

genuine interest and support for success in the industry really shone out, around 100 awards were made to men and women who have made achievement of excellence their goal. Several had done so with distinction.

Improving skill levels will contribute significantly to the industry's growth and performance and is to be encouraged.

The NZIF similarly recognises top achievers through its own awards, and it was particularly pleasing this year to have a record number (over recent years anyway) of contenders for each.

An industry that celebrates success, particularly in terms of improving the capability of its people, has to be on the path to better things.

Forest Policy

The pace of change in the world of forestry is very much a part of our lives. To some extent this reflects greater exposure to international perspectives driven by concerns about matters as far ranging as sustainability and global warming. But it also reflects the fact that today our forests are planted and managed without any real consensus on, or commitment to particular land-use, economic or social policies. Almost certainly

issues such as the sudden termination of wood production from the Crown's indigenous forests, how to deal with Painted Apple Moth, and what wood to use when re-paneling the Beehive would not have caused the same disruption and uncertainty had they been supported or underpinned by some broadly understood and appreciated philosophy. The adoption by the Institute at the AGM of the Forest Policy developed and promoted to members by Hamish Levack and Graham Whyte will help overcome some of these matters. Having taken this first step Council will now be seeking to promote our policy in the wider community in the expectation it will provide some of the leadership otherwise lacking.

Andrew Dakin

Elsewhere in this issue is an obituary for Andrew. I would simply like to acknowledge his quiet but significant contribution to the work of the Institute, nowhere more obvious than at this year's very successful AGM and conference in Auckland.

Peter Berg

Institute's power to initiate advances highlighted

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry has the power to help initiate real advances in the New Zealand forestry industry, Tony Neilson, Managing Director Neilson Scott Ltd told the NZIF annual conference. Tony Neilson was responsible for wrapping up the proceedings of the conference, much of which will be published in separate papers in this edition.

One of the key decisions at the end of the conference, run on the theme "the future opportunity", support for a cohesive strategy vision for the industry with wide industry participation, strong leadership, improved marketing and a better market presence.

In noting the Institute deserved congratulations as this was one of the best conferences in recent years, Tony Neilson noted: "The people who belong to the Institute are naturally inquisitive and intellectual, but I hope we don't just have a lot of warm feelings [coming out of the conference]."

The Institute was non-aligned and non-political and was therefore in a position to take aboard what had been discussed at the conference and move forward boldly and with passion some of the issues highlighted. Tony Neilson highlighted the difficulty in presenting a unified strategy for marketing and leading the industry forward to meet the challenge of the so-called wall of wood.

"The industry is a graveyard of good ideas," Tony Neilson said, noting the failure of Wood New Zealand to get off the ground along with the stalled launch of ideas such as the Cellulose Valley in Rotorua. The day of the conference, 7 May 2001, should be marked as "the day the light came on" for the industry. In summarising the day's proceedings, he said there were three aspects: the givens, the big ideas, and the way forward. The givens included committed leadership, creativity and inventiveness, product and market understanding, infrastructure, investment, free trade, good governance, and biosecurity. He noted that few of a group of people his publication, Pine International, had polled could name a forestry industry leader.

"Industry is seriously short of high profile leaders," Tony Neilson said. Top of the list in the "big ideas" department was the need for a cohesive strategy with widespread buy-in. Part of this would be to create a market presence. "There are individual companies that are doing these already but NZ Forest Inc doesn't do much in market presence building. What about establishing a centre for softwood excellence in the Southern Hemisphere? he asked. He noted that a wood marketing co-operative for private growers would be a good idea. A Hall of Fame to celebrate the best and learn from them was another idea.