

Welcome to Issue 36 of the Network for Women in Forestry (NWIF) newsletter. If you would like to subscribe to receive the newsletter directly please email sonya@blackburnegroup.co.nz. **This newsletter is for you, Women in Forestry, and we welcome your feedback and suggestions for future content.**

Kiwi Women Talking Tough in the Mid-Market

The Canterbury re-build has brought calls for more women to get involved in traditional male industries. Facing a shortage of skilled labour, the government and re-build agencies are pushing the line you "don't have to be a big, tough Irishman" to play a role in Christchurch, noting engineers and project managers are as vital as hammers and hard hats.

But Kiwi women are already making inroads into traditionally "blokey" industries. In New Zealand's mid-market (companies which turn over between \$2m-\$50m a year and employ about a third of all New Zealanders), women are taking up leadership roles in construction, engineering and forestry businesses.

Carol Caldwell, for example, is Director of Christchurch-based fire engineering firm Enlightened Solutions. A highly experienced fire engineer, Caldwell established the consultancy in 2004.

Enlightened Solutions ensures new buildings are compliant with the building code fire regulations and helps owners refurbishing buildings to obtain council consents.

"Occasionally we get involved where somebody wants to put in more fire protection - in art galleries, for example, or heritage buildings."

Caldwell wants to see more women entering traditional male industries such as engineering, arguing they bring different strengths.

"As a general rule women are more open to communication and exploring other options. It doesn't mean there aren't men who aren't great communicators but having women as part of a team is important, I think. From my perspective, for example, I love it when a client is able to be fully involved in the discussion. To me, it's important but it

doesn't always happen in design."

Melissa Savage says she encountered scepticism as a woman leading a firm in the construction industry. Business Manager for innovative Huntly-based modular building firm Metrapanel, Savage leads the business and financial direction of the firm, while co-owner and husband Andrew handles operations.

"In a man's industry, I've had to earn credibility," says Savage, whose background was in the banking industry. "It's taken a few years for them to have full confidence but I think they can see the value now. Women are better at crossing the 't's, doing the forward planning and the detail work; you need that to grow a business."

Metrapanel was founded in 1994 by her father Les Wykes who later sold to Fletchers who subsequently sold it on. Since the Savages bought the firm in 2007, they've doubled revenues, a result she attributes to sticking to the business plan, along with a surge in enthusiasm for prefabrication systems among builders.

"People are looking for better, faster, smarter, more economical ways of doing things."

Karen Forbes is a rarity as a woman co-running a log transport business. In partnership with husband Alan, she operates central North Island outfit Alan Forbes Transport Ltd, with a particular focus on managing health and safety.

She believes women bring a different perspective to the log transport industry. "One example is the emphasis we place on the role of family in allowing our guys to do their job safely and well. I think women see that side of it, and understand it a little better, than men."

Source: NZ Herald, Friday 31 October 2014, chosen by GE Capital

Protecting Your Business from a Relationship Breakdown

By: *Debbie Dunbar*

Karl ran his own business for ten years before meeting Jackie. They began living together in a de facto relationship in 2008.

When they met, the business was doing well enough to be running at a small profit. Jackie was an accountant with an IT background and was able to help Karl better manage and improve the profitability of his business. With Jackie's efforts and guidance the business substantially increased its profitability and value during the relationship.

In early 2014, Jackie and Karl separated. Following their separation, Karl knew that Jackie would be entitled to a half share in the home they lived in as well as half of all the chattels in the home. However, he was not prepared for the fact that Jackie could also make a claim in respect of the amount the business had increased in value by during their relationship.

Jackie had contributed her time and efforts to the business (for example, spending time doing the books for Karl, website design and providing business advice) and was able to claim that those contributions had assisted in increasing the value of the business. As such, she was entitled to claim an interest in that increase.

The increase in value of the business was valued at \$200,000. Based on her contributions, Jackie's entitlement was assessed at 40% – she was therefore entitled to receive \$80,000.00 from the increase in value of the business.

Karl said that if he had known Jackie could claim an interest in the increase in value of the business, then he would have taken steps to protect the business as his separate property.

If agreed, Karl and Jackie could have entered into a Contracting Out Agreement earlier in their relationship to record that the business, and any increase in value of it, would remain Karl's sole and separate property.

Both Jackie and Karl would have required independent legal advice to enter into such an agreement and any agreement of that nature would have to be in writing and signed by each of them with their independent lawyers.

Source: Rainey Collins Lawyers, October 2014

Dismissal Justified During Trial Period

By: *Alan Knowsley*

An employee who worked as a Supervisor and was dismissed during his trial period has had his personal grievance claim for unjustified dismissal rejected by the Employment Relations Authority.

The ERA said that the trial period within the employee's individual employment agreement was effective as the employee had not previously been employed by the company, the provision was in writing, the trial period did not exceed 90 days, and the employee was given notice and dismissed during the trial period.

The ERA held that the dismissal does not deprive the employee of his ability to bring a personal grievance claim for unjustified disadvantage or for a breach of good faith.

The ERA directed the parties to mediation on those issues.

Source: Rainey Collins Lawyers, October 2014

This is a newsletter for you - the Women in forestry. Please email us and let us know what you want to see and read about in the next newsletter.