



Supporting industry to develop workforce skills



2021/22 Annual Report

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From The Chair



I am pleased and honored to have been recently elected Chair of ForestWorks, after having served for several years as a director. I very much appreciate the confidence placed in me by my colleagues on the Board.

I wish to acknowledge the work and achievements of Michael O'Connor, who served as both Chair and Deputy Chair of the ForestWorks Board during his tenure as a director. As a direct result of initiatives taken by Michael last year, ForestWorks is well poised to enjoy a new period of growth at the heart of the skills reform agenda and to influence the challenges confronting our industry.

I would also like to welcome our new Director to the Board, Scott McLean. Scott is a very experienced Tasmanian based employee representative who is well known to many forest industries stakeholders. He has previously served as Director of ForestWorks and we welcome him back to the ForestWorks Board.

In acknowledging the dedication and commitment of all our Directors, I wish to make special mention of Tony Price, who recently marked his ten-year anniversary as a ForestWorks Director. Tony, who for a period was the Chair of ForestWorks, is to be congratulated on his commitment to skills and training, and to ForestWorks in particular.

My election as Chair coincides with the appointment of Michael Borowick as the Chief Executive Officer of ForestWorks. Michael brings to the role a strong understanding of the vocational education and training system, government, and public policy development. Reflecting the priorities of the Board, Michael has, since his appointment, been engaging with the Australian governments,

federal, state and territory as well as employers, unions, industry associations, businesses, and other key stakeholders.

Michael, who has ambitious plans for ForestWorks, leads our talented and hard-working team of staff. Our successes over the last year are a testament to their hard work and dedication.

Our new Chief Executive Officer is building upon the marvelous work of his predecessor, Yvette Nash. Yvette served ForestWorks with great distinction and her departure was a huge loss for the organisation. I expect that in all her future roles, Yvette will remain a strong supporter of ForestWorks and the forestry and forest products industry.

It wasn't all that long ago, Australia experienced one of its most prolonged droughts. More recently, many Australians have experienced the torment of bush fires and floods. The Board is encouraged by the early signs of the new Australian government about the contribution that the forest and forest products industries can play in Australia's response to the challenges posed by climate change. For the response to be the best it can be, our industry will need to retain our focus on innovation and competitiveness, and offer jobs that are healthy and safe, stimulating and offer genuine career paths.

Finally, thank you again to all who contributed to the work of ForestWorks in the last year. In 2023 we look forward to continuing to build on the hard work of our staff and Board during 2022.

Denise Campbell-Burns

Chair of the Board

From the Chief Executive Officer



I am greatly appreciative to the Board of ForestWorks for appointing me as the Chief Executive Officer. My sincere thanks go to my predecessor Yvette Nash who gave years of dedicated service to ForestWorks and under whose leadership the organisation flourished, despite the difficulties and unique challenges posed by the COVID pandemic.

Since I commenced in the role of Chief Executive Officer of ForestWorks in early June, I have met and spoken with company members and key stakeholders who have generously shared with me their knowledge of our industry, and most importantly, key insights on the challenges our industry faces in achieving improved skills and training outcomes.

I am looking forward to further developing my relationships with all stakeholders, businesses, unions and industry organisations, including with those I am yet to meet.

Recently, the Board signed off on a proposal to reinvigorate the ForestWorks Skills and Employment Council (SEC) in 2023, with the aim of facilitating greater high level national discussion about the training related challenges confronting our industry.

From the conversations I have had in my first four months, I've come to appreciate that ForestWorks is well respected and that the work the organisation undertakes is valued.

As I am moving around our great nation, I am also taking the opportunity to meet with Ministers and officials in all three levels of government.

Since my appointment, I have been greatly assisted in my role by the Directors of the company, all of whom are passionate about the important role that ForestWorks plays. I wish to make special mention of the Chair, Denise Campbell-Burns, and her predecessor Michael O'Connor. Whilst a Director of the company, Michael served with distinction as both Chair and Deputy Chair.

Day in day out, I am extremely fortunate to be part of a team of incredibly talented and dedicated staff. Our staff, spread across four locations in three states have a depth of knowledge gained through years of involvement in our industry.

