

Armstrong, Julian (from *The Forester* Sep 2004)

Member profile – Julian Armstrong

I'm Julian Armstrong and I work for Forests NSW (formerly State Forests of NSW) at Batemans Bay, NSW. Growing up in Gippsland, Victoria, (yes, another Mexican!) I enjoyed helping my dad collect firewood on weekends. I was also keen on bushwalking and camping, so naturally I chose forestry as a career.

I studied forestry at ANU from 1984 to 1987. Those were the days! We were a fairly high spirited (in every sense!) lot of students, and we probably gave the lecturers a few grey hairs. I really enjoyed the field trips to places familiar to every ANU student such as Eden, Kioloa, Shelly, Pine Creek, Tumut and even the more exotic Fraser Island. The problem with being a student was that I had plenty of time in which to enjoy myself, but no money to spend, an equation which reversed itself once I entered the workforce, although even the money side seems to be evaporating these days!

My first job was in 1988 with the then South Australian Woods and Forests Department at Mt Burr. The District was halfway through a huge replanting program as a result of the Ash Wednesday fires, replanting over 1000 hectares of pine each year. It was a great place for a young forester to cut his teeth with plenty of heavy plant and real forestry work going on. I also enjoyed living on the forest HQ, with pine trees growing right up to my back fence.

In 1990 I headed to Canberra and moved in with Julia, my future wife. I obtained a contract job working as a Technical Officer for CSIRO bushfire ecologist Malcolm Gill. After two years, as newly-weds we took six months off and went on a camping holiday around the UK and Ireland. Julia's boss said that if we could survive six months in a tent together, our marriage would last, and so far he has proved

In 1993 my next job was with the then Forestry Commission at Narooma, NSW, and fortunately I still live there. I have enjoyed supervising road construction into unlogged forests, extensive hazard reduction burning, firefighting and even establishing a small eucalypt plantation.

I have survived two restructures (currently going through a third) and the southern RFA process, although I now work out of the Batemans Bay office. I hope to keep working in forest management until I'm able to retire, which will unfortunately be at about age 75 if John Howard has his way!

I was lucky enough to receive a Churchill Fellowship, which enabled me to travel to north America for 12 weeks to look at the Model Forest system at work. So, in April 1999, myself, Julia and our three kids aged 1, 4 and 5 packed ourselves off to the Pacific Northwest, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick.