

Manulife *Forest Times*

Brought to you by Manulife Investment Management Forest Management (NZ) Limited

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Welcome to the first edition of 2026.

By Chris Barnes - Managing Director

What a challenging start to the year it has been. We have experienced significant rain and cyclone events, and the added complexity and financial pressure of a fuel crisis due to the Middle East conflict.

Reflecting back on past editions of *Manulife Forest Times*, a recurring theme has been adverse weather and the start of 2026 has been no different. In the first few months of the year we have seen multiple extreme weather events along with Cyclone Vaianu. Research is pointing to a trend of more frequent, intense rainfall events and we need to continue to adapt our forestry management practices and be prepared. During the lead up to Cyclone Vaianu, our incident management team took the proactive approach of closing the forest in advance of the cyclone making landfall. Fortunately, the cyclone was not as severe as forecast. However, you can be assured we will always take a conservative approach to these events to ensure the safety of contractors and staff.

The immediate impact of the Middle East conflict has seen a sharp surge in shipping and fuel prices. Shipping increased US\$10-12/JAS in the first few days of the conflict, while we have all seen the impact at the pump with diesel rising 43% in March.

On a positive note, the team at AVA secured a significant lift in the CFR price for April, and while this will offset some of the pain, the focus now shifts to CFR price setting and shipping costs for May and June. If we see a movement in the wrong direction, we will likely see a slowdown in production. We appreciate this creates significant uncertainty and our national managers will continue to keep contractors updated as we move from month to month. We will also continue to closely review what we can do to operate more efficiently, delay activity where possible, and support contractors with operating changes (e.g. FAF timing).

I have just returned from a market visit to southern China along with the AVA Board. This was a great opportunity to meet AVA customers and sales agents in China. An observation from this visit was the generational change across our customers, with sawmills now being run by young, energetic and entrepreneurial owners. AVA has developed a strong base of customers



in southern China, and through these relationships, we are seeing some very positive developments around log grade and mix that is leading to better returns for the end customer and ultimately, our clients. It has been pleasing to see log consumption in China start well post-Chinese New Year. Offtake is around 65k m³/day and inventory levels are relatively low at 2.56m³ (at the same time last year inventory was 3.9m³). Concerns around reduced supply from New Zealand, combined with lowering inventory, has created positive in-market sentiment and this helped lift prices in April.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our contractors and staff that contributed to the outstanding FSC and PEFC audit result in early April. This audit is an annual event. However, the outcome reflects the excellent environmental performance across the entire year.

There is a great photo in this edition from our recent company dinner of staff who have joined us. I want to thank these staff for getting up on stage and sharing their story with the business. It is always a highlight of the evening and a real pleasure listening to each of you introduce yourselves and your backgrounds. I always reflect back on the evening and feel fortunate you all choose to work with MFM (NZ). We also celebrated the 20-year work anniversaries of Sally, Carolyn and Peter (see photo later on in this edition). Thank you for the tremendous contribution you have each made to our clients and the support you provide our people and the wider New Zealand forest community. We have had several new staff join us since our last edition and I would like to welcome Ashish (Ash) Thummar (Technical Specialist Enterprise Technology & Services), Harley Dixon (Distribution Administrator), and Stella Dornan (Finance Assistant).

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National Managers' Update



Andrew Widdowson National Operations Manager

So far in 2026, the New Zealand forest industry has experienced a mixed and challenging start, marked by cost pressure, cautious markets, and gradual signs of stabilisation rather than strong growth.

Elevated fuel and energy prices have been a dominant issue, significantly increasing supply chain costs and putting pressure on contractor and forest owner margins.

At the same time, climate change impacts—including heavy rainfall events and weather-related access issues—have continued to disrupt operations and planning.

Export demand from China has remained stable, while domestic demand has shown modest improvement compared with 2025.

Despite these headwinds, the industry has continued operating steadily. The first part of 2026 has highlighted the sector's resilience, adaptability and focus on safety as it navigates ongoing volatility and uncertainty. New Zealand forestry contractors have consistently demonstrated a high level of resilience in the face of sustained and overlapping challenges.

While margins remain tight and uncertainty persists, the forestry contractor base has shown durability built on skill, innovation, and practical problem-solving. This adaptability remains a critical strength for the wider New Zealand forestry sector as it navigates an increasingly complex operating environment.

Health and safety in our operations remains a critical priority. Challenging weather, tighter margins, and fatigue risks reinforce the need for disciplined systems, competent supervision and investment in safe work practices to protect crews and sustain long-term industry performance.

Stay safe.



Darrell Tahere National Harvesting Manager

It has been a challenging start to the year.

Across the central North Island, harvesting operations have had to respond quickly to changing conditions, weather impacts and a busy programme of operational, safety and stakeholder activities.

Significant windthrow events in the Waimiha, Pittams and Pukematoiti forests required careful planning and adaptive operational changes to ensure work could continue safely and efficiently while recovering the affected volume.

