

Manulife *Forest Times*

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

Issue No.22 | JULY 2026

Half-yearly Update

By Chris Barnes - Managing Director

As we hit the halfway mark of 2026, I am reminded of the Bruce Springsteen version of the song War and the lyric, "What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!" It seems as relevant now as when the song was first written.

The impact of the Middle East conflict played out very quickly earlier this year, with a sharp lift in shipping and fuel prices. Shipping increased by as much as US\$19/JAS by mid-June, and we have all seen the impact at the pump, with diesel prices peaking in April. The combined impacts of fuel and shipping led to the decision to slow export production during June and July, and I want to thank our contractors for their understanding and support during this period. We acknowledge that any slowdown creates pressure across businesses and for people throughout our supply chain. However, it was an important and practical response to the prevailing conditions while also ensuring the market understood the margin pressures.

Fortunately, we started to see both shipping and diesel prices decrease steadily through to late July. However, a recent return to hostilities has seen prices lift again. On a positive note, AVA has been able to maintain a strong and diverse market presence, and export prices are holding up along with strong support from our domestic customers. We should use a disruption such as this as a catalyst to explore new market opportunities and continue to question if we can be more efficient and potentially delay activity without impacting estate value. For our contractors, please be assured that we will continue to work with and support you as operating changes (e.g. FAF timing) are needed.

A positive highlight at this time of year is our planting programme. This is where it all starts, and I would like to thank our forestry crews who are out planting in often wet and very cold conditions. We are planting approximately 3.5M trees this winter across various sites for Taumata and OTHP NZ. Everyone involved does a fantastic job in what is one of the most important tasks in the forestry business – thank you!



In May, our Taumata and Tiaki Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Environment Committee met in Rotorua and spent the day visiting operations in King Country forests. This field visit was a great opportunity for directors to see the excellent work our staff and contractors have done recovering windthrow at Waimiha, and to see the challenges associated with long travel distances for both people and getting logs to market. We also took the opportunity to visit the Blue Duck recovery project (see pg 8) and the location of several distribution incidents associated with log cartage from Waimiha.

We have had several new staff join MFM (NZ) since our last edition, and I would like to welcome Courtney Henderson – Assistant Land Manager, and Tiana Kapene-Hamilton – Woodflow Scheduler. Thank you for choosing to work with MFM (NZ) and for sharing your backgrounds with us in this newsletter. Please take the time to welcome our new staff when you can. I would also like to thank and farewell Darrell Tahere, who retired on 9 July after 17 years of service with MFM (NZ).

Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles to this edition. I encourage contractors to share your stories and business highlights. If you have an article, please send it to Helen Moffatt (hmoffatt1@manulife.com) for our last edition later this year. It is our people who make forestry a great place to work, and sharing your stories helps showcase that.

A final reminder to please ensure you understand our life-saving rules and be careful regardless of the task. Always take your time and remember you are empowered, and have my full support, to stop any operation if you are concerned about safety.

Please feel free to give me a call (027 257 7260) anytime if I can help, or if you would like a chat or a coffee.

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National Managers' Update



Andrew Widdowson

National Operations Manager

Unlike last winter, this year we have enjoyed unusually settled weather which is always well-received by our people working out in the forests.

Our 2026 planting programme is 3,967 hectares in total, of which 3,000 hectares are concentrated in Taumata Plantations Ltd. It is pleasing to see exceptionally good seedling quality from Arborgen again this year. A special shout-out to our forestry planting crews and staff who are out on cutovers every morning, rain, hail or shine, to complete the programme.

At this time of year, the Harvest Planning and Engineering teams are focusing on harvest planning and maintenance work, as required. We are presently undertaking further shredded road trials in Northland which are proving successful and have potential across our wider operations in the central North Island.

Our harvesting staff and contractors have done an excellent job over the last few months managing production quotas in response to soft export market conditions in June and July. Pleasingly, we are seeing some improvement in FOB returns which will see a return to normal and budgeted production levels. July marks a new fiscal year with a harvest programme totalling 3.8 million tonnes. This will be produced from 43 harvesting crews operating across our three client entity forests in Northland, South Waikato, King Country, and Taupō.

Our log distribution operations continue to perform at a consistently high level, demonstrating strong coordination, reliability, and operational excellence across our supply chain. Through effective planning, robust health and safety practices, and strong partnerships with harvesting crews, distribution contractors, and customers, we have maintained efficient log flows across our client forestry network over the first half of 2026.

