

Frustrations and Passions of Our Green Industry

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In an industry which can both mesmerise and transform lifestyles; we can convey insights that can be incorporated into an urban space. From third world to first, **arborists** need to be able to nurture and train people, understand the environment around them, familiarise themselves with and maintain a multitude of tree species and educate the public, all to improve our urban areas. Cooperation with environmental researchers, forest engineers and botanists can propagate not only a shared knowledge but also potential career avenues and opportunities. We feel, as a society, the need to satisfy all stakeholders and everyone involved. From a business perspective, the tree industry can at times appear to be fuelled by capitalistic drivers which may only please a few select bank accounts in the end.



Source: T. Miranda 2020

In Australia and/or New Zealand, individual companies may grow to a point that can then drive competitiveness and subsequent innovation. However, a sustainable approach seems more in tune with how society naturally function. We are embedded in a *'free market'* where *'free will'* can often develop into a selfish passion for trees that ultimately what is best for the greater good of the tree may be

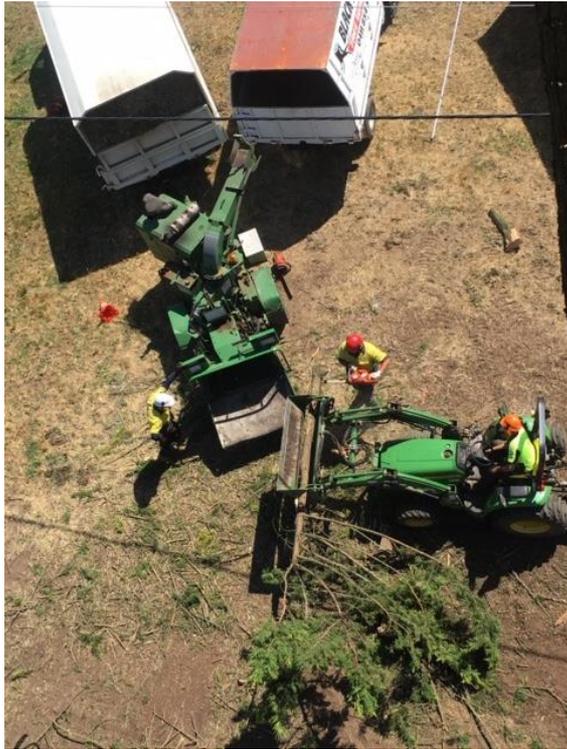
forgotten. Society, as a whole, is hard (and some may say impossible) to change. As a nation of peoples, we need a symbiotic relationship which can benefit all parties involved.

From a point of occasional frustration, I ask myself; *what is the solution that can satisfy both the needs of the few and the many?*

Regulation could be one option. I know it is an old argument explored by many in the past, but I am sure we all agree; those who dedicate themselves to this industry long for the days when 'cowboys', only in it for the money, shall disappear completely. Hard work, both from behind the desk and in the trees themselves can often amount to nothing. When those unaware of the environmental reality (but perhaps struggling financially) charge into, what may be for them, an unknown battleground? Unfortunately, this could result in a victory over the lives of the dedicated few. Regulation, although a process with many twists and turns, could provide results for those willing to participate in the 'real deal' through the promotion of increasingly competitive markets in the future. Once a new stage like this is reached, pop up companies may well experience more barriers to entry. A broader education awareness of the public will need to be nurtured for this to occur.



Veteran tree pruning management / Source: N. Norton 2019



Crew working in Adelaide / Source: T.Miranda 2020

Another source of frustration worth mentioning is that of the job hierarchy and the importance of valuing the roles of others within a company. As an example, many of us started as ground workers, dragging branches with very little tree knowledge. Over time, we may acquire, either through societal pressure or (preferably) a passionate individual driving force, the need to develop further and become a tree climber. There are of course challenges if we allow ourselves to stagnate, ultimately, we may lose a degree of value in the eyes of some within a company.

Negotiating for better conditions to further increase motivation can become challenging in this environment. This again may be resolved in part through a process of regulation but *what would be the fairest way to determine an appropriate wage?*

Often, experience may prove to be more valuable than paper qualifications. Through a deeper consideration of this problem, we may be able to create a better working environment which can not only satisfy the needs of the company owner but also those in a team who are just beginning their journey. It is an unfortunate trait of modern society that all too often money is a key driver of change and a sole motivator for many. For instance, the drive can be so intense that trained arborists may turn their backs onto *“doing the right thing”* with the tree and/or customer advice for the sake of cash in or sheer lack of patience towards a better goal concerning the arboriculture industry.



Source: R. Tregoweth 2018

Flexibility within a fast-growing industry requires a sustainable approach to give technological innovation time to create job opportunities in the future and enhance information to the public. An existing reliance combined with our expanding knowledge of the plant and natural world may help us grow as a nation and perhaps fully comprehend both the cause and effect of climate change. Perhaps a step back from individualism towards working as a collective may be what defines the future of our industry.