Safety, training and continuous improvement remain a strong focus. WorkSafe Inspector Roger Merriman completed visits to Tiaki and Taumata Central with no issues raised. A trainer assessors meeting was also held, where we welcomed Aarin Dunster to the team. Roger presented WorkSafe's latest findings, supporting open discussion and shared learning.

A steep slope winch-assist workshop was held in Tokoroa, facilitated by Professor Rien Visser, targeting our ground-based operations.

The workshop was well attended by both contractors and staff, with strong engagement across all three clients.

We also welcomed University of Canterbury students Noah and Jotam, who completed a detailed time study at Trimax 116, a high-productivity skidder stem operation in Tarawera Forest.

Visits, Engagement and Industry Collaboration

We also hosted several stakeholder visits, including representatives from Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Manulife Japan/Australia, Indian officials, MPI staff and New Zealand business leaders from the red meat sector. These visits showcased our people, systems and commitment to safe, sustainable harvesting.

We were also joined by Karen Bayne (Bioeconomy Science Institute) and Harvey Campbell (School of Forestry), who visited the Aramiro and Morrison forests to discuss alternative harvesting options on steep slopes with crew foremen Chris Bridgens and Mark Lefebre. These conversations are an important part of exploring future-focused solutions and innovation.



Trimax 116 stem operation.



Left: Karen, Mark and Harvey.

Acknowledgement

Colleagues and friends gathered to attend Paddy Penwarden’s memorial service, a fitting tribute that reflected the strong connections within the team.

Paddy Penwarden memorial service held at Wawa quarry.



Mike Baker

National Forestry Manager

Tēnā koutou.

At the end of last year, an initial trial of aerial spraying by UAV commenced in the Taumata Central region. Five small blocks have now been completed by Outdoor Accuracy Ltd across both the spring release and late summer desiccation programmes. While it is early days, this operation shows it has potential, particularly for blocks with sensitive boundaries.

Chemical thinning has also now been introduced in all regions as another method for our thin for value programme, alongside manual chainsaw and mechanical operations. Chemical thinning is currently only a relatively small proportion of the total thinning programme, as we become familiar with its effectiveness across the range of sites encountered in the MFM (NZ) managed estates. However, this method of thinning is likely to be an effective tool, particularly on sites with steep terrain where it can reduce the health and safety risk of manual chainsaw operations.

In regard to the MFM (NZ) forestry team, we bid farewell to George Fanning-Ihaka in February as he departed on his OE. As a School of Forestry graduate, George spent two years working out of the Rotorua office, managing operations across the

Eastern region. Kayla Corbett, who has worked in the MFM (NZ) forestry team in Tokoroa for over six years, has now transferred across into this role in the Rotorua team.

Take care.



Chemical thinning result three months after treatment in Kinleith Forest.



UAV being loaded before re-commencing spraying (left) and results from a desiccation block at Wolverine Rd in Kinleith Forest (right).



Geoff Gover

National Harvest Planning & Engineering Manager

Another quarter has rolled over, and I often wonder where our time goes. For most, the Christmas holidays are a thing of the long-forgotten past, and for many of us, we now look forward to our next holiday.

Most of my team attended Safe Start meetings that, from all accounts, were informative and well run. This year's primary focus was on getting to and from the job site. A document distributed toward the end of last year by the forest industry collective, highlighted that around 50% of potential high harm incidents recorded were associated with driving. For most of us, this was not news. However, what it has done is put more focus on getting to and from your job site.

Your job sites are just that - your sites. You get to control the risks and hazards. When we venture out onto the public road network, we can no longer control the risks and hazards entirely and have to put controls in place to reduce the risk. The following are a number of controls that should always be considered by drivers:

1. Is the vehicle roadworthy (has WOF and registration)?
2. Put your seat belt on. These are for your protection, not mine. Too many people are severely injured or killed by simply missing this one step. MAKE IT HAPPEN for your family.
3. Drive to expect the unexpected.
4. Keep well left.
5. Keep a good following distance. If you are following someone, it doesn't matter if you are 2m or 30m behind, you are still doing the same speed and won't get there any faster.

6. Make sure you leave yourself time to get to your destination safely. If you are running a little late, then just be late. Better to get a telling off from the boss than to not get there at all.
7. Look out for your mates.

The engineering chaps have been busy over summer, working around the poor weather. The soils have remained wet for much of the so-called summer which has slowed construction progress. The one positive is that as we move forward, more of the harvest is from second rotation forests. They do not need the same heavy earthworks and so we can upgrade pavements under canopy. With any upgrade comes the need for aggregate, and lots of it. The Central chaps are blasting and crushing fulltime to keep up with demand.

Thanks to my team and Manulife staff who have provided me with significant support over the last five months. It's not until disaster strikes that we realise the importance of life and the people around us.

My final parting words are for those that don't always wear a seat belt while driving - please put it on for your family's sake.



Watts Quarry blast (Kinleith Forest).