During the recent federal election, there was much discussion about skills and training and how lifelong learning directly contributes to the success and performance of our world competitive industries.

Our forest and forest products industries play not only a vital part of our national economy but in many regional economies as well. The work undertaken by ForestWorks helps position the forest and forest products industries as industries of the future, offering lifelong careers of choice for a diverse range of people.

Michael Borowick JP

Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors



Denise Campbell-Burns | **Chair**

(elected Chair 9 August 2022)

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 \$3.5 billion industry superannuation fund for the timber; pulp & paper; furniture & joinery industries.



Michael O'Connor | **Chair**

(20 January 2022 – 30 June 2022)

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 \$3.5 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).



Stacey Gardiner | **Deputy Chair**

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.

As the former 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.

Stacey has served as a Director on the Australia Forest Products Association and Chair of the Forest Management and Harvesting Industry Reference Committee.



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 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 (ACSFBI) and a member of the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA).



Travis Lawson | Director

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.



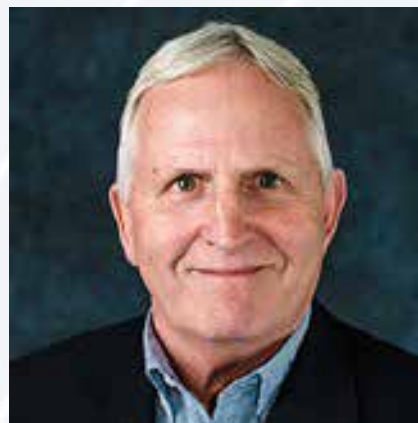
Scott McLean | Director

A born and bred Tasmanian, Scott has worked in the Forest and Wood Products industry for 3 decades.

Scott is the Tasmanian District Secretary of the CFMEU Manufacturing Division.

Scott has been involved in a number of training and safety management issues over the years, including the introduction of mechanical harvesting, the FOLS system, high risk licensing and training packages for Forest and Timber Products workers.

As the former chair of the Tasmanian Forest Industry Training Board (TFITB) for almost a decade, Scott together with the TFITB Board navigated the merger with ForestWorks, in order to enhance training and skills outcomes for Workers and the Industry.



Tony Price | Chair

(1 July 2021 – 20 January 2022)

Tony is a Director of Miller Grove Pty Ltd and was previously 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.

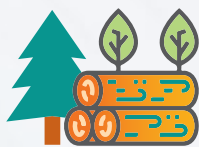


Supporting industry to develop workforce skills

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 was in 2021/22 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?

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; and,
- 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: FWPSS00044 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)

Over the last 12 months Industry Reference Committees have continued to 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; and
- 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.

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.

The IRC industry engagement arrangements will come to an end in December 2022 and will be replaced by an Industry Cluster arrangement that is currently in the grant stage. Skills Impact, in partnership with ForestWorks and Mintrac, have submitted an application within this grant application process, which is expected to be completed by late 2022.

ForestWorks would like to thank all members of the 4 Industry Reference Committee's managed by ForestWorks on behalf of Skills Impact, for their involvement and contribution over the last 5 years.

Industry Clusters

The Australian Government has determined to implement a new set of vocational education and training arrangements designed to improve the speed to market of qualifications and ensure training product development is aligned to skills in demand and meets industry need, thereby increasing workforce productivity and delivering more learners into jobs.

The Industry Clusters is intended to replace the current industry engagement system, including the 67 Industry Reference Committees (IRCs), and 6 Skills Service Organisations (SSOs), and are expected to be fully implemented by 1 January 2023.

Skills Impact has been advised that its tender has been successful and will form part of the emerging industry cluster arrangements.



2022-23 Industry Skills Projects

In previous years, Industry Skills Forecasts and Annual Updates were developed by the IRCs. In 2021-22 the development of a Skills Forecast Annual Update was not required but was replaced by an IRC Industry Skills Summary that was developed for each IRC and submitted to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. In addition, the IRCs have prepared two more detailed reports:

- Forest and Wood Products Industry Skills Report; and
- Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Skills Report.

In these reports, the IRCs have recommended the following project priorities for future consideration:

- Actions to implement identified solutions to address low enrolments and thin markets;
- Development of industry shared resources to support delivery of accredited training;
- Working with other agribusiness, food and fibre industries on research and planning projects to identify and address skills gaps relating to traceability, provenance and blockchain; and
- Identifying digital skills needs using the Digital Workforce Capability and VET framework currently in development (along with other digital capability frameworks).

Skills Impact have also produced a wider Agribusiness, Food and Fibre Industries Skills Report covering all the IRCs for which Skills Impact provides secretariat support.



2021-22 Training Package Projects

ForestWorks engagement in 2020-21 provided the basis for the following skills standards projects to be undertaken in the 2021-22 year.

Timeframe	Project	Project status
September 2020 – December 2021	➤ Responding and Assisting in Bushfires	Endorsed by AISC in August 2022 and awaits approval from State and Territory Ministers
	➤ Sawmilling and Timber Processing	

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	Updated versions of the PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacture and FWP Forest and Wood products training packages published on training.gov.au in January 2022
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)	



Responding and Assisting in Bushfires

In the 2021 Annual Update to the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work for the Australian Forest and Wood Products Industry, industry representatives noted that a range of skill gaps emerged in the 2019-2020 bushfires. These gaps were particularly evident in relation to effective communication and awareness of hazards associated with recovery activities.

An analysis was conducted as part of this project to identify and close the gaps in the training packages. As a result, this project consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, including forestry and arboriculture representatives, government agencies, and public safety and emergency services, and developed three new units of competency to support the role of forestry operators, arborists and agency approved staff and volunteers in vegetation clearing and clean-up after a bushfire:

- One unit addresses the skills required to use communication protocols and structures in a bushfire zone while conducting tasks such as vegetation clearing and clean-up operations on private and public land, including main roads; and

- Two units address the skills required to perform tree hazard assessment in a bushfire zone. One of these units is designed for personnel authorised to perform tree hazard assessments during the early stages of bushfire recovery to take timely actions to prevent injuries. This unit will be hosted within the FWP Training Package, specifically in the Certificate IV in Forest Operations. The other unit is intended for professional arborists who conduct complex assessments of fire-affected or fire-damaged trees as part of the later stages of bushfire recovery. This unit will be consulted on for potential inclusion in the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Arboriculture as part of a future project.

In addition, the project worked with stakeholders to address a skills assessment issue raised by training providers regarding four units of competency for cutting and felling trees with a chainsaw. These units were updated so that they can also be delivered and assessed by non-forestry sectors.



Sawmilling and Timber Processing

In the 2021 Annual Update to the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work for the Australian Forest and Wood Products Industry, industry representatives identified that the FWP qualifications for sawmilling, timber processing and wood manufactured products need to be updated to:

- Reflect significant technological improvements in sawmills and wood products operations across Australia;
- Incorporate current skill requirements; and
- Consolidate the number of qualifications and units to reduce complexity in the training system.

In response, this project redeveloped the qualifications, skill sets and units of competency for timber and wood production to be more flexible in structure and provide learners with the opportunity to focus on skills or tasks that are important to the industry now and into the future.

The updated qualifications incorporate current skills requirements and changes that meet current skill needs, facilitate efficient training delivery and provide clear career pathways for school leavers, new entrants to the industry and existing workers.

Learners who are interested in obtaining the Certificate III in Timber and Wood Products Operations will have the option of specialising in timber production, glue laminated timber or cross laminated timber production, plywood or laminated veneer lumber production, or reconstituted wood panel production.

Future production supervisors and technicians will be able to acquire the skills necessary to manage technical operations, production issues, performance, equipment maintenance, and quality and safety requirements of a timber or wood products operation by completing the Certificate IV Timber and Wood Products Operations.



The new flexible qualification structure will allow learners to select subjects that best suit their needs and provide skills that are transferable to a wide range of jobs or occupations. The updated qualifications support relevant skills for timber production operators and processing sites, reflecting the unique requirements for skills development and professional growth and different occupational levels.

Specifically, the following improvements were made to qualifications to support job roles and facilitate training delivery and participation:

- The Certificates at level II and III were consolidated so that there is one qualification available at each of these levels;
- The Certificates II, III and IV were re-named to be certificates in 'Timber and Wood Products Operations' and broadened in their application to support jobs and skills across all operational areas;
- Four specialisations were created for the Certificate III to reflect distinct job functions and promote clear career paths. These specialisations are timber production, glue laminated timber or cross laminated timber production, plywood or laminated veneer lumber production, and reconstituted wood panel production;
- The packaging rules for all three qualifications were revised, resulting in a reduction in the number of core units to two in Certificate II, four in Certificate III, and none in Certificate IV. In addition, the total number of units required to complete the Certificate IV was reduced by two. These changes were made to give businesses more flexibility in selecting units based on their own skill needs;
- Units were imported as electives in all three qualifications, mostly from the MSM Manufacturing Training Package and MSS Sustainability Training Package, to help learners gain basic skills that can be used in any manufacturing job or occupation such as applying effective manufacturing work practices, using structured problem-solving tools, performing tasks to support production, organising personal work priorities, and working in teams;
- Fifty existing units were updated, with 21 being consolidated into 8, to remove duplication and reflect the current work tasks requirements;
- Eight new units were developed to meet skill needs and close gaps in qualifications as follows:
 - three units for training production operators, senior operational personnel and internal auditors in chain of custody certification principles;
 - a unit for skilling saw technicians, line technicians, and production supervisors in mechanical equipment maintenance;
 - three units for supporting the specialist skills in engineered wood products required by production operators to support quality, problem-solving and production activities; and
 - one unit for preparing the forest industry workforce to communicate effectively with members of the public or external stakeholders concerned about forest practices.
- Created nine new skill sets that provide credit towards the Certificate III or IV to support timber and wood products trades and future leaders.

These updated training package products were produced in consultation with subject matter experts and representatives from industry associations and regional hubs, employers, registered training organisations (RTOs) and skills advisory bodies in each state.



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 were undertaken to consider options for delivering the revised Certificates II, III and IV in Pulp and Paper Operations. Industry feedback 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 were made:

- Six qualifications at Australia Qualification Framework (AQF) levels II, III and IV were 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 was 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 were 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 were reviewed to better reflect current work tasks, technology and processes;
- Twenty-eight units were merged to become 11 units that better reflect current job tasks;
- Three skills sets were 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 were revised to include updated units of competency; and
- Two skill sets were deleted, as these skills could be better addressed in the new skill sets.



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, the forest industry can now access updated national entry level qualifications that better support learner's career paths and reflect practical skills. The new 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, forest operations supervisors, forest contractor business managers and early career foresters can now access newly updated, industry-developed, practically focused and flexibly structured qualifications.

The updated Certificate IV in Forest Operations is a specialised qualification for managers of 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 updated Diploma of Forest Operations provides 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 an industry need for national skills standards to support safety culture and practices among workers in remote forest operations.

As a result, the forest industry can now access national skills standards that 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.

A man wearing an orange and yellow high-visibility hard hat and a khaki work shirt with rolled-up sleeves stands in a forest. He is looking upwards at tall, thin trees. The background is filled with green foliage and tree trunks.

Supporting industry to develop workforce skills

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, businesses can identify training and skill gaps and identify how they will address them.

Workforce Statistics

At 30 October 2022, there were just over 3,500 active FOLS-holders in the database. ForestWorks is 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 2022)
Environmental Care Procedures ¹	1,054
WHS Policies and Procedures ¹	976
Operate Excavator with Log Grapple	807
Operate Skidder	472
Transport Forestry Logs	415
Trim and Cut Harvested Trees	401
Operate Crawler Tractor	313
Operate Forwarder	325
Falling (Advanced)	288
Conduct Mechanical Processor Operations	265
Operate Feller Buncher	265
Operate Loader	243
Falling (Intermediate)	167
Operate Single Grip Harvester	165
Fell Trees Manually (Basic)	59
Conduct Tractor Operations (Civil)	19
Operate Wood Chipper	13
Perform Landing Duties (Chaser)	20
Operate Yarder	30
Hook Up Felled Trees (Choker)	17

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



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 has been seeking to pursue opportunities to refine these processes and find efficiencies in time and cost so that we can provide a better service to the industry. ForestWorks continues to work with software developers on a new web-based portal to streamline operations and improve the service delivery to the industry. ForestWorks commenced a project with Bluegem software developers on a new web-based portal to streamline operations and improve the service delivery to the industry. The new portal, expected to 'go live' in late 2022, will dramatically simplify administrative time for ForestWorks and the users of the system.