Darrell Tahere.

Retirement after 17 Years of outstanding service

As a final note, after 17 years of dedicated service in senior leadership roles with Hancock Forest Management (NZ) Ltd and, more recently, Manulife Forest Management (NZ) Ltd, we acknowledge and celebrate the retirement of Darrell Tahere, National Harvesting Manager. Throughout his career, Darrell has been a highly respected leader whose expertise and professionalism have made a lasting contribution to our forestry business. On behalf of everyone at MFM (NZ), we thank Darrell for his outstanding service and wish him and his whānau all the very best for a well-deserved and fulfilling retirement.

Stay safe.



Richard Arderne

National Forestry Update

Recognising Thinning Success

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge our thinning contractors across all regions for the excellent work completed so far this calendar year. Collectively, crews

have thinned approximately 2,500 hectares with zero Lost Time Injuries.

There has also been encouraging progress in the manual thin certification space. Year to date, nine thinners have achieved certification, with a further 10 now eligible. This is a positive step forward for our thin-for-value programme, helping ensure operations are completed safely, consistently, and to the required standard. As more of our registered thinners move through the certification process, we strengthen both operational quality and confidence across our thin-for-value operations.

From Thinning To Planting: The Winter Programme Is Well Underway

As we move deeper into the winter months, the focus for many contractors and forestry staff has shifted from thinning to planting operations.

The forestry team is now well and truly elbows deep in managing this year's planting programme, which involves nine planting crews and 74 planters working across the three regions. This season, the target is to plant 3.5 million trees across 3,967 hectares.



Planting on a frosty morning in Matahina Forest.

Competition

At the time of writing, progress is tracking well toward the planned mid-September completion date, with 45% of the programme already completed.

A Tough Job That Deserves Recognition

Of all forestry operations, planting is one of the most physically demanding. It requires fitness, endurance, and mental toughness. Planters spend long days moving across slash-filled cutovers, which are often steep and wet. They do this while carrying loaded boxes of seedlings, repeatedly bending, digging, cultivating, planting, and moving on to the next spot, all the while making sure planting is completed to the required high standard.

It is a job that can look simple from a distance, but anyone who has spent time in a planting crew knows the level of effort involved. It is even harder to believe that some planters still finish the day and head off to rugby practice at their local club.

Take care.



Winner of Best Article in the April 2026 Newsletter

By Helen Moffatt - Administrative Coordinator, Tauranga

Congratulations Steve Weir for your article on the Share the Road Programme.

It's great to see our youth being exposed to the forestry industry at such a young age. The safety messages delivered are so important and you've got to love the cheeky look on some of these kids' faces.

Remember anybody is eligible to win and another \$50 gift voucher. This 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



National Managers' Update



Geoff Gover

National Harvest Planning & Engineering Manager

What a tumultuous year it has been to date. With the US-Iran war, the impacts go right through to the family household trying to afford to fill the car up with fuel on a weekly basis. The one thing I did learn in the last few months is that most of the world is just getting on with living and it doesn't even get a lot of media attention. Here in New Zealand, the media have certainly reflected on the negative impacts, and through the big gloom machine, have probably created more cost than what is absolutely real.

I spent a few weeks visiting my daughter in the UK and everything was tracking along as per normal, even flying through Dubai. I didn't even know that there was a war on, apart from the airport being a little quieter than normal.

Back to life in New Zealand, and it's certainly a lot colder. Thankfully the weather has been exceptionally kind with regard to rainfall. A number of the roadline salvage operations have been running behind schedule, and with the longer dry period, it has allowed the construction of roads and landings to continue. A big shout out to all the operators who are working lengthy hours to ensure the infrastructure is in place ready for the harvest crews.

I often talk to my team about knowing who your customer is. We spend significant time focused on optimising the operational efficiency for harvest and distribution. One area where the engineers are putting a lot more focus and undertaking not only improvements to signage on the network but also providing maps etc that will assist teams to make better decisions. A couple of the current activities that road users in Central may have noticed are:

- The line marking on the seal network is now twice as thick as it once was, so should remain vivid and clear for users for at least an entire year. Areas with low volume use will see at least two years before the lines start to fade. Some sections of the seal network that once only had centre lines marked are now having fog lines marked to assist with driving when the fog gets thick.
- Corner speed recommendations. Using some technical equipment, the Engineering team are now able to determine what the safe cornering speed should be. With the focus being on the seal network first up, we will move into the high volume aggregate roads over the coming months. You will start to see signs similar to the pictures to the right, to assist you with making the right decision on corner speed. If you have concerns around the marking, then please contact your local forester who will either give you the details of the engineer or pass on a message.
- Using AI to write computer code, we are able to create maps that will show the gradient of the road for an entire route. This will assist the Distribution team when

looking at hazards for the log trucks. Steep gradients on straight sections of road are generally not an issue but a steep gradient leading into a tight radius corner may be an issue. Increasing bund height and signage may be the remedial work required.