Competition - Newsletter

Winner of Best Article in Nov 2025 edition

By Helen Moffatt - Administrative Coordinator, Tauranga

Congratulations to Karl Boobyer for your Keep NZ Beautiful Week article.

It is disappointing that people continue to dispose of their trash in our beautiful forests. However, it was very uplifting that so many staff, contractors, councils and transfer stations came together for this annual clean up. It always amazes me what people dump. Fantastic team effort.

**KEEP
NEW ZEALAND
BEAUTIFUL**



Remember anybody is eligible to win and another \$50 gift voucher will be awarded to the person who contributes our favourite article from this edition. If you have a favourite, please email Helen: hmoффatt1@manulife.com

... Continued from Managing Director article.

Their stories are at the back of this edition. Please take the time to say hello and welcome them when you get the opportunity.

While I have highlighted some of the challenges we currently face across the industry, please take the time to look through this edition of *Manulife Forest Times*. It highlights that we are in the

fortunate position to go to work each day in some of the best forests in the world, surrounded by great people and supportive clients.

Please feel free to give me a call (027 257 7260) if you ever need anything or would like to have a chat or a coffee.



Laresia Heke

National Distribution Manager

In this edition of the *Manulife Forest Times*, I will be sharing some photos and commentary around:

- Engagement – Wood is Good (Te Horo School at Pipiwai)
- Recognition – Driver Safety Awards and recognition for assistance with gates
- Technology – Driver Drowsiness and Attention Warning (DDAW) trial
- IK & SM Newey Transport Ltd – Welcome to the MFM (NZ) distribution contractor group
- Health and Safety.
 - Distribution contractor Safe Start events
 - Forest360 enforceable undertaking presentation
 - Australasian Road Safety Conference.

Wood is Good (Te Horo School at Pipiwai)

'Wood is Good' was undertaken at Te Horo School in Pipiwai during March. This programme is a New Zealand forestry initiative aimed at educating young people about the benefits of forestry. It provides resources and activities for primary school students to learn about trees, their uses, and the importance of sustainable forestry. We appreciated the support of both Rotorua Forest Haulage Limited and IK & SM Newey Transport Limited who provided trucks for this event. There were about 40 children in attendance, and they enjoyed having the opportunity to get up into the cab of a log truck, and receive a high-visibility bucket hat and gift bag.



Children at Te Horo School learning about safety around log trucks and the benefits of forestry to their community.

Driver Safety Awards and Recognition for Assistance with Gates

During the 2025 calendar year, 138 drivers were recognised with Driver Safety Awards. These awards were presented to drivers who have consistently operated within MFM (NZ) managed estates without any recorded fatigue or distraction events. In addition to this, commendable conduct is also acknowledged through special nominations made by distribution contractors, fellow drivers, harvesting crew members, and staff of MFM (NZ). Each driver also receives an entry into the end of year draw. Four drivers were randomly drawn and awarded a gift basket and voucher for Christmas.



Driver Safety Draw winners (2025) with their prizes.

Several drivers were also recognised for their help in opening gates in Taumata Central forests throughout 2025 which enabled access for the first trucks of the morning.



Drivers recognised for their help in opening gates in Taumata Central forests

Driver Drowsiness and Attention Warning (DDAW) Trial

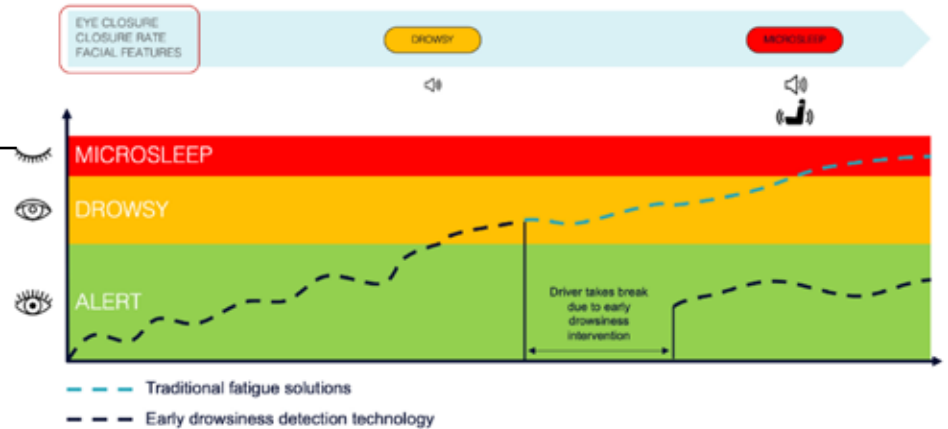
Williams and Wilshier Transport Limited (WWT) has been participating in a trial for the last eight months using new technology to assist with the early detection of driver fatigue. All log trucks that work for MFM (NZ) are required to have forward and driver-facing cameras that monitor drivers for distraction and provide alerts for fatigue or microsleep events. In the event that a driver has a microsleep, the seat will shake to alert the driver, along with an audible in-cab alert. Management will also receive a notification of a fatigue event after it has been reviewed and verified by Guardian Seeing Machines' monitoring centre. Driving is a critical risk and WWT, MFM (NZ) and AutoSense have worked together to use Driver Drowsiness and Attention Warning (DDAW) technology to develop reporting and awareness to assist drivers in managing fatigue more effectively. Generation 2 cameras have DDAW capability that continuously assesses the driver for signs of drowsiness and uses the Karolinska Sleepiness Scale (KSS) to calculate a score. This data can be collated in the background and used for reporting. When a light bar is fitted to the in-cab camera, a soft glowing light alert will show when the driver reaches a KSS