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 has an important role in advising on:

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

The Steering Committee has met and established policies regarding the naming conventions for skills in light of the AFPA/ AFCA Safe and Skilled Approved Units of Competency.

ForestWorks welcomes expressions of interest to participate in the FOLS Steering Committee.





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 2021-2022 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 NCVER VOCSTATS data on participation in nationally endorsed VET training.



IRC Skills Report - Forest and Wood Products Industry Sector

The forest and wood products industry is critical to Australia's future economy based on sustainable products and clean energy. It is the only industry with a carbon neutral footprint, generating durable carbon storage through forest growing and management activities and wood and timber manufactured products with low embodied energy.

Forest Management businesses are landowners or state-owned agencies that oversee the development, growing, maintaining and planning of forest estates.

The harvesting and haulage sector is predominately made up of a contracted workforce of small to medium harvesting and haulage crews. Forest Managers contract the crews to carry out operations as set out in the plans or schedules developed by the Forest Managers.

Around 16% of Australia's land area is covered by forests. The sector is made up of native and plantation forests. Almost 123 million hectares are native forests and around 2 million hectares are plantation forests.

Access to log supply both now and into the decades to come is by far the biggest issue impacting the forest and wood products supply chain, and with multiple factors impacting log supply and future plantation establishment.

There is Australia-wide support for increasing plantations both to meet increased domestic and global demand for wood and fibre and to transition to a greener, lower-emission economy. Research shows the need for at least 400,000 hectares of new plantations by 2030 to meet Australia's demand for wood, in addition to the 70 million trees planted every year to replace the trees harvested in Australia's plantations. Under the National Forest Industries Plan (2018) the Australian Government has a target for the planting of 1 billion extra

production trees by 2030.

In Victoria and Western Australia, businesses across the forest and wood products value chain are needing to prepare for native timber harvesting to be phased out. The Victorian Government has resolved to phase out native forest harvesting by 2030 (with reductions from 2024-25). This native timber harvesting ban on public lands is forecast to result in a deficit of wood supply and, to address this, the Victorian Government has committed to an extra 50,000 hectares for plantation by 2030. In Western Australia, the state government will also end native timber harvesting from 2024. The decision is part of the state's upcoming Forest Management Plan 2024-33. The announcement also included \$350 million to expand Western Australia's softwood timber plantations.

While the Victorian and Western Australian state governments have committed to increase support and funding to further the development of plantation forestry, there is widespread industry concern over:

- The future supply of timber;
- The impact on regional businesses across the value chain; and
- The impact on regional communities sustained by value chain operations.

Machinery and operations used in native timber harvesting are not readily interchangeable with machinery and operations used in plantation forestry, and there is concern for the impact on businesses due to the loss of investment. There is also concern that the additional capacity the forest industry companies, machinery and workforce provide in responding to bushfires will be greatly diminished.



Priorities

Recovery from natural disasters

Businesses in the Forest Management and Harvesting sector are still recovering from extreme and widespread bushfire events in 2019/2020, and flooding in 2021/2022. The impact of recurrent natural disasters has a significant impact by lowering the availability and quality of log resources, which in turn negatively impacts businesses and employment in the industry.

Technology

Technology has always been a key driver of change in the forest management and harvesting sector. Digital technology, drones and remote sensing systems, in-field technologies and optimisation equipment are supporting the industry to be more productive, environmentally sustainable and safer.

The main objective of these technologies is maximising output while maintaining quality, and being able to measure, track and plan production to be at its most efficient. As a result, many job roles require different levels of technical and digital skills than before.

