



## **Te Ara Paerangi – Future Pathways**

Building the future of NZ Research, Science and  
Innovation

### **Capacity - Capability – Funding**

Summary submission from  
New Zealand Forest Owners Association Inc

16 March 2022

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Submission summary .....	4
Contact for correspondence .....	5
NZ Forest Owners Association .....	6
Forest Growers Levy Trust and Forest Growers Research .....	6

## Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to consult on how to best position the New Zealand research, science and innovation system for the future.

The New Zealand forest research, science and innovation system has served the forest and forestry industry very well over the last 100 years, helping us to develop and grow the national plantation estates, enhance understanding of our natural world, and what constitutes sustainable management.

We seek to create a modern, future-focused research system for the NZ forest and forest products sector; a system that is adaptable to a rapidly changing future, resilient to changes, and connects to industry, public sector, and international research efforts and beneficiaries.

We would like to emphasize some key points:

- Forest research is by nature, long-term, and funding arrangements need to recognize this and be tailored accordingly.
- Forest research requires strong research capability to tackle and solve, often complex and interconnected issues. Any reorganization needs to consider how the industry can protect and enhance this.
- The industry is concerned about the apparent loss of focus on forest growing research particularly at a time when plantation forestry growth and protection will be absolutely critical if forestry is to play its part in supporting NZ's climate change ambitions.

We would like to direct your attention to four FOA Strategy documents that have been developed to help future-proof the industry.

[Forestry Roadmap to 2050](#) (March 2019)

[Forest Growers Science and Innovation Strategy to 2050](#) (November 2019)

[Forest Biosecurity Strategy to 2030](#) (January 2020)

[Forest Biosecurity Research Strategy](#) (January 2011) is currently being re written.

## Submission summary

Our submission addresses the targeted questions that have been provided in the Green Paper. This is not just about the problems we see in the current RSI system; we also include our ideas and solutions about how we should address these issues.

- **Research priorities:** Consolidate the capability of the CRIs and remove independent governance, while maintaining a focus on NZ unique positions of opportunity and where we have a natural advantage. Avoid technology- centric approaches.
- Have each of those capability areas (Currently CRI's) as a business unit with the potential to combine Scion, AgResearch and Plant and Food to create a primary sector CRI and enable the benefit of the current system to be maintained, while minimizing redundant duplication (capital, infrastructure, operating systems, procurement, functional areas (HR, Finance etc).
- **Move to mission-**led science and develop national research priorities to identify what is most important to New Zealand.
- **Funding:** Increased funding is needed for long-term forestry research. Funding is needed for knowledge transfer as well as knowledge creation.
- Govern the system centrally but devolve the execution and funding of the strategies away from MBIE to relevant government departments (MPI, MfE, DOC) and ensure there are cross cutting task forces e.g., climate change. To ensure better connectivity to stakeholders, gov't strategy and industry.
- **Research workforce:** Align workforce aspects (rewards, recognition etc) to the goals of the system and keep contestable /investigator led science as an additive component
- **Research infrastructure:** Fund infrastructure longer term and shift the ownership to central government with CRIs charging a management fee back to the government.

In conclusion, the NZ Forest Owners Association agrees that the research, science and innovation sector can be improved and welcomes the opportunity to be part of the consultation and decision-making process.

For the forest industry, this is about ensuring we have the capacity, the capability and the necessary funding to drive, design and deliver the long-term, sustainable benefits from our forests for the benefit of all of New Zealand.

We look forward to further engagement, and consultation, so that we can assist the further development of ideas feeding into the White Paper release, as the policy design process becomes more detailed and preferred options are narrowed down.

A more detailed submission is available on request.

Signed



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## NZ Forest Owners Association

As the New Zealand Forest Owners Association Incorporated (FOA) is the representative membership body for the commercial plantation forest growing industry we advocate on behalf of our members and the wider plantation forestry sector.

We represent large and medium forest growers and small growers via the NZ Farm Forestry Association. FOA members manage and/or own approximately 1.2 million hectares of New Zealand's plantation forests and more than 80% of the annual harvest.

We present the industry position in those instances where proposals may have a significant effect on forest industry practices, the costs of operating and the property rights of forest owners. We therefore maintain a significant interest in the development of legislation that will have a major impact on the success of our industry.

## Forest Growers Levy Trust and Forest Growers Research

The Forest Growers Levy Trust (FGLT) is the largest industry funder of research and development for the New Zealand forest-growing sector. The funds come from a levy which is paid on each tonne of harvested timber in New Zealand.

The FOA provides secretariat support to the FGLT, in conjunction with the NZ Farm Forestry Association (NZFFA), which represents small forest owners.

Forest Growers Research (FGR) is part of the Forest Owners Association (FOA) and co-ordinates industry input and funding of research programmes relevant to the forest growing sector. FOA holds the single share in the company for the benefit of all forest growers.

We do this in two main ways:

- We manage the research funded by the Forest Growers Levy Trust (FGLT) – this money comes directly from forest growers in the form of a levy on harvested timber.
- We also manage other research programmes which are funded by sources other than the levy. This includes two major government and industry funded programmes:
  - (i) the Automation and Robotics PGP Research Partnership
  - (ii) the Specialty Wood Products Partnership
  - (iii) the Tissue Culture Partnership

The joint FOA/NZFFA Forest Research Committee makes recommendations on research priorities for funding based on the priorities set out in an industry Science and Innovation Plan.

Once operational, each research programme is guided by a Technical Steering Team made up of industry representatives or other relevant experts.