



2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT


ForestWorks


1983 - 2023

Celebrating 40 years of dedication to skills and sustainable development in partnership with the forest and forest products industry.



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Acknowledgement of Country

ForestWorks acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the first nations and traditional custodians of the Country, and their continuing connection to lands and waterways upon which we depend. We pay our respect to the Elders, past and present, and to all First Nations people and honour the continuation of their cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

From the Chair

The past 12 months has been an incredibly busy year for ForestWorks and our team.

The organisation continues to deliver key skills and training related products and services across our industry sectors as well as providing additional essential support services to those Victorian workers being impacted by the Victorian Forestry Plan and hardwood sector.

With the launch by the Australian Government of the Jobs and Skills Councils program, ForestWorks is pleased to be working and partnering with Skills Insight - the successor to Skills Impact - on industry training package related activities.

As part of this work, ForestWorks has expanded its training package portfolio to encompass the furnishing sector as well as the textile, clothing and footwear sectors. We welcome stakeholders in these industries to ForestWorks and look forward to building fruitful and rewarding relationships with them.

Our team are currently working to deliver the scoping report for the Forestry Workforce Training Program, being administered by the Australian Government. We would like to thank all the industry stakeholders who have participated in the engagement forums for this project to date. This scoping report will provide government with the blueprint for delivering systemic and sustainable skills and training outcomes for the forestry and forest products industries.

The ForestWorks team continues to be supported by our dedicated and committed Board of Directors. Their expertise and industry knowledge supports the work of ForestWorks and is pivotal to the success of our stakeholder engagement activities.

In late 2022 Ross Hampton resigned as a Director after taking on the challenge of a new global role and relocation to London. During his time on the Board, Ross was a great contributor and provided a high level perspective on our areas of work. We had the pleasure of welcoming David McGinness from AKD to our Board as Ross' replacement. David is well known to many in industry and has already proven a terrific asset for our Board.

I wish to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of our Chief Executive Officer, Michael Borowick and the entire ForestWorks team. Our achievements over the past year are a testament to their collective hard work.

Finally, thank you to our members and stakeholders for your contributions towards the success of ForestWorks in 2022/23. Our success as a national not-for-profit organisation is underpinned by the involvement and contribution of people and organisations who are passionate about skills and training and understand the wide range of benefits they deliver to our industry sectors.

We look forward to continuing to deliver skills and training support services and outcomes in the coming year.

Denise Campbell-Burns

Chair



From the Chief Executive Officer

This has been a particularly busy and dynamic year for ForestWorks, coincidentally marking my first year as Chief Executive Officer.

Our organisation has expanded from a team of 10 to 24 members to support our new programs, and we anticipate further growth.

The year has not been without its challenges, especially as we have scaled up. However, it has been immensely rewarding.

One of our major successes has been the completion of the Snowy Valley Skills Development Service, in collaboration with industry and TAFE New South Wales. We initially aimed to engage 400 unique learners but exceeded this goal by involving an impressive 632 unique learners. This achievement would not have been possible without the dedicated effort of our Steering Committee and project team.

We have also partnered with Skills Insight as part of the Australian Government's Jobs and Skills Council program. Skills Insight is a key part of the national network of ten Jobs and Skills Councils and this partnership aims to drive high-quality outcomes in the VET sector, including benefits for learners and businesses within our industries.

By the end of 2022, we committed to two new major projects that may be the most significant and far-reaching in the history of our organisation.

One of these impactful projects supports the allocation of the \$10 million investment by the Australian Government in the Forestry Workforce Training Program over four years. This program aims to support the delivery of skills and training that are required within Australia's forest and wood products sectors.

We have been working tirelessly, consulting with the industry to develop a scoping study report for the Forestry Workforce Training Program. This report will provide a comprehensive review of existing barriers and future industry skill and training needs.

In response to the Victorian Government's decision to terminate native timber harvesting in state forests by 2024, we have established and now administer the Victorian Forestry Worker Support Program. The program provides support to sawmill workers, harvest and haulage contractors, and Opal Australian Paper Workers.

The driving force behind our achievements has been a highly skilled and industry-knowledgeable Board of Directors, an actively engaged group of stakeholders, and a devoted and diligent staff who has worked tirelessly to deliver our programs despite the many challenges encountered. Additionally, we have been fortunate to be supported by capable and expert service providers.

It is with great sorrow that I acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Mariana Hein, who dedicated 11 and a half years to ForestWorks and who has sadly passed away following her retirement.

In closing, I extend my profound gratitude to all those who have diligently contributed to our successes throughout the year.

Michael Borowick JP
Chief Executive Officer



Travis Wacey (ForestWorks) with Hon. Chris Bowen MHR, Australian Minister for Climate Change and Energy at 23rd session (Egypt, November 2022) of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



AUSTRALIA

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Australian Government acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present, and to their Elders past and present.

Guiding Principles

ForestWorks is an industry owned not-for-profit organisation offering services to support the skills development of the forest, wood, paper, timber, textiles, clothing, footwear and furnishing industries.



Adam Dalzotto, Kat Teisini and Gemma Moran (ForestWorks) participated in a frame and truss industry familiarisation tour held by the Frame and Truss Manufacturers Association of Australia (September 2023)

Our Vision

A skilled, progressive, and resilient workforce for our industries.

Our Mission

To partner with government, industry, unions, workers, and training providers to develop a highly skilled workforce for our sectors. This includes:

- Attracting and developing new workers
- Upskilling existing workers
- Supporting workers along their career journey

Our Core Values

Respect

We listen to and strive for authentic respect and understanding of stakeholders and colleagues through meaningful engagement and consultation.

Integrity

We are open, transparent, and honest in our interactions with team members and external stakeholders.

Teamwork

We achieve more by collaborating and supporting others than working alone.