Climate Change

Climate change remains a key driver of the trajectory of the forest and wood products industries, including through the push to plant more trees, the development of value-added products and less carbon intensive construction materials and methods, and the use of biomass for energy and other purposes. Expanding the plantation estate, including the goal of expanding farm forestry in Australia, is key to pursuing this objective.



Image courtesy of FWPA

Safety

Safety has always been a key focus across all sectors and job levels within the forest management and harvesting sector. Forestry and timber growing, harvesting and haulage contracting, sawmill operations and timber products production all contain high-risk activities that must be carefully monitored and managed.

Essential Training Standards are enshrined through the industry program 'Safe and Skilled', which was developed by the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) and the Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA).

The program requires that forest operators are trained to national competency standards in environmental care, workplace health and safety (WHS), and the technical (often machinery) equipment being operated.

The availability of online training programs and training and assessment materials, particularly in the areas of safety and environmental care, will support RTOs and provide better access to nationally recognised training and this is reflected in the IRC priorities.



IRC Skills Report - Pulp and Paper Industry Sector

The pulp and paper manufacturing industry makes a significant contribution to Australia's economy – approximately \$3.7 billion per year – and is a key employer in regional communities.

The pulp and paper industry in Australia is highly concentrated in regional Victoria and New South Wales, with around 75% of industry business located in these two states, and the remainder in South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland. Approximately half of the jobs sustained by this industry are located in regional Australia.

The industry directly employs over 15,000 people, but that number rises to around 30,000 people when taking into account the five large-scale multinational companies and 1,000 paper product wholesaling businesses.

The sector also supports thousands of jobs in regional areas, including transport, logistics and supply chain operations.

Pulp and paper manufacturing operations in Australia are tightly embedded within the overall forest and wood products supply chain. The harvest of pulp logs for paper and cardboard manufacturer is only commercially and operationally feasible if higher-value timber for sawmills is also harvested. Upstream in the supply chain, forest operations continue to be severely challenged by impacts of bushfire, COVID, government policy and market fluctuations, and these in turn impact the pulp and paper manufacturing industry.



Priorities

The major priority for the IRC was to address the lack of formal enrolments and achievement of qualifications and units from the PPM Training Package. A key contributor to this was the perception that the Training Package was outdated and required substantial review. It became clear that parts of the Training Package were being used as the basis for informal and internal training, but there were no RTOs willing to provide formal training, due to the potential lack of viability. As a result, a complete Training Package review was undertaken in 2020/2021 and substantial streamlining was also completed.

The 2021 complete review of the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry (PPM) Training Package was an important milestone in the IRC's goal to have the qualifications accurately reflect the innovative and recent technology and operations of the businesses operating in the industry. As part of the recent review, new units were developed that will provide new entrants (and some existing employees) with an understanding of industry structure, the principles of pulp and papermaking, and the processes used for papermaking and converting. Based on extensive industry consultation, the IRC considers the Training Package to sufficiently reflect the functions of the industry and that priority work to support the industry will be in other parts of the skills system.

No RTO currently has PPM Training Package qualifications or units on scope, and this has been the case over the last four years. This means there are currently no enrolments in PPM qualifications or units of competency. This must be addressed and corrected. The ability to take further actions has been limited by the focus of the current program on funding for the review of Training Packages, with no available funding for the promotion of VET.

On campus RTO training delivery is unsuitable because of the machinery used in the industry. There is a struggle obtaining qualified training staff that know how to operate the specialised equipment and machinery used in PPM operations. There is a need for workplace-based and workforce-based training and assessment system that provides the rigour and calibre the VET system is renowned for but allows for flexibility and viability through effective partnerships between business and RTOs.



Skills Gap and Training Needs Analysis

(Murray Region Forestry Hub)

During 2022, the Murray Region Forestry Hub engaged ForestWorks to:

- Create a comprehensive list of industry participants and their roles, in the Murray Region Forestry Hub;
- Conduct a survey of industry participants in the Murray Region Forestry Hub in relation to their training and skills needs (now and in the next 5-10 years) including 20 interviews (on site) of businesses identified by the Hub;
- Provide a detailed report to support the industry in Workforce Development, including the survey data and relevant data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, ABS Census Data (2016) on training and skills in the Murray Forestry Hub Region; and
- Present on findings to a meeting of the Murray Region Forestry Hub Committee.

