



To Branch Councillors

The following are the items that were presented at the Council meeting on 11 April, 2014, at Blenheim. One additional item (13) has been added, which may or may not be considered.

Your branch should discuss the items below so that your views can be heard and a vote can be cast at the Council meeting due on 5 November 2014 if relevant. Each item in their own right could take a whole day to discuss, so we whilst not wanting to stifle discussion we all need to be mindful that we do need to discuss or vote on all of them before the end of the day.

Some items have a “possible resolution”, which if passed, could leave more time for other items to be discussed.

If you can't attend the meeting on 5 November at the ForestWood Centre in Wellington:

- Give your proxy vote with voting directions to either another attending Councillor, Ian (as President) or Glenn (as Secretary/National Association Manager)
- Give your proxy vote to Ian to be cast as he sees fit
- Inform Glenn in writing before the commencement of the meeting
- All acronyms used are in the footer of each page

Note that in the items and discussion below, “Colin” is a fictional member of the Wellington branch, other named people are as we know them to be . . .

Item	Points of Discussion and Possible Resolutions
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Item	Points of Discussion and Possible Resolutions
<p>A. That the current legal and organizational structure of the association be changed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is tasked with determining the strategy, direction and governance for the Association, whereas the Executive executes this strategy • The Council is a bit un-wieldy at 26 members • Not all Councillors attend Council meetings, would more Councillors attend if some of their costs were off-set by the Association? • The Executive has 6 members, plus Bruce (co-opted Treasurer, non-voting) • Should the Council and Executive be merged? Six may be too few to be representative and 26 too un-wieldy, maybe a number somewhere between? • If merged to, say, 15 members, would these members be geographically spread? Or a minimum of, say, 5 for each island plus 5 more from anywhere? On the other hand, North and South Island representation requirements could be seen as a bit anachronistic – a tree grower in the far North wants pretty much the same things as someone in the deep South. • Council meetings are held only once a year • Executive meetings are held four a year, and also when necessary. Sometimes conference call meetings are held. • Communication both ways between either the Council and/or the Executive to the members is poor • The Constitution states that the Council has the function of strategy/direction/governance and that the Executive on of implementation. One way of looking at it would be to try to make these two bodies more effective in their specified roles and in working with each other. • There are a number of potential governance models (as outlined in the Angus/Peter/Hamish paper 30 Sep 2014, plus a sixth): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Status quo with the president and executive elected by the branches and wider membership, and the council being a group of locally-appointed branch members having little effective leadership internally and meeting once a year to ratify those matters that the executive asks it to, and those matters that the constitution requires it to. ii. Status quo with changes to council rules enabling it to set its own agenda, elect its own chairman and organise its own communications. Devolution of some as yet undefined executive roles that are NZFFA specific (as opposed to pan industry) back to the council. For example awards judging and conference interaction might be run and managed by the council, whereas membership of pan industry groups (levy board) or national sponsorship agreements could be undertaken by the executive. iii. An 'electoral college' model, where branches and the membership directly elect the council and the council then elects the executive from within its ranks. The president might or might not be elected by the council; and the council might or might not choose a set of rules that required constitutional changes to be ratified at an AGM. iv. A streamlined model with the president and an enlarged executive directly elected from the branches and wider membership, and the council disbanded. The new executive might or might not choose a set of rules that required constitutional changes to be ratified at an AGM. v. The reorganisation of council so that councillors represent branch clusters that would incorporate the interests of a group of neighbouring branches in whatever governance model is chosen. Critical mass is an issue for many branches with too few people doing too many roles, and so the concept of shared services may well work if parochial views were put aside. vi. A sixth suggestion has been made: Angus' paper does not include the option of retaining the current arrangement but finding a way of shrinking the Council so that it can be kept more up-to-date, meet more often, be more effective and thus provide better guidance to the Executive.



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<p>B. That consideration be given to special interest groups having a seat at the council table or formal representation at executive level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original version of this item in the 2014 Conference booklet was “that Special Interest Groups have equal status to branches.” The original issue is no longer explicitly covered here but needs to be and needs further discussion. • “Having a seat at the table” is different from “formal representation at executive level”, especially with respect to any voting rights. • SIGs are more active than some of the Branches • Possible governance conflict and/or double-voting, eg could Colin vote on an issue as a member of the Wellington branch but then vote again as a member of the AMIGO group. • Democratically, if an SIG represents a particular body of NZFFA members, why shouldn't they? • Could an SIG be set up with minimal membership, eg a bark tea SIG? Should they get the same rights as the AMIGO group? Maybe there needs to be a membership threshold number. But then, what about some of the smaller branches?
<p>C. That new interest groups, that fill unoccupied spaces in the forestry sector, be set up. Because it will be the means whereby the NZFFA is most likely to be able to recruit significant numbers of new members, it is recommended in particular that a “forest investment interest group” be established.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no reason why a new SIG cannot be set up. The question is what status within the Association they would have or expect. <p><i>Possible Resolution: “The Council resolves that no impediment be offered to any member or member organisation seeking to establish a new interest group to serve an identified need within the forestry sector, provided the aims and standards of the proposed group be consistent with those of the NZFFA.”</i></p>
<p>D. That some functions that are currently undertaken by branches be centralized to ease workloads on voluntary administrators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current main HO to Branch interactions are address labels, branch refunds, conference • Current branch functions are bank account, newsletters, field day or event organisation • Some branches use the central database for mailing lists and some don't, which means HO doesn't know if the Branch adds/deletes a name but doesn't tell HO, and vice versa • All Branches are run by volunteers, so whatever HO can do to ease the load should be done. • Branches do not want to lose their autonomy, there should not be a HO take-over. <p><i>Possible Resolution: “The Council resolves that branches be encouraged to manage their own affairs in all respects; provided that they comply with audit, treasury and other specified requirements as set out by the Executive from time to time; and acknowledging that where branch resources are inadequate, branches may request and expect head office assistance.”</i></p>
<p>E. That a financial strategy be prepared to help with the future development of the association. This would include recommendations on how active funds (national body) and latent funds (branches) could better be used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes . . . • Is the level of existing expenditure acceptable • What are our possible future revenues and expenditure