On another note, I want to shout out to the entire Engineering team who have completed six years without a Lost Time Injury. Like I have said many times, good planning and execution have created this result. As the saying goes, "It didn't happen by accident." Taking ownership of the site, and persons working in and around the site, are key factors in this outstanding result. Weekly, I see incident reports coming into Velocity that relate to wider forest users and not just the individuals who take the time to report. Well done to all contractors and staff.

Keep safe and look out for your mates.

My parting words:

"In the forest, they found their peace, Among the trees, their worries ceased.

Leaves would whisper, winds would sing, A symphony of nature's spring.

Now the woods hold their gentle soul, In every branch, they've found their role."

**RIP John van den Kerkhof, you will be missed.
Your legacy lives on in us.**



Laresia Heke

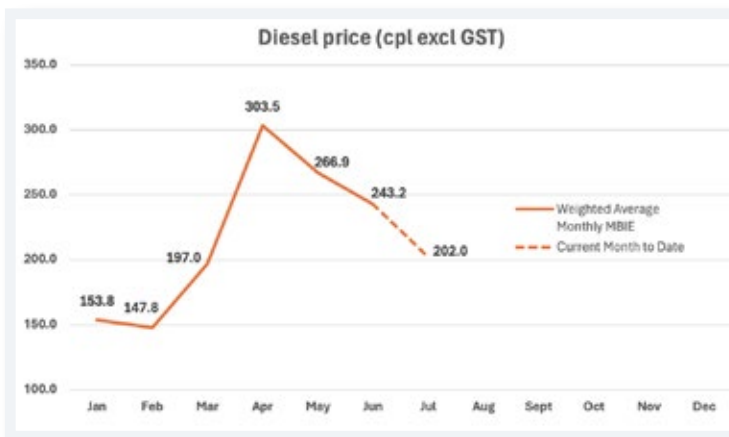
National Distribution Manager

In this edition of Manulife Forest Times, I will be reflecting on the recent fuel cost pressures, sharing two industry initiatives that I feel are of interest to the wider MFM (NZ) stakeholder group, and paying tribute to Warwick Wilshier who was

recently appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours.

Fuel Cost Pressures

Over the past quarter the New Zealand forest industry has faced significant cost pressures from elevated fuel prices following President Donald Trump's military actions and escalations in the Middle East, particularly the conflict with Iran. As a fuel-intensive sector reliant on harvesting, road transport, and export logistics, higher diesel and freight costs have had a direct impact on operating expenses across the supply chain. These pressures have been difficult to offset in competitive markets, placing strain on margins and resulting in MFM (NZ) operating for a period at reduced production levels. We acknowledge that this slowdown has had a direct impact on contractor businesses, and we recognise the challenges this has created for our contracting partners. Encouragingly, fuel costs have begun to ease and are trending in the right direction, although they remain above pre-conflict levels as highlighted in the fuel trend graph below. As production levels now return to 100%, we sincerely thank our contractors for their resilience, flexibility, and continued commitment during this period, and we all look forward to greater certainty and stability across the supply chain in the months ahead.



Forest Owners Association - The Blokes Book

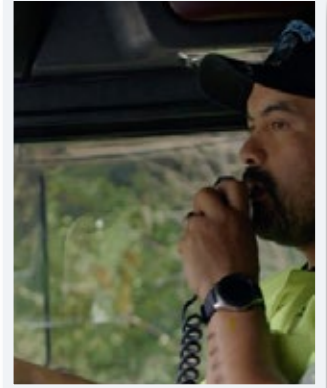


At a recent Distribution Contractor meeting, copies of the "Blokies Book" were provided for contractors to pass on to their drivers. The Blokies Book is a wellbeing resource that was funded by the Forest Growers Levy Trust (FGLT) as part of a driver wellbeing project run by James Drummond for the Forest Owners Association (FOA). This initiative is created for the log transport community and is supported by the Log Transport Safety Council (LTSC). It offers practical tips and support to help drivers look after their mental, emotional, and physical health. The resource recognises the tough

demands of the industry and encourages proactive steps toward wellbeing. There is guidance on stress management, nutrition, work-life balance, and personal stories aimed at inspiring healthier habits and building a stronger, safer community. The themes covered are universal and align with MFM (NZ)'s commitment to supporting the health, safety, and wellbeing of all people working in our operations, and I recommend that you obtain a copy by contacting Shayne Jeffares from Jaffa Media jaffamedianz@gmail.com.

