



2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



ForestWorks

Supporting
industry to develop
workforce skills

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From The Chair



It is with some sadness that this will be my last Report as Chair of ForestWorks Board.

When I first joined the Board in 2012 I was Managing Director Australian Bluegum Plantations.

I joined the Board because this industry has provided me with many opportunities to develop my skills, knowledge and capacity as a manager and leader. Being on the Board of ForestWorks has provided me an opportunity to give back to the industry, concentrating on ensuring others have the learning opportunities that I have benefited from. It is great to be able to focus on what we can do to ensure the industry can further build its standards, productivity and ultimately profitability through people development.

When I joined, then Chair, Jane Calvert reflected that the industry's need to cope with and manage change had never been greater. She could not have anticipated the change the industry has had to deal with over the eight years since then.

I thought that last year had been a tough one for our industry. With fires, COVID-19 and environmental activists doing everything they could to destroy the industry.

But another year of restricted travel, disrupted supply chains and poorly thought through Government decision-making has put us to the test, at the same time that we have had sky rocketing demand for timber, and a changing climate which contains both opportunity and threat for our industry.

In times of uncertainty, it can be difficult to think past the immediate challenges, but it is in these times it is more important than ever to invest in training.

This year ForestWorks has completed skills assessment and planning for a number of our Forestry Hubs. There are some

common challenges which we have seen across the regions: an aging workforce and competition for new workers. Providing opportunities for development and growth through training will increase the attractiveness of a career in the forest and timber industry.

ForestWorks has also updated the Forest and Wood Products Training Package to provide a new pathway into the industry in forest growing and management and harvesting and haulage. The new qualification includes a new unit related to use of a simulator – it's a great way to get people excited about the industry without risking an expensive piece of kit. We've also created a new unit related to safety in remote workplaces. In addition, new streamlined qualifications are available for the Pulp and Paper making industry.

ForestWorks has also been hard at work developing projects to support our industry through our challenges with trainers and assessors, responding to bushfire impacts, supporting innovation, and responding to our shortage of saw technicians and wood machinists. But those are all matters for next year's report.

This year we have welcomed Travis Lawson from the Green Triangle to the Board. As a third generation Timber and Forestry worker and CFMEU Organiser, his unbridled enthusiasm and deep knowledge of the Timber Processing sector is a welcome addition to the Board.

We also thank Alex Millar who left the Board after three years, including as the inaugural Chair of the Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee.

Finally, thank you again to all our members in the industry, and for all of you who contribute to the work ForestWorks does on our behalf.

General Manager's Report



Last year I wrote that I had grand plans to get out and meet everyone in the industry in my first 12 months – but unfortunately between bushfires and COVID-19 I haven't come close.

Here we are another 12 months down, in the location with the longest lockdown in the world. Interesting times.

I can't thank the ForestWorks team enough for adapting to the challenges we've faced. Despite working from home, home schooling, and all the challenges of having a working life, but not much else, the team have remained committed to developing the skills of our industry.

Georgiana has relocated to Queensland, so we're pleased to have a new ForestWorks presence on the ground in the Sunshine State. Over the last 12 months, she and Rob have combined their efforts once again to completely overhaul the opportunities for new entrants into the forest and timber industry, including my personal favourite, a simulator unit.

Ruth (who we borrowed from our sister organisation, Skills Impact) has been working with Lina to conduct the most significant overhaul of the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Training Package in a decade. We are hopeful that the new streamlined package might be more attractive for delivery to our industry. To go along with the new project, Ruth has done a sterling job supporting the industry to develop training materials for new starters in the industry. These will be available in the next financial year.

Michelle continues to stretch herself beyond her role managing our Industry Reference Committees, turning her hand to skills forecasting, as well as developing training and assessment materials in support of our industry training providers.

Clara, Mariana and Tim, continue to work to deliver the best Skills verification system we can, and our industry the safest they can be. This year, in addition to managing the current FOLS system, the team has been working on rolling out a series of improvements to reduce processing times, and to improve usability and reporting.

Tim has taken his deep understanding of our industry in NSW, developed supporting the NSW Industry Training Advisory Boards, to engage with the North East and Central West Hubs in the delivery of considerable reports on the skills needs of the industry in those regions.

We've also continued to borrow Travis who, having completed our analysis of how we might proceed to improve access and use of the training system, has stayed on to help us deliver those improvements.

And 2020-21 has also brought our newest recruits, Emily and Denise. Denise has hit the ground running, keeping our finances on track, and Emily has been a great addition to the team, making light work of providing administrative support to the whole team.

I also want to laud Sarah and Jodi, who despite not being official members of the ForestWorks team have contributed significantly to our successes in 2020-21 – helping us shape and obtain funding for a range of new projects to be delivered next year, whilst continuing to deliver the last year of the TSDS and or skills advisory services in Victoria.

Last, but not least, I also want to thank the ForestWorks Board for their support and their own unwavering passion for skills development in our industry. They have placed a great deal of faith in new adventures, which I hope will bring significant benefits to our industry in the future.

Board of Directors



Tony Price | Chair

Tony is the Managing Director of Midway Ltd. He has over 30 years of experience in all facets of the forest industry, and has a particular interest in harvesting, processing and marketing. Tony brings a wide range of executive management and board director experience to ForestWorks. He is well connected with industry leaders, which enables him to provide analysis of current industry thinking, issues and challenges.



Michael O'Connor | Deputy-Chair

Michael O'Connor is the National Secretary, Manufacturing Division of the CFMEU and has held this position since 2005. He has been with the Union for over thirty-five years, commencing work as a union organiser in 1985.

Michael is Co-Chair of First Super, a \$3.24 billion industry superannuation fund, which has 46,000 members across the timber, pulp and paper, and furniture and joinery industries, and their communities. Michael also chairs the First Super Investment Committee. He is a Director on the board of Industry Super Australia (ISA).



Denise Campbell-Burns | Director

Denise is the Secretary of the Pulp & Paper Workers District and elected President of the CFMEU Manufacturing Division. With over 25 years' experience in the forestry industry, her technical discipline is in workplace health & safety and hazard management. Her breadth of experience incorporates policy and system development; fatality investigation and culture change as well as industrial relations and negotiating skills.

She has been a key stakeholder in speciality industry safety projects with both the Victorian Country Fire Authority, Victorian State Coroner and WorkSafe Victoria. In more recent years her focus has been in representing workers in the pulp & paper sector. Her experience in the sector means she has a strong understanding about the needs of the industry and the required infrastructure for skills and training for workers.

