

Forest Enterprises' korero with Associate Minister of Forestry

Associate Minister of Forestry, [Honourable Meka Whaitiri](#) met with Forest Enterprises at their Masterton office during her visit to the Wairarapa on 7 June. The Minister's Office approached the New Zealand-owned forestry investment company, wishing to talk about the Government's forestry priorities.

Forest Enterprises manages more than 20,000 hectares of pine forest in the Wairarapa, Gisborne and Hawkes Bay on behalf of their investors, almost all of whom are New Zealanders. It is one of three licensed managers of forestry Managed Investment Schemes in New Zealand.

"The meeting was very positive", says Forest Enterprises' CEO, Bert Hughes.

"It is an exciting time to be in the forestry business. We are encouraged to do all we can to assist the Government's One Billion Trees planting milestone."

During what was a rare opportunity for most companies, Forest Enterprises talked with the Minister about matters important to the forestry investment sector. The discussion highlighted a number of shared priorities, including the availability of skilled labour, use of underutilised land, and the economic and environmental benefits of afforestation.

Says Hughes, "We plan to grow our forestry investment business given the confidence of the Government that this is a worthy objective for both the environment and the economy."

"The direct impact of our success is the creation of jobs", he adds. "Forestry needs skilled people across a range of job types, and they tend to be more highly paid compared to other land-based businesses. But as a company based in 'the regions', it can be hard to attract the right skills."

The One Billion Trees campaign was on the agenda. Discussed was the importance of the contribution of companies like Forest Enterprises to the campaign's success, in terms of both ensuring the replant of forests to be harvested in the next 10 years as well as the establishment of new forests.

Forest Enterprises highlighted that it was currently hamstrung by the unintended consequence of a forestry provision in the Tax Act, and that without change, it would not be able to maximise its contribution to the campaign. The Minister indicated that she would pursue this matter with her parliamentary colleagues.

"One Billion Trees is the best thing to happen to forestry in twenty years", says Hughes.

"The message of 'planting the right tree, in the right place, at the right time' rings true because we understand that what we do is only part of the picture.

"One Billion Trees provides employment opportunities among other long-term regional benefits. Afforestation is key to meeting the country's climate change targets, and we believe this is inspiring to the next generation of forestry investors."



Photo: Hon. Meka Whaitiri (centre), with Forest Enterprises executives, from left – Gordon Wong (Legal Services Director), CEO Bert Hughes, Graeme Tindall (Managed Investments Director), Steve Wilton (Special Projects Director) and Malte Coulmann (Forest Estate Manager) – 7 June 2018

Bert Hughes
CEO & Forestry Director
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