mature trees have been snapped or broken, as if some crazy game of ping pong has been played among them.

"The combination of wind and water caused the greatest damage in the gullies, rather

than on the tops."

Despite the devastation, Coghlan says the storm was such a rare event it should not discourage people from planting trees.

McLeod hopes to be able to clear the land and replant, but without funding she will have to wait years to do it. 📷



Trees protected the land better than pasture, but even they were destroyed in pockets where the storm was most intense.

## Storm victims urged to register

Forest owners who suffered any damage during the February storms should register with MAF's Agricultural Recovery Programme (ARP) as soon as possible, forestry relief co-ordinator Kelly Coghlan says.

"Forest owners who just received ARP packs may have put them aside thinking they can't claim because they don't meet the criteria. But there's a two-stage process, and first it is important to register.

"To argue a special case for forestry, we need as much information about actual damage as we can get," he said.

ARP information is available from the MAF website at [www.maf.govt.nz](http://www.maf.govt.nz), by email on [floods@maf.govt.nz](mailto:floods@maf.govt.nz) or by phone on 06 351 7921. Kelly Coghlan 0274 488 067. 📷

### Timber in design

The 'wood is good' story is being actively communicated to architects, engineers and others who influence the choice of construction materials.


"A whole raft of information" about timber design and timber products was presented at a series of workshops, hosted by the Timber Design Society, and held in Auckland, Christchurch and most recently, Wellington.

The programme included case studies where timber had been used to solve difficult construction problems.

"We highlighted wood's durability and strength and its flexibility to meet difficult requirements. We showed that the appropriately designed timber product, in multilevel buildings, can be as durable as steel or concrete, and as cost effective," said Lawrie Halkett of the Pine Manufacturers Association (PMA).


For the past two years, the PMA has run evening seminars demonstrating glue-laminated products to architects and designers.

"There's a lot of interest in wood, not just for its aesthetic qualities, but also because timber is a renewable resource. Well-managed forests produce timber on a sustained continuous basis, with minimal adverse effects on soil and water values," he said.

Other initiatives are the Origin Timber Design Awards, four prizes of \$10,000 for practising architects and engineers. Carter Holt Harvey is funding a student design competition, and there are moves to have a chair in timber design at engineering schools. 

### Sustainability stars

The NZFOA's Rob McLagan and the NZFIC's Stephen Jacobi have both been filmed for a video presentation being made for the Ministry for the Environment to present at next year's World Sustainability Conference.

The two organisations are also helping with the script. 

### Forest voice




It is "hard to find someone with direct responsibility for forestry" in the recently released discussion document outlining a new structure for MAF Biosecurity, says NZFOA chief executive Rob McLagan.

MAF, the lead agency in nationwide biosecurity, is to be organised along 'functional' or 'point of intervention' lines (pre- and post-border inspection and eradication) rather than sectoral lines (forestry, livestock and arable.)

In a letter to MAF deputy director-general Larry Fergusson, the NZFOA says that, while it accepts the rationale for the restructure, unless forestry has direct access to a senior person with a dedicated interest in forestry, the existing strong and effective relationship with the ministry will be weakened.


In response, Fergusson says he shares the concerns of the Association but needs to reduce the heavy burden of responsibilities being carried at present by directors. He says the ministry is considering four options for possible future structures.

The NZFOA will be indicating to MAF which of these options it prefers, once it has consulted with members. 

### Beyond Australasia

The Future Forests and Timber Conference 2004, to be held in Sydney in November this year has its theme going beyond Australasia and promises to be well worth a visit.

The Programme includes regional and global markets, better business practices and Asian challenges and opportunities.


For more information: [www.forestsandtimber.com](http://www.forestsandtimber.com) 

### South shows skills

Fifty Forest Industries Training Letters of Commendation, recognising national certificate achievement from forestry, wood processing to first line management, were presented at an evening in Dunedin on May 7.

Sponsored by Ernslaw One and Blue Mountain Lumber, this was the first presentation of its kind in Otago. It is one of five Forest Industries Training regional presentations happening all over the country over the next month.


David Carruthers, manager training operations, for Forest Industries Training welcomed certificate holders and their guests.

In his presentation, Peter Weir of Ernslaw One promoted the future of forestry. 

### New research body

The Forest Biosecurity Research Council (FBRC) held its first formal meeting on 28 April in Rotorua. The FBRC is the new name for the former Forest Health Research Group.

Jeremy Fleming of Carter Holt Harvey is the chairman of the Council, established to provide a unified body to bid for key research funding, manage programmes and monitor progress.

The Council comprises three representatives of the NZFOA, two each from Forest Research and MAF, and one each from the National Centre for Advanced Bio-protection Technologies at Lincoln and the Forest Health Research Collaborative. 



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