

**Rider, Ernie** (from *The Forester* April 2015)

**NOMINATION OF ERNIE RIDER  
FOR FELLOW OF THE INSTITUTE OF  
FORESTERS OF AUSTRALIA**

***Citation:***

Ernie Rider was raised as a tee-totalling Puritan spending many long holidays on the dairy farm of family friends. After completing a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry (Honours) at the University of Queensland and the Australian National University from 1961 to 1966, he spent the majority of his notable 50-year career in forestry based initially at Beerwah, north of Brisbane, then since the early 1980's at Gympie, the core centre of forestry in Queensland.

He has first-hand experience in most forest types in Queensland, including North Queensland rainforests, western cypress and hardwoods, South-East Queensland rainforests and hardwoods, Central Queensland forests and woodlands, and coastal and wallum vegetation. The first two decades of his career were spent working with the then Department of Forestry as a tree breeder, compiling and managing extensive trials. Over the subsequent three decades he worked with various other State agencies, branching into broader land and catchment management disciplines.

Ernie's concern for and grasp of land management as a whole, of which forestry is but one facet, is impressive to say the least. His infectious enthusiasm and personal involvement has contributed significantly to forestry management in Queensland, helping foresters, land owners and interested others take a wider view of the contribution of forest science to practical, environmentally sound land management. He has contributed to a change in mindset by many on forest values beyond the standing crop. His high standing and recognition in this space is demonstrated by him currently being the President of Gympie and district Landcare, Regional Weeds Co-ordinator for the Queensland Herbarium and a long-term member of the Mary River Catchment Co-ordinating Committee. Ernie has personal experience of establishing and managing his own small hardwood forest and grazing area near Gympie.

He is extremely knowledgeable in a host of forest based disciplines, including history, silviculture, ecology and genetics. He is rated by colleagues as a forest taxonomist of the first rank. Over the last 10-years this capacity has been demonstrated time and again when working with Griffith University as a *pro bono* reference botanist/ecologist and colleague on a range of Industry, ARC and University funded projects. He is a practical, accessible man in the field, and thus considered a most useful colleague when accompanying research scientists in testing environmental conditions. From 1999-2002 Ernie was on a four man committee that ran the Mary Valley Sunshine Coast Farm Forestry association, a combined native forest extension and research project covering the Mary and Burnett catchments that was housed at the then Queensland Forestry Research Institute based in Gympie. Over time, this group morphed into Private Forestry Service Queensland (PFSQ), which in addition to providing a wide range of native forest and plantation services also manages the Gympie Woodworks Museum and Interpretive Centre. Ernie joined the Board of PFSQ in 2009 and is still there.

Worthy of particular mention, is Ernie's contribution at a local level to the Wide Bay Branch of the IFA, where he volunteered to take on the leadership role at the turn of the century, and successfully kept the IFA active among forestry professionals, and so provided Branch stability and long-term service to the IFA. His direct participation in the planning and conduct of a number of field days were highlights for members and guests who attended from far afield.

Indeed, many foresters would recall fondly (managers with exasperation) Ernie turning up to field inspections or field days either barefooted or, if required to wear PPE, arriving with a pair of comfy sandals on (often in his official capacity as Workplace Health and Safety Coordinator). As recounted by Sean Ryan, Chief Executive of PFSQ, Ernie's performances at field days for that organisation have also been the stuff of high legend. He recalls the first (and possibly only) time he asked Ernie to talk at a field day on fire management, where Ernie spent half an hour describing an experiment (subsequently written up in a published paper) by legendary comrades McArthur and Cheney, which involved throwing 2,000 lighted cigarette butts out the window of a car, and, as none started a fire, proving that this form of wild fire ignition was difficult. At another PFSQ field day Ernie stood on a meat ant's nest until covered with thousands of ants up to his shorts, to prove that meat ants don't bite and should be renamed.

Ernie is regarded as a devoted family man second to none. His interests outside of forestry are as diverse as his interest within forestry, including: native fauna and field naturalist excursions; classical and folk music, and singing in an A Capella choir; great literature, including modern spy thrillers; cryptic crossword puzzles; the art and science of driving; training and experience in extension, including psycho-socialology with both children and adults; and the English language (and how she is spoke). While many Queensland foresters have jumped higher and further beyond the boundaries of our great State, no forester has jumped with more style and conviction in the

Queensland context.

It is a pleasure to be able to commend Ernie Rider to the IFA Board Honours Committee for consideration as a Fellow of the Institute of Foresters of Australia.

***Nominated by:***

Dr Gary Bacon FIFA - Adjunct Professor, Griffith University; past National President, IFA

***Seconded by:***

Dr Bob Thistlethwaite FIFA, RPF - past Chair, Queensland Division, IFA

***Supported by:***

Resolution of the Management Committee, Queensland Division, IFA

***Approved for nomination by:***

Stephen Walker RPF - Chair, Queensland Division, IFA