Denise is a Director of First Super – the \$3 billion industry superannuation fund for the timber; pulp & paper; furniture & joinery industries.



Stacey Gardiner | Director

Stacey is an experienced leader committed to building mutually beneficial relationships across organisations and industries for successful project delivery to support and enhance not-for-profit, government and public sectors.

She has over 20 years' experience in strategic planning and managing teams focused on creating strategic frameworks and developing policy with thorough analysis and research. She holds a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and a Master of Land Use Planning.

Stacey is currently a director on the Australia Forest Products Association and Chair of the Forest Management and Harvesting Industry Reference Committee.

As the General Manager for the Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA) Stacey's successful record of leadership in delivering outcomes focused at driving improved outcomes from members is demonstrated by the facilitation of training programs, development of policy and guidelines to support and improve outcomes for industry and her ongoing advocacy with all levels of governments.



Ross Hampton | Director

Ross Hampton has been Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) since 2013.

AFPA is the peak industry body representing growers (native and plantation), processors (native and plantation) and the pulp, paper and bioproducts sector.

Ross has a Master's Degree in Public Policy and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is Chair of the UN FAO Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest Based Industries (ACSFI) and a member of the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA) board.



Alex Millar | Director (resigned 18 February 2021)

Alex Millar is the former National Assistant Secretary of the CFMEU Forestry, Furnishing, Building Products and Manufacturing Division, and is a Director of First Super. Alex spent many years representing workers in the pulp and paper sector and, in doing so, has a high level of expertise about the needs of the industry and the necessary infrastructure for skills and training.



Travis Lawson | Director (appointed 11 March 2021)

Travis is a 3rd generation Timber/Forestry worker who commenced with the CFMEU as a Union Organiser in 2004.

Travis has previously Consulted and worked with ForestWorks on the project to Build and Maintain Timber Stacks Unit of Competency and also the Advances in Wood Machining and Saw Doctoring Project which resulted in two updated qualifications for Saw Technicians and Wood Machinists.

Travis has also completed various projects with Industry Stakeholders that have resulted in Specialised career paths for Mobile Plant Operators, Forestry Maintenance Workers, Treatment Plant Operators, Saw Technicians / Wood Machinists, Maintenance Personnel, and various other Production Roles with the goal of achieving industry excellence for the employees and their workplaces.

Travis is extremely passionate about Timber and its journey from the Forest to the countless products that it is transformed into, and he views Timber as the ultimate renewable and sustainable resource which will have a major role to play regarding future global development.



Supporting industry to develop workforce skills

Skills Standards Development

ForestWorks' core business is to develop skills standards and qualifications. We do this with our partner and relevant national Skills Service Organisation, Skills Impact. ForestWorks is contracted by Skills Impact to provide support services to four Industry Reference Committees (IRCs):



Forest Management and Harvesting



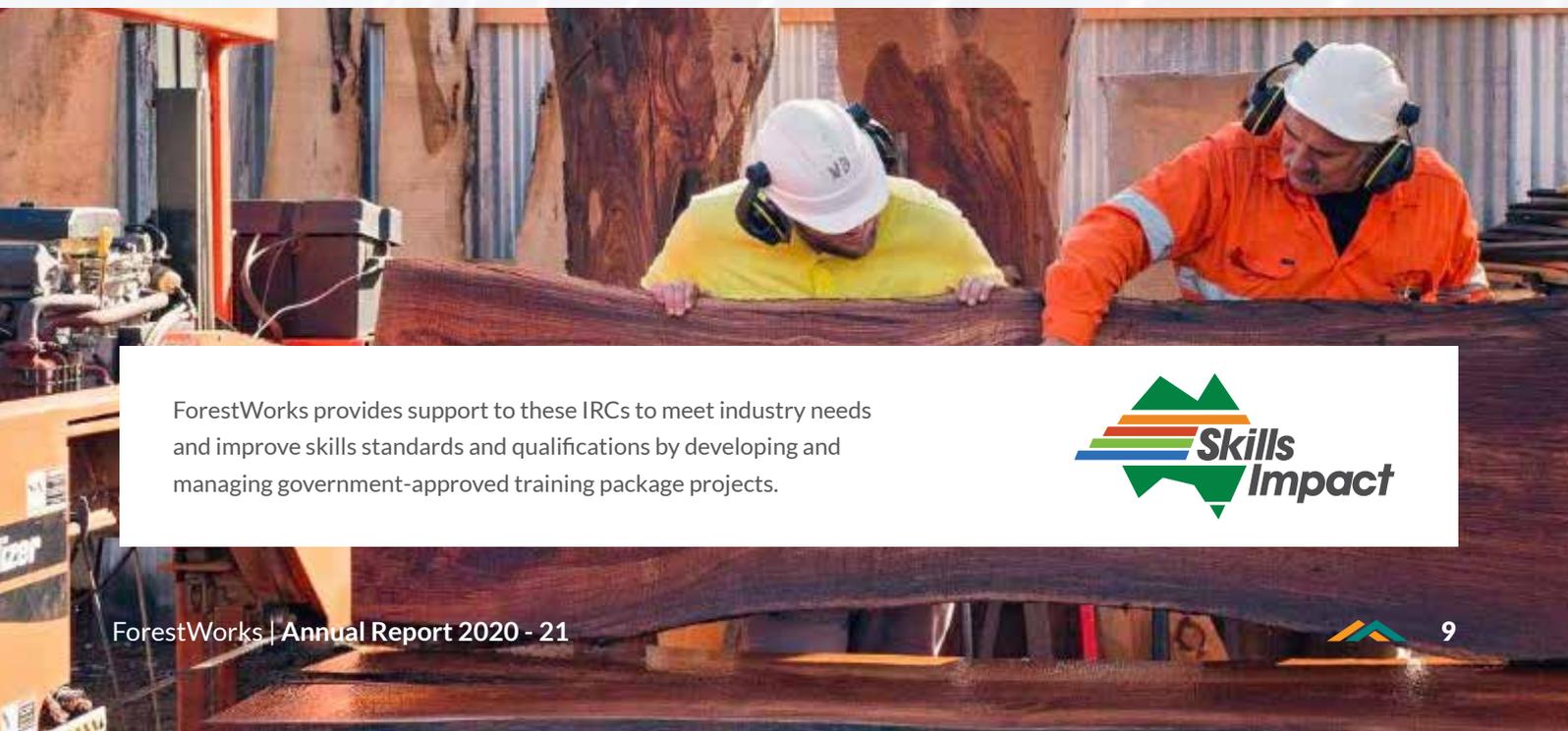
Timber and Wood Processing



Timber Building Solutions



Pulp and Paper Manufacturing



ForestWorks provides support to these IRCs to meet industry needs and improve skills standards and qualifications by developing and managing government-approved training package projects.