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<p>F. That, once structural changes have been made, the NZFFA's current "showcase events" such as the national conference, action group weekends, national awards be reviewed to determine their relevance and appropriateness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes . . . a small group should be convened to work on this issue. <p><i>Possible Resolution: "The Council resolves that a small group be convened to review the relevance and appropriateness of the showcase events."</i></p>
<p>G. A full review be undertaken looking at the way members of the national association, branches and special interest groups are levied, and how this relates to the benefits that they receive. Currently all costs and benefits are bundled which leads to a high up front charge for membership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several types of known members: full members, TG-only members, and branch-only members. Another possible member-type could include an SIG-only member, eg a possible FFT-only member who is only interested in timber processing who isn't interested in the TG mag • Should the Association allow branch-only members? • The TG levy component is \$50 • Approx 30% of members don't have e-mail so the TG is the only guaranteed communication the NZFFA has with its members. As an aside, the FGLT expect that we can disseminate their information to our members if required and this offered capability was part of our budget request. • The membership cost range is about \$70-150, say \$110 on average, x 28 years = \$3080. • If the TG is allowed to be "unbundled" and become an optional item, some members will choose not to receive it which will reduce the number distributed, which will reduce the advertising rate that can be charged.
<p>H. That special interest groups be encouraged to prepare their own R&D strategies in order to target research gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIGs know what is required to help their own needs themselves, but all such R&D projects will still need to be agreed to and supported by the Executive before approaching, for instance, MPI or the FGLTB for funding <p><i>Possible Resolution: "The Council resolves that special interest groups be authorised to prepare their own R&D strategies in order to target research gaps and to source research funding, subject to any application for external funding being first approved by the Executive."</i></p>



Item	Points of Discussion and Possible Resolutions
<p>I. That a dedicated communications working group be formed to review all the current means of communication including the Tree grower, the website, the national office newsletter, and newsletters from branches and action groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms is in multiple directions: to its members, to non-member SSFOs, to the industry, to the public, to the Government/DCs/RCs • The website is very information-heavy and geared toward existing members or knowledgeable people who are interested in the technical side of things, but there's not much to explicitly encourage non-members to join, ie what can we do to help them or what's in it for them to join? • Content from Branches and SIGs for the national newsletter and the website is sporadic • FedFarmers put out one or two press releases a day, which gives them very visible media presence, and in a propaganda sense, the more something is said the more true it becomes. Maybe the NZFFA needs to be more vocal to promote its own needs and views. • Maybe we need a contracted lobbyist/strategist/PR person? • Currently, by default HO passes on any requests for comment to Ian as the president - maybe we need specialist spokespersons on particular topics, eg Patrick to do with anything scientific/bio-security, Hamish for economic impact events, Julian for H&S? <p><i>Possible Resolution: "The Council resolves that..." (continue with the exact words of item I).</i></p>
<p>J. That branch boundaries and regions of interest be reorganized to more closely align with regional communities of interest and possible alignment where practical with local government boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branches are geographically-based, possibly due to historic friendships and/or natural boundary features which may differ from local governments "lines on a map" boundaries. • Maybe branches could be re-organised according to their RC, DC, timbershed, roading aggregation, nearest accessible port, political boundaries? • Branches have formed strong social interaction relationships. <p><i>Possible Resolution: "The Council resolves that all branches and special interest groups shall through consultation establish their own boundaries and regions of interest; provided that branch boundaries shall embrace all areas of New Zealand and no two branches shall claim jurisdiction of the same area. All disputes shall be resolved by the Council whose determination shall be final."</i></p>
<p>K. That amendments to the NZFFA constitution be made to allow an unbundling of the relationship that Special Interest Groups have with NZFFA so that membership growth from outside of NZFFA sphere can be achieved.</p>	<p>(refer Appendix 1 of the attached Gordon/Berg/Levack paper)</p>



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L. That a name change be considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, it should be considered. • Possibly a working group is convened to discuss reasons for and against, and to present a range of options for consideration. • It needs to be decided how any decision is to be made, eg is there a members referendum and is it binding, do the Council vote and decide, or do the Executive vote and decide? <p><i>Possible Resolution: "The Council resolves that the Communications Working Group be charged with identifying and evaluating the merits of no more than four possible changes of name for the Association; and that it submits those options to the 2015 AGM / Council meeting for discussion."</i></p>
(this is an additional item which may or may not be considered at the meeting) M. Should the NZFFA offer commercial services to its members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should we offer commercial services to members? Would this cut into NZIF territory, what liability would the NZFFA have? • At the least, should we have a list of service providers on our website, eg seedling suppliers, planting crews, silviculture crews, harvesting crews, transport companies, fx providers, etc. • What about hardware providers, insurance, 4WD, safety gear? • While they would be listed as a service to our members, should we charge the provider to be on our website?