FISC Initiative - Industry Collaboration Supports Health and Safety Learning

MFM (NZ) Distribution Supervisor Quintin Makene is contributing to an industry-led project being undertaken by the Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC) to strengthen Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation (WEPR) across New Zealand's forestry sector. The initiative is developing a suite of practical online learning modules designed to build the confidence and capability of health and safety representatives, frontline supervisors, and workers, helping to improve workplace communication, hazard awareness, and safety engagement. FISC's goal is to make high-quality health and safety learning more accessible for forestry businesses operating in remote and dispersed environments. Quintin has been invited to contribute valuable frontline insights from his experience in distribution operations, where health and safety management and communication are key, to help ensure the training reflects real-world forestry environments and challenges.



King's Birthday Honour - Warwick Wilshier (Williams and Wilshier Transport Limited)

Warwick Wilshier has been appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours, recognising his significant contribution to improving health and safety outcomes across New Zealand's log transport sector. His leadership of the New Zealand Log Transport Safety Council (LTSC) for more than 25 years has been instrumental in reducing industry log truck rollover rates (from 2.4 per million kilometres travelled to 0.3), representing a sustained and measurable improvement in safety performance. LTSC achieved this through spearheading safety reforms, including increasing trailer lengths to 22m so loads could sit lower, improving stability and reducing rollover risk. Additionally, LTSC introduced stricter driver training, formal qualifications, speed monitoring and fatigue management programmes. Warwick is a Director of Williams and Wilshier Transport Limited, which provides log cartage services to MFM (NZ) clients: OTPP New Zealand Forest Investments Ltd, Tiaki Plantations Company and Taumata Plantations Limited. This recognition reflects Warwick's strong leadership, passion, and commitment to continuous improvement, as does his previous induction to the New Zealand Road Transport Hall of Fame in 2022. Warwick was also named Business Person of the Year at the 2024 Tompkins Wake Rotorua Business Awards.



All the best for the third quarter of 2026. Ngā mihi nui.

Sales and Export



Chinese log buyers at Crew 2 – Tiaki.

The China Market in Person

By Thornton Campbell - Supply and Commercial Manager, Rotorua

In March, there was an opportunity to visit China, New Zealand's largest log export market and MFM (NZ)'s most important export destination. For almost 30 years, New Zealand forestry investors have benefited significantly from China's growth in softwood consumption, particularly within the construction sector.

Historically, strong demand enabled sales strategies that relied on China's ability to absorb excess volume, often resulting in bulk sales approaches with limited focus on end-customer requirements. As China's sawmilling industry matures, this approach is becoming less effective. Customers are increasingly selective regarding log quality, grade specifications, port destinations, and supply consistency. This shift is being driven, in part, by investment in highly mechanised processing facilities designed to produce specific products such as oriented strand board (OSB) and laminated veneer lumber (LVL).

AVA, through its New Zealand team and Chinese agents, has invested heavily in understanding these evolving customer requirements. A more customer-focused approach enables stronger and more stable returns than the traditional volume-based sales strategies that have historically been employed.

The primary objective of the visit was to ensure that AVA and MFM (NZ) continue to align products with customer needs.

Examples of this work include refining destination selection by grade and introducing new grade variants to better match customer specifications.

Site visits provided valuable insight into the breadth of the Chinese processing sector. Traditional log breakdown methods remain common, with clusters of small sawmills continuing to consume significant volumes of radiata pine. However, visits to a newly commissioned OSB facility and an export-focused LVL manufacturing plant highlighted the ongoing evolution of China's wood processing industry and demonstrated how future log demand may increasingly be driven by specialised, high-value applications.

In June, several Chinese customers visited New Zealand to better understand the cost pressures affecting the supply chain. Their willingness to engage directly with forest operations, production processes, and log grading highlighted the increasing importance of product specification and reinforced the value placed on AVA's supply programmes.