What is a Training Package?

Industry plays a vital role in the process of updating training packages, to ensure they meet the current needs and expectations of the workforce.

Training packages:

- > are a collection of components that describe the skills required to perform tasks and job roles
- > are industry's way of telling trainers what skills and knowledge students need to perform particular job roles and to what standard the task needs to be performed
- > offer a national and industry-led approach to training and assessment, giving workers access to skills standards that are consistent and recognised across Australia
- > are used by registered training organisations and industry as a framework for developing training.

A Training Package is comprised of the following components:

- > Units of Competency – building blocks for a work function. *Example: FWPCOT3320 Build and maintain timber stacks*
- > Skill Sets – groups of units of competency that go together. *Example: FWSS00044 Timber Floor Truss Manufacture Skill Set*
- > Qualification: a set of 12-20 units that describe a job role. *Example: FWP31019 Certificate III in Saw Technology*



Supporting Industry Reference Committees (IRCs)

Industry Reference Committees carry out a range of important functions:

- > Advise the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC) of training and skill development needs
- > Ensure that Training Packages meet the needs of industry
- > Oversee and govern projects to update industry training packages.

Each of the four IRCs supported by ForestWorks is made up of industry stakeholders who are committed to advocating, encouraging and supporting industry to access the VET sector by providing advice to government about industry requirements, challenges, opportunities and trends relating to skills and training.

IRCs promote the use of vocational education and training in the industry sectors they represent.

IRCs gather information from their industry sector—including challenges, opportunities, trends and industry requirements for training—to advise on training packages.

This information is used to develop and review training packages to help ensure the national training system provides the qualifications, knowledge and skill sets that industry needs. IRCs promote the use of vocational education and training in the industry sectors they represent.

Gathering industry intelligence about skills needs

IRCs identify and document skills gaps, emerging skills needs and associated training needs for the industry in a plan that is the IRC Skills Forecast. This process also determines whether there is a need to change training packages, such as units of competency, skill sets and qualifications.

IRCs are required to submit comprehensive Skills Forecasts once every three years, with abridged annual updates in the intervening two years.

IRC Skills Forecasts are maintained and reviewed through a consultation process with industry and analysis of sector data and intelligence, as well as online feedback registers.

For the year 2021-22, the AISC have approved two projects to update and improve the Forest and Wood Products Industry Training Package:



2021-22 Training Package Projects

The IRC Skills Forecast Annual updates for 2021 proposed the following schedule of work for 2021-22:

Project 1:

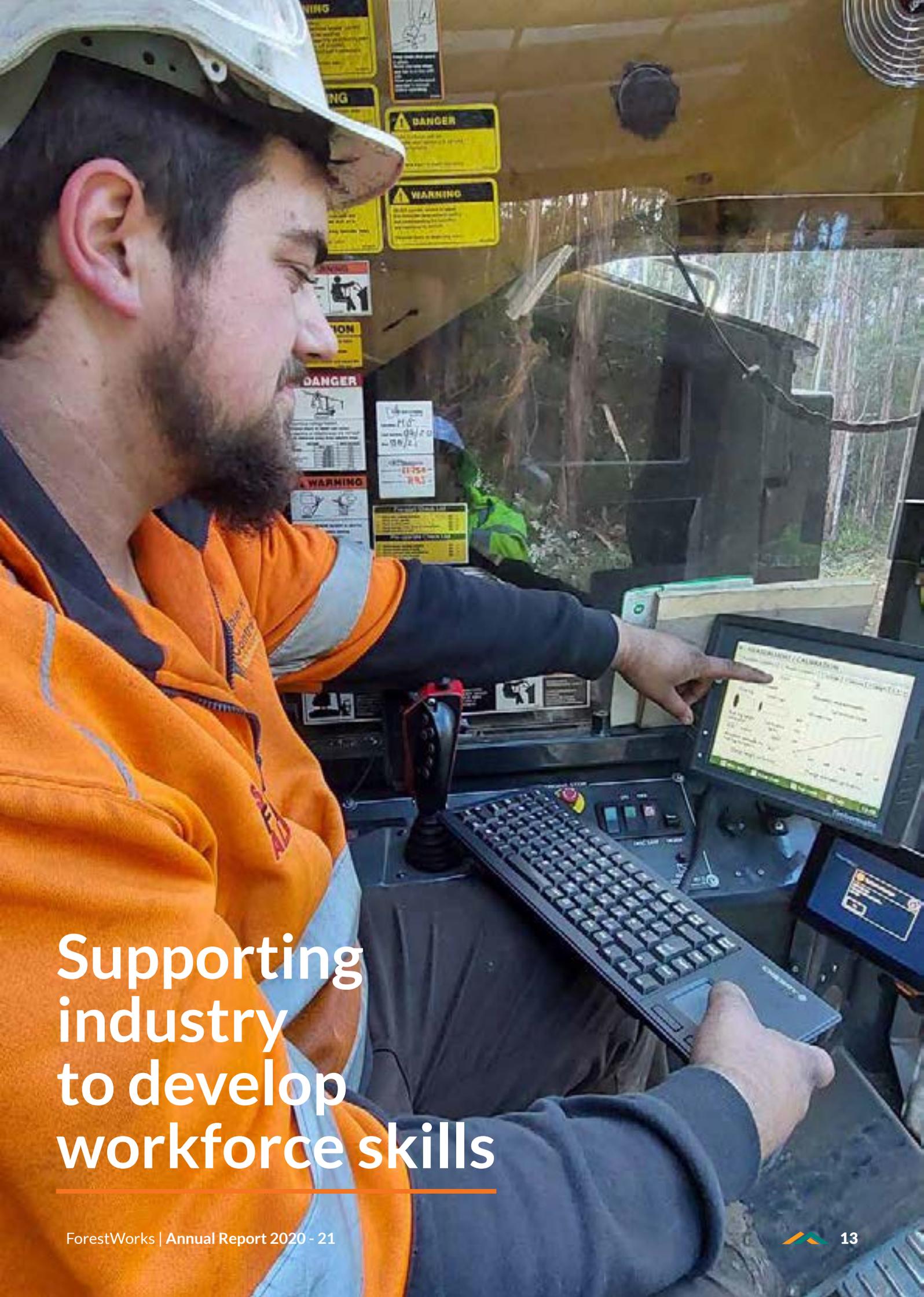
Sawmilling and Timber Processing

The sawmilling, timber processing and timber products sectors are undergoing rapid digital transformation and technological advancement. The skills required of operators is changing. They need the skills to work with new technologies and produce innovative products such as cross laminated timber (CLT) and glue laminated timber (GLT). The demand for skills to monitor, maintain, optimise and troubleshoot highly specialised automated equipment that moves, grades, assesses, scans, cuts and assembles timber pieces and products is surpassing the need for operators to pass, move, lift, grade, assess, stack, and sort timber and wood products. This project proposes a review of current qualifications and skills standards to incorporate current skills requirements and to consolidate the number of qualifications and units, to reduce complexity in the training system.