score of 8 or more. This early detection and intervention is aimed at preventing fatigue and microsleep events before they occur.

The diagram to the right, from seeingmachines.com indicates the two outcomes that could occur when a driver becomes drowsy. With no DDAW alert, the driver can continue to be drowsy and eventually fall asleep. With a DDAW alert the driver can stop, take a break, and return to a more alert state to safely complete their day.

Early Drowsiness Detection vs Traditional Fatigue Detection

By intervening pre-emptively, early drowsiness detection can prevent drivers from entering a microsleep



The whole WWT fleet was fitted with DDAW-capable cameras and light bars. For the first couple of months the data was captured in the background to help establish a baseline. Training sessions were undertaken with the drivers before the light bars were then enabled in the cab. Drivers were also given a list of countermeasures they could use to assist them if they started to feel drowsy and the light bar came on. The light bars were all enabled at the same time, and as expected, the reporting showed a downward trend in both DDAW and fatigue events. The data also showed a strong correlation between DDAW events as a precursor to fatigue or microsleep events. The light bars are a simple addition to an existing camera but play a very important role in the early detection of drowsiness and the prevention of microsleeps. WWT has found this trial very valuable, and they have had some positive feedback from drivers. This has enabled them to work with individual drivers where required, and has empowered drivers to intervene themselves by stopping and taking a break to ensure they get home safely.

Welcome to the MFM (NZ) Distribution Contractor Group

In October 2025 the distribution team welcomed IK & SM Newey Transport Limited to our Taumata Northern operations. We have very much enjoyed working with Ian Newey and his team over the past six months and look forward to their continued valuable contribution.



Laresia Heke (MFM (NZ) National Distribution Manager) and Ian Newey (IK & SM Newey Transport Limited).

Distribution Contractor Safe Start Events

In January 2026 MFM (NZ) distribution team members attended many distribution contractor Safe Start events. Key themes from contractor presentations included:

- 2025 year in review (health and safety incidents and trends)
- Operational rules/ACOP/critical risks
- Summer hazards/safety messages/driver wellbeing
- Health and safety-related KPIs or focus areas for 2026
- Driver recognition.

Forest360 Enforceable Undertaking Presentation

Dan Gaddum, Managing Director of Forest360, shared a presentation with MFM (NZ) staff, members of the Central North Island Health and Safety Forum, and some MFM (NZ) distribution contractors in relation to an enforceable undertaking (EU) that was agreed between Forest360 and WorkSafe. Forest360 agreed to fund a range of actions in response to a fatality on one of their sites where a log truck and trailer rolled while negotiating a tight bend on a Coromandel forestry road in May 2023. Of particular interest is the tool that Forest360 will be developing that will automatically map roads, measure their geometry and compare this to design standards. This will allow identification of roads that need improvement or additional safety measures.

Australasian Road Safety Conference

Laresia Heke, MFM (NZ) National Distribution Manager, and Glen Coleman, MFM (NZ) National Health and Safety Manager, attended the Australasian Road Safety Conference in Perth in October 2025. Allied Forensic Group (AFG), which undertook an independent safety review of MFM (NZ)'s distribution function, submitted a contribution to the conference programme highlighting MFM (NZ)'s impactful work across the distribution function. Key themes were around:

- Commitment to Vision Zero
- Focus on harm elimination
- Adoption of a safe system approach
- Belief that no one should be killed or seriously harmed while performing transport tasks.

Ngā mihi nui.

Industry



Chris Barnes (Managing Director), Ash Thummar, Elvy George, Celeste Foreman, Stella Dornan, Aaron Huggins, Harley Dixon, Philip Luton, Jo Burrell (HR Manager).

2026 MFM (NZ) Annual Company Dinner

By Helen Moffatt - Administrative Coordinator, Tauranga

In March MFM (NZ) had the honour of having the MIMTA senior leadership team in New Zealand who put aside some of their precious time to front up to a question and answer session followed by our annual company dinner. We also had a number of our Taumata and Tiaki directors join us for the evening. The staff really enjoyed this interaction and appreciated the directors taking the time to mix, mingle and meet the team on the ground. It was mutually rewarding.

