



## Continuing Professional Development

Earlier this year when members were surveyed to express their views on various issues, a clear message was that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was seen as an important feature within NZIF. This was perhaps not surprising, since formal CPD is an increasing trend amongst professions both within New Zealand and overseas. The Standards/CPD Task Group

has explored various aspects of CPD and the findings are reported in this issue of NZ Forestry. Members are invited to write to Bill Liley, the Task Force Convenor, or other members of the Task Group, with any comments or suggestions on the emerging NZIF CPD system.

John Galbraith

“When planning for a year

– sow corn

When planning for a decade

– plant trees

When planning for a lifetime

– train and educate men”

– Kwan-Tzu

## CPD – what is it?

Kathrine Fraser\*

CPD means different things to different people – this was one finding from the membership survey conducted in 1994. To ensure there is a common understanding on which to base discussions within the Institute, NZIF has developed a definition to encapsulate the concept. The Task Force investigated how other Institutes define CPD and the contribution of education theory and adult learning and this is the result:

*“Continuing Professional Development is the systematic and structured learning that is undertaken by professional foresters throughout the course of their careers, to ensure that they continually maintain and enhance their professional skills and the quality of service they offer.”*

### Implications of definition

- CPD is one of the responsibilities of being a professional.
- Providing it is structured, CPD can include learning that occurs on-the-job, within study groups, through research projects etc, as well as attending formal seminars and training programmes.
- CPD includes any aspect of development that is relevant to an individual's practice within the forestry industry including enhancing business management, marketing and personal skills and other areas that contribute to professional effectiveness.

- Providers of CPD programmes (NZIF, universities, private providers) should apply sound educational principles and practices to the development and conduct of courses, to ensure that members receive maximum benefit.
- CPD is systematic in that it is planned with regard to the individual's overall job, client needs and career stage. Members need to identify their own particular development needs in relation to their professional situation.

The establishment of a CPD system may be viewed by some as demanding more of members, but it is in fact only formalising and refining the ongoing development activities which forestry professionals have always undertaken.

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### CPD activities can include:

- Participating in training programmes
- Writing articles
- Giving presentations
- Training/teaching others about forestry-related issues
- Participation in structured study groups
- Attending conferences.

The main criteria are that CPD activities have specific objectives, are planned, and can be documented. Thus, under the proposed NZIF CPD system, a wide range of opportunities will be able to be taken up by members, to achieve the required credits.

## CPD – The How

Foresters work in many different roles and contexts within the industry. It is for this reason that the NZIF CPD system is being designed with maximum flexibility for members to determine appropriate learning opportunities.

Recent trends stress the significance of multi-skilling, the transferability of skills and the critical importance of being able to learn and adapt to new demands from organisations, clients and the global marketplace. As people progress through their careers, new development needs typically emerge as they accept new responsibilities, such as supervisory and management roles, marketing functions, mentoring and instructing, and also as they adjust to other life changes. Professionals have to plan their CPD so that they are equipped to

deal with the challenge of change which has become a reality of modern life.

Planning CPD does not involve merely scanning the pages of a course directory. The first step is to take some time to analyse and overview your employment situation.

- **What range of skills is required currently in your job?**
- **What job do you see yourself doing in five years' time?**
- **What new clients/markets are emerging for your services?**
- **How will technology, legislation, and other external factors influence your job?**

Answers to these types of questions will reveal the knowledge, skills and attitudes that you need to strengthen through

\* Director, KINETICS Organisation Development Consultancy in collaboration with the Standards/CPD Task Group