Project 2:

Responding and Assisting in Bushfires

Forestry operators hold a key role in assisting with fire mitigation, firefighting, clean up, and clearing operations. They have expertise in the heavy machinery used in both harvesting operations and fire-fighting and support the prevention of bushfire through mechanical thinning. With the frequency and intensity of bushfires in Australia expected to increase, forestry operators and emergency services supervisors need to be effectively trained and ready to respond and assist. Seventeen current units of competency within the FWP training package are proposed for review, to incorporate the skills required for bushfire prevention, assistance and recovery. Two units may also need to be developed to fill a skills gap in fire incident control and leadership. The revised and new units could be exported into other training packages to support job roles outside the forestry industry, which have also expanded to undertake



Supporting industry to develop workforce skills



2020-21 Training Package Projects

ForestWorks engagement in 2019-20 provided the basis for the following skills standards projects to be undertaken in the 2020-21 year.

Timeframe	Project
September 2020 – December 2021	> Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Review Project
	> Review Qualifications to Attract New Entrants (Entry Level Forestry Skills)
	> Review of High Level Jobs in Forestry (High-Level Forestry Skills)
	> Safety Mindsets in Remote Operations (Remote Forestry Operations)

Completed Training Package Projects

The following training package projects that were undertaken through the IRC Skills Forecasts and Proposed Schedules of Work have been completed.

Project	Project status
Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Review Project	Completed in July 2021 and awaits approval from State and Territory Ministers
Review Qualifications to Attract New Entrants (Entry Level Forestry Skills)	
Review of High Level Jobs in Forestry (High-Level Forestry Skills)	
Safety Mindsets in Remote Operations (Remote Forestry Operations)	



Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Review Project

This project required a full review of the qualifications, skill sets and units of competency that make up the PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package. Seven qualifications, 10 skills sets and 80 units of competency were revised and updated to reflect the evolution of industry job roles and skills needs, including skills for the operation of new technologies and production processes that have evolved in the past 10 years.

Employees in pulp and paper manufacturing facilities work across a variety of operational areas linked to both papermaking and pulping and operate a wide range of equipment involved in integrated continuous manufacturing.

It was recognised that training in work health and safety, quality assurance and problem solving are core aspects for those working in production support roles, more experienced operators, and also those that supervise and lead teams. Support for the inclusion of problem-solving skills, work health and safety and quality assurance as core skills is reflected across all of the three new qualifications at certificates II, III and IV. The revised diploma qualification is suitable for supervisors, managers and specialist job roles.

The four qualifications all serve as pathways for further learning and reflect a more simplified structure. Training in skill sets that recognise a group of skills to undertake specific task roles or functions can serve as 'building blocks' in the recognition of full qualifications and is viewed as viable for the industry going forward

In recent years, training in pulp and paper manufacturing in Australia has been performed on the job by in-house subject matter experts, often utilising the national training package as a basis to design activities. However, this training is not formally accredited in the national system. Part of this review focused on potential improvements to the usability and accessibility of the training package.

Consultation with registered training organisations has been undertaken to consider options for delivering the revised Certificates II, III and IV in Pulp and Paper Operations once they have been finalised. Industry feedback has established that models of training delivery which are based on RTO/ industry partnerships with training delivery taking place in the workplace would best suit this sector.



The following key changes have been made:

- Six qualifications at Australia Qualification Framework (AQF) levels II, III and IV have been merged into three qualifications, so that there is one at each level, reflecting the common skills across papermaking and pulping, at the same time addressing the full breadth of skills required for different job roles in a pulp or paper manufacturing facility.
- The Diploma of Pulp and Paper Process Management has been reviewed and renamed the Diploma of Pulp and Paper Operations Management, with revisions made to the core units and updated elective selections.
- Seven new units have been developed to cover entry level skills for working in the industry; skills in management or oversight of operations, including the research and evaluation of emerging technologies; and skills for working with advanced de-inking operations.
- Fifty units have been reviewed to better reflect current work tasks, technology and processes.
- Twenty-eight units have been merged to become 11 units that better reflect current job tasks.
- Three skills sets have been developed to address emerging technologies used in production processes, including de-inking and support skills for entry into the workforce and high level roles.
- Eight skill sets have been revised to include updated units of competency.
- Two skill sets are proposed for deletion, as these skills could be better addressed in the proposed new skill sets.



Image courtesy of FWPA

Review Qualifications to Attract New Entrants

This project responded to the industry need for updated national entry level qualifications that better support learners' career paths and reflect practical skills. Local school students in regional and sometimes remote forestry areas should have access to school-based vocational education and training (VET) that provides a career path and the necessary skills to get started into a range of forestry roles.

As a result, from 2022, the forest industry will have access to updated national entry level qualifications that better support learner's career paths and reflect practical skills. The newly updated Certificate II and III in Forest Operations are designed to support efficient training delivery and provide flexible training to entry-level and skilled operators to meet current job requirements. Additionally, they are intended to provide local school students in regional and sometimes remote forestry areas with access to school-based VET training that provides a career path and the necessary skills to enter a variety of forestry roles.

Both qualifications offer specialisations in Forest Nursery Production, Silviculture and Timber Harvesting and Haulage, allowing participants to tailor their studies to their specific needs. For example, existing operators or new entries interested in pursuing a career in forest nursery production may wish to focus on studies in maintaining seed orchards, growing and conditioning tree stock, and using automated tree nursery production systems such as topping equipment and seed sowing lines. Whereas those seeking roles in harvesting operations may focus on harvesting machine operations, health and safety responsibilities and industry practices for protecting the environment, including the areas of cultural significance.

School students and learners who are new to forestry operations may also choose to study through the forestry skill sets. For example, the Entry into Forestry Role Skill Set includes courses that teach students about the forest industry's fundamentals, how to operate a forestry machine via a virtual experience, health and safety responsibilities and how to communicate effectively in the workplace.