The events were perfectly hosted by our very own in-house MC, Chris Barnes (Managing Director). This year we started with the usual new hire presentations. You will notice that Aaron Huggins is in this group – he thought that because he couldn't make the dinner last year, he was off the hook. He was sadly mistaken.

As a backdrop to the evening, we had a PowerPoint running to showcase and highlight achievements in the business over the last year. There was a lot to be proud of.

This year we added a new presentation category, the MFM (NZ) Values Awards. Staff were asked to nominate other staff members and the response was overwhelming. Below is a summary of the awards and the recipients.

Do the right thing - Winner:
John Lamb

Obsess about our customers - Joint winners:
Diana King and Treen Hawker

Protect our people from harm - Winner:
Rona Wheeldon

Think big - Joint winners:
Karl Boobyer and TJ Thompson

Get it done together - Joint winners:

Sue Ranger, Elvy George, Sarah Fellingham, Alex de Rosemont, Celeste Foreman and Shanon McGovern

Own it - Joint winners:

Michael Elix, Gordon Anderson-Smith, Reuben Hawtree and Sally Strang

Share your humanity - Winner: **Geoff Gover**

We were also honoured to have three staff members celebrating 20 years with the business:

Peter Houston, Forestry Manager
Award presented by Andrew Widdowson

Sally Strang, Environmental Manager
Award presented by Ursula Buckingham

Carolyn Jackson, Land Manager
Award presented by Mike Baker



Andrew Widdowson, Peter Houston, Sally Strang, Ursula Buckingham, Carolyn Jackson, Mike Baker.

Environmental & Harvesting



Loggabull Crew 14 and whanau at Morrison Forest. Not a bad view from the office!

Getting it Done Together: Loggabull Crew 14's Outstanding Harvest of Morrison Forest

By Sally Strang - Environmental Manager, Tokoroa office

Recently MFM (NZ) recognised Loggabull Crew 14 for their exceptional work in Morrison Forest at Aotea. This forest holds deep cultural significance, with occupation dating back to the first arrival of the Aotea and Tainui waka.

Within the forest are 38 recorded historic sites, including three prominent pā, a sacred pōhutukawa tree, wetlands associated with the discovery of the Korotangi (a sacred stone bird now held by Waikato-Tainui), a cave rua, and numerous midden.

The eastern side of the forest includes an historic garden area cultivated by Whakaotirangi, principal wife of Hoturoa who was captain of the Tainui Waka. Taro that descended from her original plantings can still be found there today. Known collectively as Hawaiki Iti - a reference to the ancestral homeland Hawaiki - the area is registered as wāhi tapu with Heritage New Zealand.

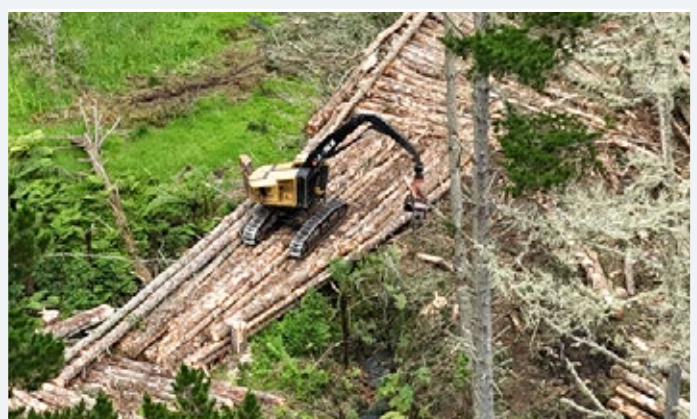
Consultation for the harvest began back in 2015, and understandably, local iwi (Ngāti Te Wehi and Ngāti Patupō) were deeply concerned about ensuring the harvest was carried out with the utmost care and respect.

Following a cultural induction at Mokai Kāinga Marae in February 2025, Loggabull Crew 14 began cable logging in an area with trees planted in extreme situations and enormous responsibility to “get it right.” After a few weeks of straightforward harvesting to warm up, the team moved into the most sensitive zones - working around the Korotangi tree, three pā sites, Hawaiki Iti garden areas, wetlands and streams.

Brian, Mark, TJ, and the team used every bit of their cable logging experience to protect the sites. Machine-assisted directional felling, using hauler ropes rigged through blocks, was used to place individual trees with precision. The team rigged a tail spar to improve deflection, two-staged it to the hauler ropes for



Felling the final trees from Ture Matai Reha pa site with the armoured log extraction corridor.



Constructing the log bridge over the Kowiwi Stream to protect the stream and taro from damage.

extraction through a single corridor, constructed a log bridge to protect a creek crossing, and armoured ridges with logs to protect extraction corridors. They even used a few more novel techniques, laying down tyres under falling machine tracks when working on pā sites to minimise ground disturbance. No stone was left unturned to keep impact to the absolute minimum.

