



Nurturing young foresters

BY JACQUIE WALTERS

Scholarships give a leg-up to forestry students that not only enriches the industry, but can lead to surprising directions.

Nelson Management Ltd (the management company for Nelson Forests Ltd) has been providing scholarships to tertiary students since 2000, supporting a total of 16 so far (usually more than one student is supported annually, in different stages of their tertiary studies).

Many recipients have gone on to find rewarding employment in the forestry industry, fulfilling a variety of roles throughout New Zealand. Others have received a leg-up to related careers overseas.

Shannon Burnett, former student and NML employee, is now a spatial analyst for Wellington City Council, but

believes her scholarship was a valuable stepping stone for her career.

“The work experience I gained as part of my scholarship with NML was an important factor that led me towards my current career,” she says. “The varying roles that I was involved in during my time with NML meant that I was introduced to all sides of the business and was given the freedom to work out what I enjoyed.

“I enjoyed helping out with the GIS and spatial management side of things. Not every job sends you up in a plane to take aerial photos of the forests!”

After graduation, Shannon worked as a Technical Forester within NML’s silviculture team. “A move to Sydney two years later made working directly for a forestry company difficult, but my experience in the GIS and spatial

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SHANNON BURNETT

aspects of this role made it an easy transition to a GIS Analyst. I worked for an Environmental and Engineering Consultancy in Sydney for five years and while I was there I also furthered my studies, completing a Masters of Spatial Information at the University of Sydney.” Shannon moved back to New Zealand in September last year.

She says she would recommend a career in forestry, and that the most valuable part of the NML scholarship was gaining experience in the real world while she was studying. “It gave me great exposure to the different aspects of forestry as well as the different careers available.”

Women have been well-represented as scholarship recipients over the years. The first scholarship recipient was Kiriana Rogers, daughter of Bim Rogers, the Executive Assistant to NML Managing Director Lees Seymour, and one of the four current recipients is Forest Engineering student Georgie Holdaway.

Scholarship winners receive \$4000 per annum for up to five years, with \$2000 paid when the student enrolls and \$2000 when they successfully complete their studies each year. NML also provides work experience during university holidays.

“Our scholarships provide funding and work experience for up to four Bachelor of Forestry Science or Bachelor of Forestry Engineering students at any one time,” says Jenny van Workum, NML’s Human Resources Manager. “Whenever learning opportunities within the Company’s operations become available, whatever the time of year, scholarship students can undertake a range of practical training focused in four key areas: harvesting, silviculture, roading and sawmilling.

“This allows the students to truly understand the theory they are learning in their university classes because they are actually working out in the field,



OPPOSITE PAGE Danielle Inglis

LEFT Georgie Holdaway (top) Kurt Malietoa (bottom)

RIGHT Scholarship recipient Nathan Sturrock undertakes a time and motion study at Fraser Logging’s sites

grounded in the day-to-day realities of the forestry industry.”

Two former scholarship recipients currently work for NML, one of whom is Technical Forester Danielle Inglis. Present scholarship recipients and the stage they are at in 2016 are Kurt Malietoa (year 4), Nathan Sturrock (year 2), Georgie Holdaway (year 2) and Christoph Riedel (year 3).

KURT MALIETOA

Kurt is a third-generation forester. His father has worked for Nelson’s Kelly Logging for more than 15 years. Kurt recalls visiting Dad’s worksite as a kid and being able to sit in the cab of the machines. “That was what got me interested.” He is keen on the harvesting side of the business and loves being outdoors. Kurt is about to start his fourth year of study towards a degree in Forest Science from the University of

Canterbury.

He enjoys the small classes at university, which means everyone gets to know and work alongside each other. There are also field trips every week. Kurt says the holiday work experience with NML gives him the chance to apply theory in the field.

During the 2015-2016 summer break he worked on two harvesting projects for NML’s Chief Operating Officer David Robinson and evaluating stream quality alongside NML’s Planner Heather Arnold. In previous years he worked on various office-based tasks and with harvesting and forest inventory crews.

GEORGIE HOLDAWAY

Georgie’s physics and maths ability led her to study engineering at the University of Canterbury. She has completed her intermediate year and is now studying Forest Engineering,

which is a cross between forestry science and civil engineering. “I really enjoy working outdoors and I’m really looking forward to combining civil engineering and forest science.”

Georgie knew a few people who work at NML through her involvement in scouting but it was time spent out in the field in 2014 that drew her to forestry. She has just spent her first summer working with NML writing out licences for cattle grazing, water-testing streams and working on NML’s roading network with Forest Information Officer Jasmine Snowsill.

“I was surprised by how many women are working here when I started,” says Georgie. In the longer term she is keen to work in environmental engineering and hopes to contribute towards climate change solutions, bringing her knowledge of forestry to the task. **WT**