Review of High Level Jobs in Forestry

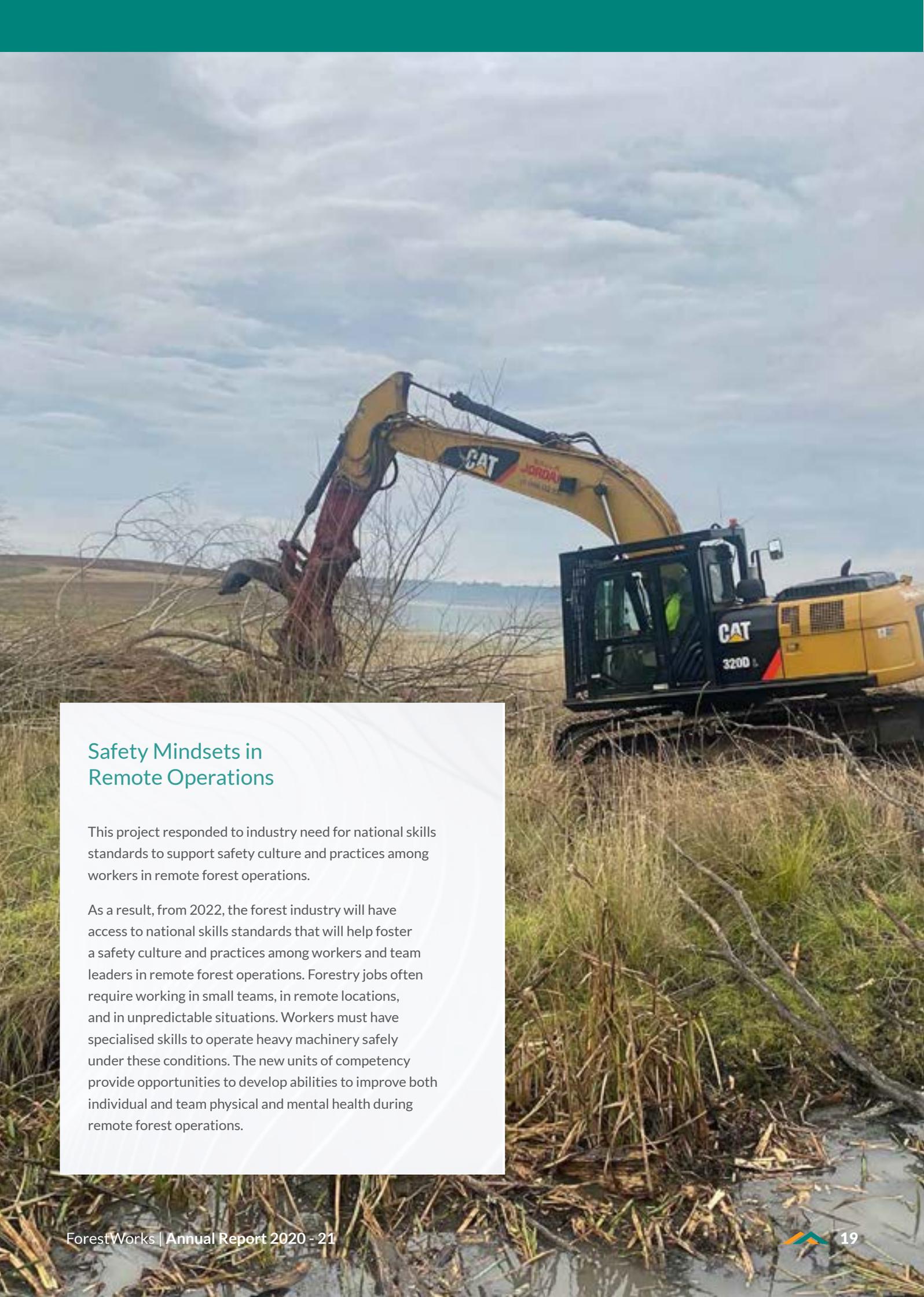
This project responded to the industry need for updated national high level qualifications to better represent contemporary skills for sustainable forest growth and harvesting, as well as promote career pathways. Since the last review of the Diploma of Forest and Forest Products and Certificate IV in Forest Operations, foresters have adapted to a variety of new digital and spatial technologies in forest planning and management. Further, sustainable and safe forest management practices have evolved, requiring the inclusion of relevant skills in national high level qualifications and skills standards. Forest operations require high-level forestry skills to supervise, plan and manage production forests and commercial plantations.

As a result, from 2022, forest operations supervisors, forest contractor business managers and early career foresters will have access to newly updated, industry-developed, practically focused and flexibly structured qualifications.

The Certificate IV in Forest Operations has been redeveloped as a specialised qualification for those responsible for managing teams and operations in forestry contractor businesses. The qualification provides specialised skills and knowledge in forest operations management, including establishing operational plans for forestry operations and supervising teams involved in implementing operational

plans. Additionally, it provides learning opportunities for managers focused on establishing efficient practices for managing human resources and operational activities specific to a forestry contractor business. Individuals working in forestry logistics may also study the skills necessary to manage log loading and haulage operations.

The Diploma of Forest Operations has been designed to provide workplace-trained foresters, early-career university-trained foresters and forestry field officers with the practical knowledge and skills needed to work in Australia's dynamic commercial forestry industry. The Diploma offers specialisations in Forest Operations Management and Forest Resource Management and includes studies in digital data collection and analysis, forest inventory, growth modelling, forest valuation, supply chain, forest ecology and biodiversity. The flexible course structure enables participants to select subjects which best suit their needs. For example, foresters wishing to pursue specialist roles in forest operations management might focus on studies in forest management planning, forestry supply chains and optimising forest management practices. Whereas those seeking roles in forest resource management, may focus on digital data collection and analysis, growth modelling and forest inventory systems.



Safety Mindsets in Remote Operations

This project responded to industry need for national skills standards to support safety culture and practices among workers in remote forest operations.

As a result, from 2022, the forest industry will have access to national skills standards that will help foster a safety culture and practices among workers and team leaders in remote forest operations. Forestry jobs often require working in small teams, in remote locations, and in unpredictable situations. Workers must have specialised skills to operate heavy machinery safely under these conditions. The new units of competency provide opportunities to develop abilities to improve both individual and team physical and mental health during remote forest operations.



New harvesting technologies

This project responded to the forestry industry's need to develop skills for the use of new technologies, such as digital maps and forest operation plans or new harvesting systems, in order to become safer, more environmentally sustainable and more productive.