The final results have been outstanding. Ngāti Te Wehi and Ngāti Patupō have expressed deep appreciation for the respect and care shown throughout the operation. To acknowledge this achievement, we held a BBQ with Manulife senior management, iwi representatives, and members of the Morrison family. A highlight was having the crew’s whānau attend, giving them the

chance to see the forest, watch logging in action, and appreciate the need for the crew’s early starts - it’s quite the hike from Tokoroa to Aotea!

Congratulations to Loggabull Crew 14, along with Harvesting Forester TJ and Environmental Forester Karl, for an exceptional job. We couldn’t be more proud of what you’ve achieved.

Next up, Lakes 56 will move into Morrison Forest to complete the ground-based harvest areas - no pressure team!

Below: Shagger in action demonstrating tethered falling with a bit more of an audience than usual!



Waimiha Windthrow Recovery

By Richard Feierabend - Harvesting Manager, Tokoroa

A significant wind event impacted Waimiha Forest on 29 December, resulting in approximately 150 hectares of windthrow across the 1,418.64-hectare Taumata freehold property. The affected crop averages 30 years of age.



At the time of the event, three Taumata Central harvesting crews were already operating in the forest. An additional three crews have since been deployed, supported by engineering resources, to accelerate recovery efforts.

There are now six crews on-site:

- Cable crews: Fast Harvesting 67, Loggabull 40, and King Country Harvesting 75
- Tethered ground-based crews: Loggabull 43 and JDL 77
- Road-line salvage crew: FAST Harvesting 34

We expect to complete the majority of windthrow recovery by the end of June 2026, with full clearfall of Waimiha Forest scheduled for completion by mid-2027.

People & Events



Jess Evans from Evans Logging explaining his operation to the meat industry tour group.



Tiaki Board tour visiting Tarawera lake outlet.

Tiaki Tours and Visits

By Peter Auge - Harvesting Manager, Rotorua

During the first quarter, we have had a busy time hosting numerous tour groups to Tarawera and Matahina forests including:

- Manulife IT support Sanda Masala and Ashish (Ash) Thummar with Steve Richards
- Sumitomo Bank Pension Fund
- India forestry officials and MPI

- Meat industry H&S representatives and CEOs
- Tiaki Board.

Tours included site visits to Evans Logging, Trimax Logging, Maungawaru Logging, and Kajavala Forestry at KPY. We extend our sincere thanks to all participating contractors for generously hosting the tours, and for their enthusiastic engagement with attendees. Each tour also featured a visit to either Tarawera Falls or the lake outlet.



Indian forestry officials and MPI staff visit the establishment site in Matahina Forest.



SMBC visit to Trimax Logging.



Steve, Sanda and Ash at Tarawera Falls.



Central office's successful pumpkin growers, pictured alongside Geoff at the final weigh-in.

Queen of the Pumpkins Retains Her Crown

By Cameron Fenton - Forester, Tokoroa

As the 2025–2026 summer wrapped up, deep within the lush green sea of the Kinleith Forest, giant pumpkins quietly grew. Week by week they increased in size, while the first frost crept ever closer.

This year's Central Office Giant Pumpkin Growing Competition began with 27 Atlantic Giant pumpkin seedlings. As the season progressed, numbers steadily dwindled, until just three competitors successfully produced true giant pumpkins. Unfortunately, Sally Strang's competition-leading specimen was mysteriously removed overnight, denying her a podium finish.

Last year's supreme champion, Nina Paton, once again proved her growing prowess. Slipping in just before the deadline, Nina successfully produced two GIANT pumpkins on a single vine, with the winning pumpkin tipping the scales at an impressive 13.45 kilograms, enough to comfortably retain her crown.

Due to a technicality and questions surrounding the genetics of Kayla Corbett's two non-giant pumpkins, Darrell Tahere moved into second place with his 'giant' pumpkin weighing in at 1 kilogram. Despite the unlucky theft, Sally Strang was awarded an honorary fourth place for her dedication and progress throughout the season.

This year's results once again highlighted the importance of technical know-how, patience and care when growing giant pumpkins.

Planning is already underway to kick off the Central Office Giant Pumpkin Growing Competition again this coming spring. We hope that first-time competitors will return, armed with lessons learned (stronger pest management plans, improved nutrient strategies, and better site selection), to challenge our reigning champions.



Protective pest enclosure used to give pumpkin seedlings the best possible start.



Sally Strang's progress photo, documenting the growth of her pumpkin prior to its disappearance.

Supply Chain



Sarah, Nav, and Alex recently spent some time at the Northland office and took the chance to visit a number of local sites and places they had previously only heard about or seen on paper. We stopped in at Northport, the Marusumi (Now NP Wood Fibre, Nippon Paper) export woodchip pile, CHH LVL, and Weigh Northland. This helped give them a much better feel for how everything connects across the region.

One of the standout parts of the day was our visit to the Northpine sawmill in Waipu. Northpine Ltd is a privately-owned timber manufacturer that was formed in 1999 after taking over the old Waipu Timber Company. They've been a long-time customer of TPL Northland and are well known for producing high-quality structural lumber and solid wood beams using Northland's high-density forest resource.