Overall, both visits reinforced the strategic importance of the China market to MFM (NZ)'s clients. They also highlighted the benefits of maintaining strong customer relationships, providing flexibility in product and volume, and remaining focused on the requirements of end users. These capabilities will become increasingly important as the market continues to evolve toward greater product differentiation and customer specificity.



Health & Wellness



Figure 3 - The MFM (NZ) team, from top left Peter Auge, Karl Clarke, Richard Stringfellow, Marie Heaphy and Shirley Day. Bottom from left, Richard Arderne, Simon Papps, Brendan Morgan and Richard Feierabend.

Moonride 2026 Event

By Richard Stringfellow - Health & Wellness Leader, Tokoroa.

Rotorua's Mountain Bike Moonride event returned on 9 May after several years away. After putting the word out to gauge interest, it became clear there were plenty of staff keen to dust off their bikes and give the event a go. Several participants were Moonride veterans, having competed in previous years. In the end, we had enough riders to enter two teams in the six-hour event, creating a friendly Tokoroa Office versus Rotorua Office rivalry, even if it wasn't officially promoted as such.

On race day, the weather thankfully cleared after a night of heavy rain, allowing us to set up our base in Tent City and prepare for the event. Marie Heaphy and Brendan Morgan volunteered to take on the opening lap, only to discover moments before the start that the race began with a Le Mans-style start. This required competitors to complete a 400m run before jumping on their bikes for the first lap of the 6km course. Needless to say, it came as a surprise to everyone!

Following the opening lap, riders rotated through the course, giving their all with each turn. The effort put in by everyone was obvious, particularly during timing-chip handovers where more than a few shaky hands could be seen. Recovery time was spent comparing lap times, sharing stories, and supporting teammates. The atmosphere throughout the event was excellent, both across the wider venue and within our own camp.

Despite the heavy rain the previous night, the trails held up remarkably well. Aside from the grassed areas in Tent City becoming muddy, conditions were very good. Most importantly,



Above: Marie Heaphy completing the 400m run in the Le Mans-style start.



Right: Brendan Morgan gets ahead at the start of the Moonride event.

everyone finished the event injury-free and with a real sense of satisfaction.

The friendly office challenge ultimately went the way of the Tokoroa team, which finished 12th overall, completing 16 laps. The Rotorua team finished 18th overall, completing 14 laps out of a field of 28 teams. A special mention goes to Richard Arderne, who recorded the fastest lap of the day for our group with an impressive time of 19 minutes 23 seconds on his final lap.

Overall, Moonride 2026 was a fantastic event that provided a great mix of exercise, teamwork, and social connection, helping to fill everyone's wellbeing cup.

A big thank you to Chris Barnes and MFM (NZ) for supporting the event. Be warned—there may well be a request for a rematch at the Taupō Day Nighter in September!

Environmental



Whio detection dog, Beau, with a pair of adult whio on the Pungapunga River (2025).

A Record-Breaking Breeding Season for Whio in Waituhi Forest

By Karl Boobyer - Environmental Forester, Tokoroa

The blue duck (whio) is a threatened species found only in New Zealand, with an estimated population of fewer than 3,000 birds. Like many of our native species, whio have been heavily affected by habitat loss and predation from introduced predators. Whio are present along the riparian margins of the Pungapunga River and its tributaries within and surrounding Waituhi Forest. These waterways remain in a near-natural state, providing ideal habitat — but predators continue to pose a significant threat.

The Pungapunga River Whio Recovery Project began in December 2010 with 40 Department of Conservation 200 traps funded by DOC and Genesis Energy. Over the following four years, the network expanded to 135 traps. Traps were mostly installed along the forestry roads as a protective barrier around the Pungapunga River catchment. Between 2014 and 2023, the trap network remained relatively stable, with only minor adjustments and maintenance carried out as needed.

For many years, the trap lines were serviced by Geoff Marshall, a local resident and father of Will Marshall, owner and foreman of King Country Harvesting (Crew 75). Geoff also worked with his whio detection dog, Britta, completing annual population surveys over eight consecutive years. These surveys involved walking the length of the streams within Waituhi Forest and recording the number of adults, pairs, and chicks observed — a crucial measure of the success of the previous year's trapping.

Since Geoff and Britta's well-earned retirement, Andrew Glaser (DOC), with his whio detection dog, Beau, has taken on the annual surveys. The most recent survey, completed in December



Adult whio pair with four chicks located on Waituhi Stream (2025)



First DOC 200 traps being prepared for deployment (2010).