As a result of consultation throughout this project, new skills required by forestry workers and harvesting machine operators were captured in four new units of competency. These jobs require to;

- > access, capture and communicate forestry field data using mobile devices,
- > read and interpret digital maps and forest operation plans,
- > operate harvesting machine with winch-assist system,
- > use mechanised equipment for forestry site preparation on steep slopes.

The skills needed to use chainsaws within a tree when conducting tree trimming or dismantling work were also captured in a new unit of competency.

The project reviewed units of competency and updated skills required by;

- > forestry truck drivers to meet obligations under the Log Haulage Code of Practice when transporting logs,
- > wood chipping operators to use an integrated or split flail and wood chipper with a crane and/or a split flail and wood chipper fed by a mobile machine, and
- > forestry and harvesting workers to apply knowledge of cultural heritage protection principles when undertaking fire salvage operations and knowledge of threatened and endangered plant and animal species and protection zone methods when applying biodiversity protection principles in forestry operations.

The skills standards for tree felling/chainsaw operators were improved to reflect relevance to the full range of users and include clear benchmarks for the assessment of competency. Similarly, the skills standards for cable logging operators were updated to clarify job tasks and knowledge requirements.

The project also produced minor updates to all 25 units on the project scope, so that they are up to date with current work practices, safety standards, and equipment.

The project was completed in July 2020 and endorsed by AISC in November 2020. The reviewed and developed skills standards were published on the training.gov.au website on 4 December 2020.



Image courtesy of FWPA

Timber truss and frame estimating and design

Industry has driven this project to review the current skills standards for timber building systems design and truss and frame manufacture so that they reflect the distinct job roles within the sector.

As a result of consultation throughout this project, this work has resulted in the update of three qualifications and 25 units of competency and the development of five new skill sets and one new unit of competency. They have been updated to broaden entry requirements and improve consistency.

Specifically:

- > Designers and fabricators will have access to two separate qualifications – the FWP31020 Certificate III in Timber Systems Design and the FWP30920 Certificate III in Timber Frame or Truss Manufacture. Designers will also benefit from an updated FWP40420 Certificate IV in Timber Systems Design, which has been updated to enable a career pathway from the Certificate III in Timber Systems Design for junior designers/estimators, or direct entry for more senior designers/detailers.

- > Fabricators can develop technical skills related to a job function as opposed to a complete end-to-end manufacturing process. Each skill set is a subset of, and will provide credits toward, the revised FWP30920 Certificate III in Timber Frame or Truss Manufacture. These skill sets are:

- FWPSS00041 Cutting Timber to Length and Angle Skill Set

- FWPSS00042 Timber Wall Frame Manufacture Skill Set

- FWPSS00043 Timber Roof Truss Manufacture Skill Set

- FWPSS00044 Timber Floor Truss Manufacture Skill Set

- FWPSS00045 Stacking and Storing Timber Frames and Trusses Skill Set

- Four current qualifications from the Certificate II to Diploma were deleted because of low demand for training and availability of alternative qualifications.

The project was completed in July 2020 and endorsed by AISC in November 2020. The reviewed and developed skills standards were published on the training.gov.au website on 4 December 2020.



Image courtesy of FWPA

Timber merchandising

This project responded to issues related to the timber merchandising qualifications, particularly the core units of competency imported from other training package that were subsequently deleted or superseded causing significant challenges to training. The qualifications also needed to be redeveloped to align them with the current job roles of timber supply and the skills needed by employers.

Consultation has taken place throughout this project to identify the skills standards for those working in the timber supply industry.

As a result, the Certificate III in Timber Merchandising has been redeveloped to create different learning pathways and relevant job outcomes for timber building supply job roles.

The updated qualification, FWP30620 Certificate III in Timber Building Products Supply, will support all specialist jobs in the timber building supply sector from timber yard and warehouse operators to transport and dispatch coordinators and customer advisors and sales officers. It enables specialisations in timber warehousing, logistics, or customer advice and sales.

The Certificate II in Timber Merchandising was deleted because of low demand for training and availability of alternative qualifications.

The project was completed in July 2020 and endorsed by AISC in November 2020. The reviewed and developed skills standards were published on the training.gov.au website on 4 December 2020.

FOLS

Skills Verification Program



ForestWorks is proud to facilitate the FOLS Skills Verification Program. As a national, industry-led system that supports the professionalism and safety of industry through an electronic system of recording and verifying the training and currency of workers' skills FOLS is an important tool for our industry. It offers businesses a streamlined system to manage the skills of their workforce.

FOLS enables forest managers to work with contractors and their employees to ensure they are appropriately trained and current in the skills they need to undertake their job roles. Through FOLS, companies can identify training and skill gaps and identify how they will address them.

Workforce Statistics

There are currently just over 4,400 active FOLS-holders in the database. We are able to generate reports from this database that present the demographics and skills of the national forestry workforce.

Essential Training Standards

The AFPA/AFCA Essential Training Standards were published in 2018 and updated in April, 2021 on ForestWorks advice. The numbers of FOLS holders with the relevant Competencies (or their predecessor units) as specified in the Standards are listed in the table below. This table does not include current FOLS holders that have received training under state-based vocational training schemes although the FOLS database does also contain this information.

Competency (National Units Only)	FOLS Holders (as at 30 June 2021)
Environmental Care Procedures ¹	1,133
WHS Policies and Procedures ¹	1,117
Operate Excavator with Log Grapple	844
Operate Skidder	511
Transport Forestry Logs	479
Trim and Cut Harvested Trees	462
Operate Crawler Tractor	358
Operate Forwarder	348
Falling (Advanced)	309
Conduct Mechanical Processor Operations	285
Operate Feller Buncher	279
Operate Loader	277
Falling (Intermediate)	190
Operate Single Grip Harvester	144
Fell Trees Manually (Basic)	54
Conduct Tractor Operations (Civil)	20
Operate Wood Chipper	20
Perform Landing Duties (Chaser)	16
Operate Yarder	15
Hook Up Felled Trees (Choker)	12

¹ Count includes holders of higher units (e.g. FWPCOR3201 and FWPCOR4201 and their predecessor units).



Responding to COVID-19

The FOLS team within ForestWorks have needed to adapt to the Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, most significantly the need for the staff to work from home. This has presented challenges with respect to the processing of mail, banking, and telephone communications. However, we have developed and implemented strategies to meet these challenges.

FOLS Steering Committee

ForestWorks has re-established the FOLS Steering Committee made up of forest growers and harvesting and haulage contractors from the national industry. This Committee will have an important role in advising on:

- 1) What the industry needs from FOLS;
- 2) Matters of policy that affect the operation of the system;
- 3) FOLS pricing.