The scope of work was across eleven local government areas in NSW and Victoria. Although the work is ongoing, the preliminary findings are that:

- Most businesses are looking to invest in new technology, processes and practices over the next few years;
- Compared to other parts of NSW, the industry in this region makes good use of accredited training for new entrants to the workforce; and
- There is an ageing workforce, with 70% of workers in the harvesting and haulage sector and 52% of those in sawmilling and processing are over 45 years old. Replacement of retirees will be an issue with the ageing workforce within a decade.



Skills Gap and Training Needs Analysis

(Northern Territory and Ord Valley Forestry Hub)

The Northern Territory and Ord Valley Forestry Hub contracted ForestWorks in October 2022 to conduct a research study to determine the immediate and medium-term skills and training requirements of the local forest industry.

To determine the workforce gap and the skills and training needs, the study will conduct interviews with the leading forestry organisations in the region.

Forestry Training and Education Future Skills Assessment

(South and Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub)

The South and Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub contracted ForestWorks in October 2022 to conduct a study with the following objectives:

- Identify the present and future skills and training needs of the forest and timber industry in south and central Queensland; and
- Present a business model and benefits of establishing a training and career hub for the forest and timber industry in south and central Queensland.



ForestWorks Board and staff thank you for your support in 2021-22

Improving Enrolments Project

This project, jointly funded by ForestWorks and Skills Impact, was completed in 2020-21 and 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.

Following a surveying activity regarding key findings, a report on the issues and potential solutions was circulated to participants in the project and reported strong industry interest in piloting solutions including:

- The development of options for training to be delivered online (utilising videos and online learning systems) and assessment of competencies to occur in the workplace;
- The establishment of systems to enroll staff in a group of units of competency rather than full qualifications;
- A scholarship program for people to undertake their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40116) to become Workplace Trainers and Assessors;
- Training against organization's Standard Operating Procedures and having their skill assessed at the workplace against units or competency and formally recognized; and
- Industry development of training, curriculum, and assessment materials.

The provision of assistance to engage with Registered Training Organizations and access Government funding for training.

The report's findings helped formed the basis of discussions with political parties ahead of the Australian election about the skills and training needs for the industry's sectors including the Labor party which committed to Invest \$10 million to support programs which deliver qualifications, competencies and other credentials which meet the specific training and accreditation needs of the forest, wood products, pulp and paper and fibre sectors in their : A Future Grown in Australia: A better plan for forestry and forest products.



Skills Advice for Industry and Government

During 2021-22, 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 Australian 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 2021-22.

NSW Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB)

2021-2022 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:

- 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 August, November, February, and May;
- Participation on the selection panel for the 2021 Industry Collaboration Award, as part of the NSW Training Awards; and
- Participating in consultations with IBSA regarding the review of the qualifications in Cabinet Making, Timber and Composites Machining, Furniture Making and Coopering.

The ITAB contract has been renewed until June 30, 2023.



VIC Industry Advisory Groups (IAGs)

In May 2022, 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.

ForestWorks implements the role of Executive Officer tasks under the Common Funding Agreement. The current contract commenced January 2022 and runs until June 2023.

Ten Industry Advisory Groups (IAGs) continue to provide the VSA with advice and insights about skills needs to inform priorities for Victoria's skills system. ForestWorks is responsible for the Resources, Forestry, Pulp and Paper Industry Advisory Group made up of:

- > Australian Manufacturing Workers Union;
- > Australian Forest Contractors Association;
- > Frame and Truss Manufacturers Association;
- > Australian and New Zealand Pulp and Paper Industry;
- > CFMEU Manufacturing Division;
- > Minerals Council of Australia – Victorian Division; and
- > MGA/Timber Merchants Association.

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:

- > Development of the Victorian Skills Plan providing a skills roadmap for Victoria;
- > Preparation of industry sector profiles for Resources, Forestry, Pulp and Paper;
- > The establishment of the Office of TAFE Coordination and its priorities;
- > 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;
- > The Victorian Funded Course List (2023);
- > Regional Skills Taskforce in Gippsland and Wimmera Southern Mallee; and
- > Organisation of industry sites visits in Forestry, Frame and Truss, Pulp and Paper and Mining sectors.