2025, recorded 14 chicks across four pairs — our highest number ever. Of the four pairs, one had no chicks, while the remaining three produced broods of five, five, and four chicks. This is an excellent result, as whio are rarely observed with more than six chicks.

Over the past couple of years, we've focused on improving the effectiveness of the trapping network. Many traps were reaching the end of their 10-year lifespan and required replacement or significant maintenance. We have also trialled new lures, trap designs, and fine-tuned our predator trapping techniques. This effort has paid off, and our kill rates increased by more than 50% between 2024 and 2025. This year is trending even higher — we have already surpassed the 2024 total and are on track to exceed last year's total by the end of July.

One of the most exciting advancements is the introduction of AT220 traps designed by NZ Auto Traps. The traps are automatic, powered by batteries and only require servicing every four to six months. This allows for predator control in areas that are much more difficult and time-consuming to access, therefore reducing health and safety risks and removing over 75% of the labour cost to service the traps. The most valuable characteristic is that once triggered, the traps automatically reset making them active 24/7 whereas traditional DOC 200s are inactive as soon as they've been triggered.

Earlier this year, 10 AT220 traps were installed along a 2km stretch in the upper section of the Pungapunga River. An application for funding from Horizons Regional Council was

recently submitted with a plan to install a further 30 AT220 traps along the Pungapunga River/Waituhi Stream and 30 AT220 traps along the Taringamotu River. This application has since been approved, with the traps due to be installed in September.

The continuation of this project over the past 16 years reflects Taumata Plantations Ltd's long-standing commitment to not only protecting but actively enhancing the natural environment we operate in. Thanks to this sustained effort, the whio population in Waituhi Forest is showing its strongest signs of recovery in more than a decade. We look forward to celebrating even more successes as the local whio population continues to grow and thrive for generations to come.

History



University of Canterbury and Occidental College researchers examining volcanic deposits within Kinleith Forest.

Kinleith Forest Supports World-Class Geological Research

By Jacques Pienaar - Engineering Manager, Tokoroa Office

Did you know that Kinleith Forest is helping scientists better understand some of the largest volcanic eruptions in Earth's history?

Earlier this year, Kinleith Forest welcomed a group of researchers from the University of Canterbury and Occidental College (USA), with several postgraduate students, to undertake geological fieldwork within the forest.

The team is studying the massive volcanic eruptions that shaped the Taupō Volcanic Zone.

By examining exposed rock layers, pumice, ash and lava deposits found throughout the forest, they can piece together how these ancient eruptions occurred and gain a better understanding of the magma systems deep beneath New Zealand.

Kinleith Forest contains some of the best-preserved volcanic deposits in the region, making it an ideal natural

classroom for both experienced researchers and the next generation of geologists.

Forestry road cuttings and harvested areas provide excellent access to rock exposures that are often difficult to find elsewhere.

The researchers spent several days collecting samples and recording observations, with assistance from our Engineering team to safely access the sites.

Supporting projects like this highlights the many values our forests provide beyond timber production.

They also contribute to scientific research, education and a greater understanding of New Zealand's unique geological history.



Layers of rock, pumice, ash and lava deposits can be found throughout the forest

We are proud that Kinleith Forest continues to play an important role in internationally-recognised research while helping educate and inspire the geologists of tomorrow.

People - New Staff



Tiana Kapene-Hamilton

Woodflow Scheduler, Rotorua.

Hi all! It has been great meeting so many of you over the past few weeks. I joined Manulife as the Woodflow Scheduler in Rotorua. Coming into the role with no forestry background, I've really appreciated the support and guidance shared with me so far.

My background is mostly in administration, finance and scheduling, including a couple of years living and working in Brisbane before moving back home to Rotorua. I'm currently studying part-time towards a Bachelor of Applied Management through the Southern Institute of Technology, which keeps me pretty busy outside of work.

When I'm not working or studying, you'll usually find me hanging out with friends or family, reading, baking, crocheting, at the gym, camping, road-tripping, or out in the forest with my hiking boots on.

One thing I've really enjoyed since starting at Manulife is learning about an industry that is completely new to me. It's been interesting seeing how many moving parts are involved and how much goes into making everything happen.