The Steering Committee has met and established policies regarding the reassessment of manual fallers; the verification of skills evidence; and record retention. ForestWorks welcomes expressions of interest to participate in the FOLS Steering Committee at any time.

Drive for efficiencies in the system

The FOLS skills verification program relies on a number of administrative processes related to data collection, data entry, data validation, data reporting and communication with stakeholders. ForestWorks will seek to pursue opportunities to refine these processes and seek efficiencies in time and cost so that we can provide a better service to the industry.



Research

ForestWorks continues to engage in and support research to inform Government about our industry's skill needs.

Keeping abreast of data and trends helps us add value to members. It is also an essential part of adding depth the work of the organisation. Our ability to engage meaningfully with industry and produce training packages for their benefit relies on being on top of current research. It also enables us to advocate more strongly to Government on industry's behalf.

In 2020-2021 we continued to examine and analyse data to support development of IRC Skills Forecasts including from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and NCVET VOCSTATS data on participation in nationally endorsed VET training.



Skills Forecast: Forest & Wood Products Industry Sector

The Skills Forecast Annual update considered the significant and challenging issues facing the industry throughout 2020-2021.

Throughout 2020-2021, the forest and wood products industry has been operating in the most complex and challenging environments experienced in memory. While trying to support growth, industry has also been dealing with some of the biggest challenges ever faced and have been under pressure to solve these problems rapidly to meet public demand and national interest.

Devastating bushfires in major production areas were followed by the impacts of COVID followed by the major export market being substantially closed to Australian timber products.

While this has been happening, the IRCs for Forest Management and Harvesting, Timber Building Solutions and Timber and Wood Products have been overseeing training package projects focused on entry and higher level qualifications. These projects continue with the willing assistance of industry, demonstrating a commitment to vocational education and training (VET) as employers encourage workers to volunteer their time to contribute to the project as subject matter experts, reviewers and validators. The results of this work will be submitted to the AISC in September 2021.

In September 2020, the Skills Ministers and the AISC required all IRCs to review all qualifications and units of competency with low enrolments at registered training organisations (RTOs), with the aim to streamline training packages. Low enrolments are common in the FWP Training Package, as a result of multiple factors including: extensive use of informal training based on the training package; supporting highly specialised occupations that employs very few people but are critical to the continued operation of the industry; the lack of government-funded programs and the complexity of accessing that funding; difficulties for RTOs in getting access to qualified assessors; the lack of flexibility in training delivery and the impacts on business as a result; and access to RTOs with qualifications on scope.

Employers and the IRCs support the directions of the Skills Ministers to simplify the system, but are concerned that access to essential and specialist skills needed by industry could be diminished if the process is not undertaken using timeframes that work for industry, and when business needs can be more easily forecast.

The IRCs are continuing their work to streamline the FWP Training Package and propose a project for 2021-22 to review and consolidate the sawmilling and timber processing qualifications and units. The IRCs also propose a project to improve available training to assist in the event of bushfires and similar emergencies.

Skills Forecast – Pulp and Paper Industry Sector

The pulp and paper manufacturing (PPM) sector responded reasonably well to the high demand for paper products during the year 2020 – driven by the COVID 19 global pandemic. Businesses experienced a huge demand for paper products fuelled by a change in consumer behaviour (particularly toilet paper). However, sales of copy paper plummeted as a result of decreased business-to-business sales due to business inactivity and a shift to working from home arrangements. Sales of copy paper were also impacted by government procurement policies that do not specify the use of Australian products.

The production of lightweight coated paper for catalogues, advertising and promotion was also impacted as businesses curbed advertising production and distribution due to lockdowns.

Demand for paper based medical equipment including face masks, gowns and hygiene products increased throughout 2020 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The industry has also had to deal with the impact of issues affecting the upstream supply chain including bushfires and market supply issues.

The PPM industry places significant value on the competency and skills of its workforce to support its high regard for safety, its efficient operations, and its development of new and emerging technology.

Industry continues to value and utilise the PPM Training Package, albeit informally, mainly due to lack of service provision from training providers. The Industry Reference Committee (IRC) is committed to finding a pathway to formal use of the nationally accredited training system.

The IRC is currently undertaking a complete review of the PPM Training Package through the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Review Project and is grateful for the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) support of the project. This will allow all skills standards to be updated to reflect current processes and job functions. The project will also incorporate new and emerging technology into the training package around bioprocessing, de-inking and recovered paper. These new technologies are important to industry's development. Ensuring there is a skills development strategy and training products to support them is critical.

Improving Enrolments Project

This project, jointly funded by ForestWorks and Skills Impact, and completed in 2020-21 has looked at the reasons why the Forest and Forest products industry use accredited and non-accredited training.

ForestWorks' engagement across the forestry and timber industry has highlighted the key reason behind comparatively low enrolments - a gap between the VET sector's current offerings, due to funding and delivery issues, and the industry's needs. The market failures in the delivery of nationally accredited qualifications in thin markets has eroded confidence in the training system for its key participants.

A report on the issues and solutions provided will shortly be circulated to participants in the project, and published on the ForestWorks website.





Image courtesy of FWPA

Skills and Employment Assessment Project (Gippsland Forestry Hub)

ForestWorks were engaged by the Gippsland Forestry Hub (GFHub) to conduct a Skills and Employment Assessment Project and facilitate the role of innovation and regional research, in consultation with industry and local education institutions, to identify the challenges and opportunities regarding education, skills and employment in the Gippsland region.

A detailed report was produced by ForestWorks to assist GFHub support the industry in Workforce Development. The information to inform this report was sourced through an online industry survey of companies, associations and high schools in Gippsland, desktop research and one-on-one interviews with training providers.

This report analyses data on the industry's training and skills needs in Gippsland, considers 'where to from here' and recommends how the hub can improve training availability which in turn could generate employment.

Smart Development of a Future Workforce (North East NSW Forestry Hub)

ForestWorks were engaged by the North East NSW Forestry Hub to establish a regional baseline of current skills within the industry; identify the skills gaps; advise on availability of training programs; and ultimately provide the Hub with foundation for regional workforce development planning.

Data was compiled from the Australian Bureau of Statistics; the National Centre for Vocational Education Research; interviews with over 20 employers within the study region; online surveys; and two videoconferences. Organisations consulted included employers, industry associations, NSW Department of Education, local government and the federally funded Local Jobs Program.

A comprehensive report was produced by ForestWorks and submitted to the Hub at the end of July 2021. ForestWorks remains available to support any actions of the industry to advance the skills development of forest and timber workers in the study region.