Current discussions between IAG members and the VSA are focussed on addressing barriers to training in thin and regional, rural and remote (RRR) markets as well as securing Victorian Government support for the Saw technician qualification.





Snowy Valley Skills Development Service (SVSDS)

SVSDS is jointly funded by the Australian and the New South Wales Government under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund. The project will assist Snowy Valley forest and timber workers adjust to changing job requirements brought about by the bushfires. Snowy Valley forest and timber industry workers and their employers can access support to identify skills and training opportunities, undertake workforce development planning, and undertake relevant vocational training programs provided through TAFE NSW and other training providers.

Key outcomes of SVSDS:

- > Identifying business and employment opportunities in the region which might be suitable for forest and timber industry businesses and workers;
- > Supporting a minimum of 40 businesses and 400 displaced workers in the forest and timber industry understand the current and emerging employment opportunities in the region;
- > Supporting a minimum of 40 businesses and 400 workers in the forest and timber industry identify the skills needs to capitalise on new opportunities in the region; and
- > Supporting a minimum of 400 displaced workers in the forest and timber industry to access employment-focused upskilling and training.

The project has made significant inroads into the training needs of the Forestry industry in the Snowy Valley LGA and

adjoining LGAs by providing targeted training courses to the employee's needs including

- > Plantation operator skill set;
- > Chainsaw - trim and cut;
- > Fatigue management and chain of responsibility;
- > First Aid and CPR;
- > White card;
- > Overhead gantry crane;
- > Forest Machinery and truck licenses ;
- > Cert IV in Horticulture;
- > Firefighting -forest fighter basic, advanced forest fighter and crew leader; and
- > Drive 4-wheel drive on gravel roads.

Employee and employer feedback has been positive, and the uptake of the training has exceeded expectations.

A wide cross section of forest industry employees in the area have participated in the various courses which will benefit the industry as a whole.

The program is well ahead of the targeted numbers and will continue to support employees undertake training until the project concludes 30 June 2023.



Training and Skills Development Service (Tasmania)

The Training and Skills Development Service (TSDS) in Tasmania concluded in December 2021 with final financial audit and acquittal activities completed in August 2022. ForestWorks delivered the TSDS scheme on behalf of the Australian and Tasmanian Governments since its establishment in 2016, guided by a Steering Committee derived from industry to ensure the training was always well targeted to meet the contemporary requirements of the Tasmanian forest and forest products industry. The service was the second component of the Employee Assistance Program that ForestWorks delivered on behalf of the Tasmanian Department of State Growth.

TSDS was very different to other funded training programs. It predominantly supported small businesses who were unlikely to put their employees through training without external funding support, it provided support for both accredited and non-accredited training that was beneficial to the industry and many employers on the periphery of the industry, it was flexible to allow changes to be made as factors like COVID-19 and changing staff needs arose. These factors all contributed to 3,289 training places being taken up with an impressive 98% completion rate across 142 individual organisations.

- > \$4,225,000 in funding was made available for training and workforce development planning; and,
- > \$175,000 was made available for online training and assessment materials development, industry workforce development plan, a professionally designed final report and the end of project financial audit.

Approximately \$175,000 of unspent training funds was returned to Tasmanian Department of State Growth with two suggestions from the Steering Committee: firstly, that some of these funds be used to support a Tasmanian Forest and Forest Products Network (TFFPN) to develop a Career, Jobs and Training Portal for the Forest and Forest Products Industry; and, secondly, to consider quarantining the unallocated funds for use by the Skills Tasmania Skills Fund to further support industry training and workforce development planning.



Forest Resources from Land Management Activities

ForestWorks is cognizant of developing Government and Industry interest in opportunities from the existing and future program of land management for fire mitigation in terms of potential merchantable arisings and the potential skills and training ramifications.

ForestWorks will continue to work with government and all of our stakeholders on these developments.

This will include factualising industry advisory groups on request.



ForestWorks

Supporting industry to develop workforce skills

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