Bruce Larsen hosted us on-site and gave an excellent tour.

We got to see the full process - from raw logs arriving at the mill right through to finished lumber being loaded onto a truck for delivery. It was a great chance to see the entire operation in action and to understand the value Northpine brings to the region.

Sawmill Visit - Finance Team Visits Northpine

By Steve Weir - Supply Chain Manager, Whangarei



Share the Road Programme Delivered to Te Horo School, Pipiwai

By Steve Weir, Supply Chain Manager, Whangarei

"Share the Road" was first developed in Northland as an education initiative designed to help primary school children understand how to stay safe around log trucks.

With harvesting activities recommencing in the Pipiwai Forest, members of the Northland MFM (NZ) team - Ursula, Steve, Greg and Pete - visited Te Horo School to support the delivery of the programme. Around 40 students, aged 5 to 12, listened intently as Ian Newey shared important safety messages about interacting with log trucks on rural roads.

The programme features a combination of activities, videos, publications, and practical demonstrations that teach both children and their parents how to stay safe around log trucks. A memorable highlight for many students was climbing into the driver's seat and sounding the truck's air horn - an experience met with plenty of excitement.

The event was further supported by Mark Adams from RFH, along with truck drivers Barry and Matt from RFH and Ian Newey Transport. Every child received a hi-vis safety bucket hat, proudly worn at the end of the day. Each hat included the message *Kia haumarū tātou*, meaning "let's keep safe together". It's a message that resonated strongly with students and staff.

We extend our thanks to Te Horo School for hosting us, and to the drivers and management teams from both transport companies for their valued support.



People & Events



International Women's Day 2026 – Our MFM (NZ) Ltd women get together at the company dinner.

International Women's Day: Celebrating Progress, Strength and Impact

By Lyn-Lee Parker - Administrative Coordinator, Tokoroa

International Women's Day (8 March) is a global occasion that celebrates the social, economic, cultural and professional achievements of women, while also recognising the ongoing commitment needed to build a more inclusive and equitable world.

Across our organisation, women contribute in countless ways - through leadership, collaboration, technical expertise, innovation and care for both people and purpose. From frontline roles to corporate support functions, women play a vital role in shaping our teams, our culture and the success of our business.

This year's International Women's Day was an opportunity to:

- Acknowledge the achievements of women across all levels of our organisation
- Reflect on the progress made toward gender equality
- Reaffirm our commitment to creating an inclusive and respectful workplace.

At Manulife Forest Management (NZ) Ltd, we recognise that diversity and inclusion are not one-day conversations. They are embedded in how we work together - valuing different perspectives, supporting professional development, and fostering an environment where everyone feels respected and empowered to succeed.

We also recognise that inclusion benefits everyone. When women are supported to thrive, businesses are stronger, teams are more innovative, and communities are more resilient.

We encourage everyone to take a moment to:

- Celebrate the women you work alongside
- Thank those who inspire, support and lead
- Reflect on how we can continue to champion equity and inclusion in our day-to-day interactions.

Happy International Women's Day to all the women across our organisation. Thank you for the impact you make, today and every day.

Events



2025 TTT Rally Report

By Kim Munden - South Waikato Vintage Car Club

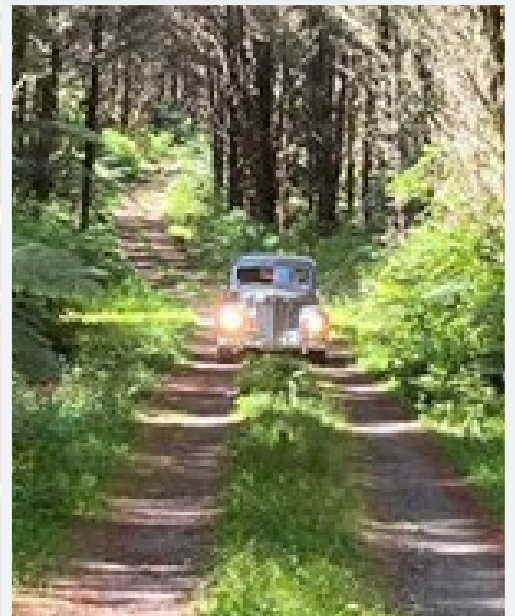
The last Sunday of November 2025 saw 29 vehicles assemble at the clubrooms for the annual TTT rally hosted by the South Waikato Vintage Car Club. This rally has been held for close on 50 years and vehicles came from as far away as Paihia and Whakatane. Vehicles ranged from a 1909 Dion and upwards.

The day dawned bright and sunny. After a get-together, we had a quick driver briefing and vehicles were sent off in one-minute intervals with an instruction sheet and goodie bag.