ForestWorks Board and staff thank you for your support in 2020 -21

Skills Advice for Industry and Government

During 2019-20, ForestWorks continued to meet with industry and industry associations to gather intelligence about current skills challenges and needs. The feedback contributed to our advice to state and federal governments. It also helped us to develop our services to meet industry needs.

Engagement with the Federal Government's Industry Reference Committees, in addition to state-based groups, provided ForestWorks with the ability to capture a broad range of industry viewpoints on current trends and issues in 2019-20.

NSW Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB)

2020-2021 was another productive year for the NSW ITAB, albeit affected by the social distancing orders that limited opportunities for face-to-face engagements. A key part of that engagement, right around the State.

Some specific highlights from the year included:

- Attendance at meetings of Consulted with the skills training advisory committees (STACs) for forestry and wood products and furnishing to provide informed comment on the NSW vocational training orders for apprenticeships and traineeships at meetings in September, October, February, and May.
- Participation on the selection panel for the 2021 Industry Collaboration Award, as part of the NSW Training Awards.
- Participation on the selection panel for Smart and Skilled High Performance Providers.
- Participated in the meeting of the Forest Industry Council in Tumut in November 2020. This enabled us to provide informed comment in a number of other forums.

The ITAB contract has been renewed until June 30 2022.



Images courtesy of FWPA

VIC Industry Advisory Groups (IAGs)

ForestWorks continued to be contracted to work in conjunction with the Victorian Skills Commissioner (VSC), to coordinate the Resources, Forestry and Pulp & Paper Industry Advisory Group.

The VSC, supported by the Department of Education and Training, provides independent advice to the Minister for Training and Skills. IAGs are made up of representatives of industry, unions and employers and provide advice to the VSC on matters including skill demand pressures and future industry skills needs.

The 2020/2021 membership includes:

- > Australian Manufacturer Workers Union
- > Australian and New Zealand Pulp and Paper Industry
- > Australian Forest Contractors Association
- > Australian Forest Growers/Institute of Foresters of Australia
- > Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining & Energy Union
- > Frame and Truss Manufacturers Association
- > MGA/Timber Merchants Association
- > Minerals Council of Australia
- > Victorian Forest Products Association

In the last quarter of the 20/21 year the Victorian Government announced the formation and funding of a new \$85.9 million Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) to ensure all Victorians can access the training they need to find a good, secure job.

Building on the work of the Office of the Victorian Skills Commissioner, this investment aims to further drive innovation across the VET sector, delivering better planning for Victoria's future training needs and providing an integrated approach to the quality of teaching and training.

New activities will include an annual Victorian Skills Plan to better guide training delivery. The VSA launched in July 2021 and is a key response to the recommendations in Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy led by former Federal Minister Jenny Macklin. Members of the Resources, Forestry Pulp and paper IAG contributed via submission to this review.

The Resources, Forestry and Pulp & Paper IAG met formally 4 times in the past year all via video conferencing. Additional activities undertaken via the IAG have included input into and consultation on:

- > The Victorian Funded Course List (2022)
- > Development and publication of Sector Snapshot providing a snapshot of skills demand for the timber frame and truss sector in Victoria as result of a series of surveys and round table of industry.
- > A project is now commencing to develop high quality learning and assessment materials that will be used consistently across the industry, as well as a strategy to ensure appropriate delivery of the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Induction Skill Set.
- > There has been progress with the SAG tailored pathway course (Cert IV) in mining/extractives to be piloted in the Wimmera. Preparing to hold further SAGs to finalise the new Pathways Course in July and August 2021.
- > Continuous input to skills sets as raised by IAG members during industry meetings and interactions both within Victoria and via the national skills service organisations.
- > Regional Skills Taskforce in the Ovens Murray meeting and review of document. Publication due in August 2021.



Training and Skills Development Service (Tasmania)

The Training and Skills Development Service (TSDS) in Tasmania has been active for four and a half years. The service is the second component of the Employee Assistance Program that ForestWorks has been delivering on behalf of the Tasmanian Department of State Growth.

The TSDS Steering Committee, whose members come from a cross-section of the Tasmanian Forest and Timber Industry, meet formally every quarter and make decisions on an ad-hoc, out of session basis as required. They are responsible for the governance of the fund and are guided by formal terms of reference.

This financial year saw \$168,235 in funding made available to projects other than the direct training of learners. Due to some approved projects not proceeding or being reduced in size for a variety of reasons, not least COVID-19 impacts, funds previously allocated once again became available. The TSDS Steering Committee gave their approval for the surplus funds to be allocated to projects such as the development of workplace health and safety online and hardcopy training and assessment materials, a Tasmanian industry-wide workforce development plan, development of community engagement training and assessment materials, and lastly to cover the costs of an external financial audit to acquit the deed.

To date Forestworks has managed approximately \$3.5 million in funding and continues to manage the remaining \$1 million of approved funding.

ForestWorks conducts midpoint and/or completion interviews with employers to ensure the training that has been supported by the TSDS fund is being undertaken as per the approved project. Employers continue to express their satisfaction with the TSDS program during these interviews and in their completion surveys.

As of 30 June 2021, this project has funded over 3,200 training places to either improve forestry industry workers skills or to obtain formal recognition for the skills they already have.

ForestWorks maintains a strong focus on assisting training providers and employers to ensure approved learners receive their training and that projects are completed on time. There is approximately \$80,000 in unallocated training funds, with an expectation that this may increase due to project non-completions and withdrawals. The TSDS Steering Committee will continue to make decisions regarding appropriate use of this surplus until the fund has been fully expended.

TSDS is funded by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments to support the rebuilding and reskilling of the Tasmanian forest and timber industry. ForestWorks is responsible for the administration, implementation, compliance and reporting of this \$6 million fund. The deed is due for completion on 31 December 2021.



ForestFit

ForestFit is a project to strengthen the capabilities of forest contracting leaders through a training program and certification scheme. In partnership with the Australian Forest Contractors Association, ForestFit is being jointly developed by industry and the NSW Government. This will be reflected in higher levels of professionalism, business administration skills, WHS and environmental compliance.

ForestWorks is participating in the industry reference group for the AFCA ForestFit contractor training and certification scheme as this complements both the FOLS Skill Verification System and the NSW ITAB. We have also been contracted by ForestFit to provide technical assistance and advice around the national training system.

As of 30 June 2021, this project has funded over 3,200 training places to either improve forestry industry workers skills or to obtain formal recognition for the skills they already have.



ForestWorks

Supporting industry to develop workforce skills

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