

Regional councils provide a collective voice for Tairawhiti's forestry-related organisations

East Coast and Hawkes Bay supply second largest volume of sawn timber in New Zealand

NEW Zealand's seven regional wood councils play an increasingly prominent role as forest industry advocates. With that in mind, Timber & Forestry enews spoke to Philip Hope, chief executive of the Eastland Wood Council (EWC), about the council's work and the issues facing the industry on the East Coast (Tairawhiti).

Mr Hope took up the position in March 2021, following prominent roles with the Lung Foundation and the Cancer Society of New Zealand. He regarded it as an opportunity to apply his advocacy, business and governance skills.

"My career in organisational development is complemented by over two decades managing agricultural, horticultural and forestry blocks in the region," Mr Hope.

He says the council provides a collective voice for Tairawhiti's forestry and related organisations (including Eastland Port). "It's funded primarily by a base membership fee, plus a cost per hectare of forestry blocks managed or owned by each company."

The EWC is active in a number of areas, including care for the environment, health and safety, training, and

“ PROVIDING LEADERSHIP BY ESTABLISHING IMPORTANT TRAINING INITIATIVES



1/ Mangatu (inland from Gisborne)... forestry generates significant revenue and employment for Tairawhiti.
2 Philip Hope... the industry is working hard to reduce the risk of slash following flood events.

ACROSS THE DITCH



With MICHAEL SMITH

supply chain efficiencies.

"We've provided leadership by establishing important training initiatives vital to forestry and other primary industries," Mr Hope said.

"For instance, the Tairawhiti road transport program ensures local road freight transport, forest industry and heavy equipment operators are able to attract, train and retain licensed truck drivers. And the generation program is a 'real world' learning experience that combines industry training with employment. A six-week base camp leads to an individualised two-year training and career pathway.

"The future success of these important development initiatives will be achieved

the region's largest GDP by industry," he said. "The East Coast and Hawkes Bay together supply and manufacture the second largest volume of sawn timber in the country.

"We also need to acknowledge the significant contribution the forest industry makes to Trust Tairawhiti [economic development agency] and, in turn, the many community groups operating across our region that exist as a result of this philanthropic income."

One of the most pressing issues facing Tairawhiti is dealing with the effects of slash, which inundated the region's rivers and beaches following devastating weather events in 2018 and 2020.

Mr Hope says an environmental focus group, consisting of EWC members, has established and refined a number of initiatives that are helping to reduce the risk of slash in flood events.

"This work has culminated in an EWC MOU on catchment management, which is currently in the process of being peer reviewed by environmental planners," he said.

The EWC secured the services of Professor Rien Visser (School of Forestry, University of Canterbury) to deliver professional development forums to its members. And Gisborne District Council engaged him to provide best-practice recommendations on catchment management,

through collaboration with other key stakeholders. Hence, we don't see the EWC owning these program in the long term, but instead supporting them – all the while focusing on the council's advocacy and policy leadership role to best represent the collective interests of our industry."

Mr Hope describes forestry as a key driver of Tairawhiti's economy.

"For the year ending March 2019, forestry employed 1072 FTEs and generated

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New Hyne chair flies in to inspect operations and meet executives and staff

JIM BOWDEN

THE new chair of the Hyne Group Tom Bruce-Jones flies into Brisbane this month for a round of meetings, operation inspections and staff introductions.

Celebrating its 140th year, Hyne Timber, a sixth generation family timber business, has partnered with UK-based James Jones & Sons, also chaired by Mr Bruce-Jones.

The partnership brings together a combined 320 years of family-owned sawmilling heritage to pursue growth opportunities.

Fifth generation Hyne family member James Hyne said the partnership was a significant milestone in Hyne Timber's 140 years of growth.

"We are bringing together two multi-generational family-owned and operated companies with a shared commitment to world-class product quality, service, safety, innovation and sustainability,"



Tom Bruce-Jones... meet-and-greet visit this month.

Mr Hyne said.

James Jones & Sons Ltd is a fifth-generation family business and the UK's largest privately owned forestry and sawmill group employing 1225 personnel and operating from 25 strategically located sites across England and Scotland.

Mr Bruce-Jones will attend a Hyne family lunch in Brisbane before taking the opportunity to personally visit Hyne operations and meet executives and staff.

Under the terms of the partnership, James Jones & Sons will hold the majority interest, almost 60%, with more than 40% retained by the Hyne Group's existing shareholders, including the Hyne family.

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including the design of debris slash traps.

Mr Hope says he is pleased to acknowledge two of the EWC's members (Ernslaw One and Aratu Forests) for their independent initiatives. They include installing natural slash catchers for the next rotation; leaving higher stumps around waterways; excluding some areas from harvest; and the strategic planting of alternative species on high-risk land.

He notes there were no significant wood debris events in 2021, which indicates the new processes adopted by the industry are working.

"This is encouraging, although our members continue to review and improve processes wherever possible," Mr Hope said.

"Given the nature of the region's terrain and soils, a residual risk always remains for both soil and woody debris movement."

• *More in next week's issue from Philip Hope.*