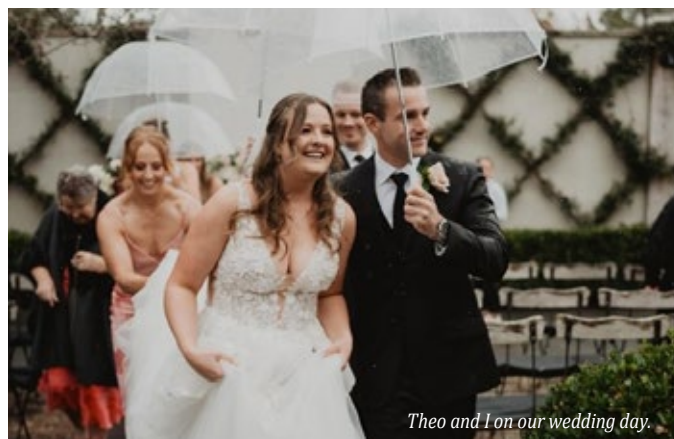
Courtney Henderson

Assistant Land Manager, Rotorua Office.

Hi everyone, I'm Courtney and I'm the new Assistant Land Manager, working from the Rotorua office. I have come from a legal background (specialising in property and estate planning) and I'm excited to put my skills to use in the forestry sector. My husband, Theo, works in forestry management, so I have become quite familiar with the industry over the years. I am Rotorua-born and have spent most of my career here, besides a brief stint in Christchurch.

Outside of work I love travelling, reading, yoga, walking my golden retriever, Freddie, going to the gym, and camping by the beach with Theo and family. I'm also a big sports fan and you will often catch me watching rugby or netball.

I'm looking forward to working with you all.



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Manulife
Investment Management

forestCHAT

Issue 07 | JULY 2026

What's New?

Over the past few months, I've been travelling across the regions delivering the Provention First Move Programme. These 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. The programme has been well-received by crews, generating valuable discussions and encouraging greater awareness of injury prevention in the workplace.

Alongside the Provention training, I continue to facilitate Be A Mate workshops, which remain free of charge thanks to funding from Ministry of Primary Industries. These workshops provide practical tools and support for mental wellbeing and foster positive conversations among teams.

Looking after our mental wellbeing is just as important as looking after our physical health. If you would like to learn more about mental health awareness or arrange a workshop for your team, please get in touch. Together, we can continue building a culture where it's okay to ask, listen, and support one another.

I'll continue supporting crews and leaders with practical wellbeing and injury prevention initiatives across the region. Thank you to those of you who have taken part in workshops and shared their experiences and contributed creating to healthier workplaces.

Your engagement makes a real difference and helps strengthen the culture we are building together.



Championing Wellbeing

An update
from Richard...

Looking After Our Mates This Winter

Here we are in July already, over halfway through the year and in what is typically the coldest part of winter. The shorter days, cold temperatures and wet weather can all have an impact on our wellbeing. When combined with the demands of work and life, it's not uncommon to see increased fatigue, changes in mood and additional mental health challenges.

While out and about, I have seen, heard and supported individuals who have been finding life's challenges difficult to manage. This serves as an important reminder of the value of looking out for one another and checking in on your mates when something doesn't seem quite right.

When Should We Check In?

Be aware of changes in a person's:

Mood – noticeable mood swings or changes in behaviour.

Appearance – looking unusually tired, withdrawn, or less well-presented than usual.

Talk – a change in language, communication style, or becoming quieter than normal.

Events – increased pressures or challenges in their life outside of work.

How Do We Check In?

Sometimes, a simple conversation can make a significant difference. Start by asking: **"Are you okay today?"**

Including the word **today** acknowledges that you've noticed a recent change and shows genuine concern. Often, the initial response may be something like, "Yeah, I'm fine." If you're still concerned, gently ask again and explain why you're checking in.

For example: **"I've noticed you seem a bit different today, and I just wanted to see how you're doing."**

This can open the door for a more honest conversation. If they don't want to talk, that's okay too. Let them know you're there to support them and check back in at another time.

Just remember that small check-ins can have a big impact. Looking after our wellbeing isn't about having all the answers – it's about noticing when someone might need support and taking the time to connect. A simple conversation, or letting someone know they are not alone, can make all the difference. Let's continue looking out for one another and keeping wellbeing at the forefront of how we work and support our teams.

Published on behalf of the Peak Mental Health & Wellbeing Sub-committee

Need to talk or need help, phone Richard on (027) 777 0894 or via email at richard@fit4work.co.nz