After a brief trip on public back roads, we entered the Kinleith Forest and slowly meandered our way west on forest gravel roads through cut-over pine plantations, young pines and mature trees. Climbing high on roads not accessible to the public gave stunning views, and the 1911 Capthorne was in its element driving on roads its owner said it was designed for. There was abundant wildlife seen with pheasants, rabbits and even two deer which just ambled away. We eventually emerged at the Waipapa Dam which became operational in 1961. This is where we regrouped and participated in an activity which involved darts and a dart board which gave plenty of laughs all around.

Leaving there, we made our way south and went over Ranginui Road which gave spectacular views of Mount Titiraupenga and Mount Pureora. Many found it hard not to stop at a café before making our way over another hydro dam, ducking back into the forest, and touring around the back of the Kinleith Pulp Mill and log yards. Skirting Tokoroa township through the forests brought everyone back to the clubrooms for a barbeque and prizegiving. Six hours and 134kms made for a very social and pleasant rally with many saying it is a rally they will be back for.

We are grateful to Manulife Forest Management, who are the forest managers, for allowing our club to showcase the beautiful scenery in our little bit of paradise.



New Staff

Harley Dixon

Distribution Administrator, Tokoroa

Kia ora,

I'm a proud and present mama of four – one girl and three boys.

Being Tokoroa born and bred, forestry has been a huge part of my whānau and our community.

My foundational knowledge of forestry was developed through my experience dispatching at Trimble Navigation.

Working at Manulife has already enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of the forestry industry in a short period of time. This has made me eager to further develop my knowledge and skills while building positive professional relationships throughout this industry.

I look forward to meeting you all at some stage.



Stella Dornan

Finance Assistant, Tauranga

Hi everyone! I'm Stella, and I've recently joined the finance team. I've made the move from Hawke's Bay where I gained my diploma in Business and Accounting and where I spent the last few years working as an apple orchard administrator.



Outside of work, I enjoy a bit of fishing, jumping on the netball court, and spending time with friends and family.

I'm enjoying the change of scenery and getting to know everyone here!

Ashish Thummar

Technical Specialist Enterprise Technology & Services, Rotorua

Technology has always been an area I've enjoyed working in and I'm excited to have joined Manulife as a Technical Specialist based in Rotorua. I work closely with teams to support the technology platforms that underpin day-to-day business operations. My role focuses on helping teams resolve technical issues and ensuring systems are reliable and enable people to work effectively.

I enjoy problem-solving and learning new tools and systems as they evolve. I'm looking forward to continuing to develop my skills while contributing to the wider team.

Outside of work, my wife and I enjoy getting outdoors and exploring what the Bay of Plenty has to offer.

Cheers, Ash.



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forestCHAT

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What's New?

This year, our wellbeing focus takes a more holistic approach, especially around how we use our bodies and support our physical health.

Last year, the Wellbeing Committee partnered with Provention to introduce their First Move programmes. These interactive sessions focus on building everyday awareness around movement, posture and healthy work habits – practical skills that support long-term physical wellbeing and help reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries.

Provention has tailored the First Move content specifically for MFM (NZ), taking into account the nature of our work and the demands placed on our people across different roles. The programme is designed to be practical and easy to apply with simple strategies that can make a meaningful difference - both at work and at home.

Following positive feedback from initial sessions, I am currently rolling this programme out more widely across the contractor network. This expansion reflects our ongoing commitment to wellbeing and injury prevention, ensuring consistent messages and support are available to everyone who works with and alongside MFM (NZ).

Be a Mate will continue to be available for those who haven't yet received the training. Late last year we delivered Co-Mate to a select group. This programme provides additional skills for supporting distressed individuals, initiating safe and supportive conversations, and guiding people toward the right help.

We look forward to continuing these partnerships and embedding these proactive wellbeing practices across our operations.



Championing Wellbeing

An update from Richard...

I hope everyone enjoyed the Christmas break and the long summer weekends with whānau and friends – hard to believe how quickly time has flown by.

It was great to get around the Safe Starts and hear the positive messaging being shared across teams. I appreciated the opportunity to speak briefly and remind everyone about the services that I provide and the support available through EAP.

Circles of Influence

Life feels busy for many of us, and it only seems to be getting busier. On top of that, world events and the flow-on affect that they have on us can add extra pressure to our daily lives, increasing stress and anxiety.

When things start to feel overwhelming, a simple tool to ground you that I recommend is the 'Circles of Influence'.

Focussing on what you can personally change or influence helps reduce stress and mental clutter. Concerns outside of your control can easily consume your energy, leading to overthinking, ruminating thoughts and disrupted sleep.

When you are feeling overwhelmed, take a moment to pause and ask yourself:

What can I control?

Your actions, your responses, your choices, your habits.

What can I influence?

Relationships, team culture, shared decisions, communication.

What can't I Control?

Other people's behaviour, world events, organisational decisions outside of your role.

Letting go of what's outside of your control frees up your energy for what truly matters, 'YOU'.

As we continue to navigate through a time of uncertainty – let's look after ourselves and each other. Small habits, supportive conversations and mindful awareness can make a big difference in how we show up at work and at home.