Accountability

We are accountable for our behaviour and do our best to get the job done and meet agreed objectives.

Adaptability

We respond to challenges with a flexible and adaptable mindset, focused on the best outcomes for our stakeholders and others.

Collaborative Approach



ForestWorks is dedicated to driving innovation and fostering meaningful change in the forest, wood, paper, timber, textiles, and furnishing industries. We achieve this through our collaborative approach that guides all our actions and decisions.

We believe in partnerships and prioritise collaboration in all our undertakings. To this end, we actively engage with a broad range of stakeholders, from businesses to government entities, industry associations, unions, and institutions within the education and training sectors.

In line with our commitment to advancing Industry via skills development, skills development, we have partnered with Skills Insight Jobs and Skills Council. This partnership built upon the foundation laid by its predecessor, Skills Impact. Through this partnership we can leverage our joint resources, share industry insights, and develop initiatives that address specific skills needs in the industries we serve.

Industry Coverage

ForestWorks supports the forest, wood, paper, timber, textiles, and furnishing industries, extending across all segments of its value chain. This includes a range of stakeholders - from forest owners and managers to processors, manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers - all working collectively to provide goods and services to the consumer.

Our inclusive industry-based strategy allows us to harness our collaborative methodology across all sectors. This empowers us to offer advice and services that are comprehensive and extensive.

The industry sectors we proudly support include:

- Forest growing and management
- Harvesting and haulage
- Timber and wood products manufacturing
- Timber systems design and manufacturing
- Timber supply
- Pulp and paper manufacturing
- Furnishings
- Textile, clothing and footwear



Board of Directors

Denise Campbell-Burns, Chair

Chair of the Employment Committee

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 and 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 specialty industry safety projects with the Victorian Country Fire Authority, Victorian State Coroner and WorkSafe Victoria.

In more recent years her focus has been on representing workers in the pulp and paper sector. Her experience in the sector means she has a strong understanding of 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 and paper, furniture and joinery industries.



Stacey Gardiner, Deputy Chair

Member of the Employment Committee

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 results, 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 government.

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



Tony Price, Director

Member of the Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee

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.



Travis Lawson, Director

Chair of the Risk, Audit, and Compliance Committee

Travis is a third-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 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, Appointed Director

(Elected on 08/08/2022)

Scott McClean was elected on 08/2022. A born and bred Tasmanian, Scott has worked in the forest and wood products industry for three decades. Scott is the Tasmanian District Secretary of the CFMEU Manufacturing Division.

Scott has been involved in several 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



David McGinness, Director

(Elected on 06/02/2022)

David possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience in the timber industry and related sectors, having worked in the field for over 30 years. After starting his career in chartered accounting and auditing, he began working at AKD in the early 1990s, a timber and sawmilling business with 1,200 employees across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. At AKD, David has held top positions in operations, risk management and workplace relations, and served as company secretary for over 25 years.

David has established strong relationships with industry professionals, training providers, and educational institutions to advocate for the development of the timber industry and its people. He holds a Bachelor of Business, a Graduate Diploma in Corporate Governance, a Graduate Certificate in Industrial Relations, is a member of CPA Australia, and an Associate of the Governance Institute of Australia. In addition, he is a founding Director and Secretary of SPE (Management) Pty Ltd, an export woodchip joint venture established in 1996, and currently serves as its Chair.



Michael O'Connor, Chair

(20 January 2022 – 30 July 2023)

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).



Ross Hampton, Director

(29 November 2018 - 22 November 2022)

Ross Hampton was the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) between 2013 and 2022.

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



Organisational Structure

ForestWorks has a national presence, structured to effectively meet the diverse needs of industry across the country. We understand that each region has unique challenges and needs. To cater to these specific demands, we have offices located in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland. These offices serve as local contact points and allow us to provide comprehensive, locally tailored, and adaptable services to all our key stakeholders in main industry regions.

Our team comprises a blend of highly skilled and specialised professionals dedicated to ensuring that the services we provide are not only high quality but also meet the specific needs of the sectors we serve. These include:

- **Project and state-based skills advisory managers:** These professionals facilitate regional engagement and offer localised insights and support on skills development
- **Skills standards and qualifications development specialists:** Our specialists work in consultation with stakeholders to ensure that national skills standards and qualifications align with the ever-evolving industry needs and best practices
- **Administrative professionals:** The efficient operation of our organisation lies in the hands of our administrative professionals. They provide necessary support to the entire team, ensuring seamless operations and service delivery.

In instances where specific skills or resources are required, ForestWorks engages the services of external contractors. This approach ensures that we can flexibly supplement our in-house expertise and dynamically adapt to any project requirements.



Transition from Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) to Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)



During the last half of 2022, ForestWorks supported the Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) to finalise several critical tasks within the Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) framework of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). This involved finalising two training packages and overseeing a transition process. The industry engagement arrangements with the IRC concluded in December 2022.

ForestWorks extends sincere gratitude to all members of the four IRCs that it has managed on Skills Impact's behalf. Their involvement and contribution over the past five years have been invaluable.

In early 2023, Skills Impact, with the support of ForestWorks and Mintrac, applied to establish the Skills Insight Jobs and Skills Council (JSC). The Australian Government approved the establishment of Skills Insight in May 2023 to represent the interests of agribusiness, fibre, and furnishings sectors within the Australia's skills and VET systems.



ForestWorks Partnership with Skills Insight

In June 2023, ForestWorks and Skills Insight entered into a formal partnership, which is built upon the foundation laid by the collaborative approach with their predecessor organisation, Skills Impact.

As part of this agreement, ForestWorks will provide specialist support to ensure the following industry sectors are suitably represented in the JSC mechanisms managed and maintained by Skills Insight:

- Forestry, Pulp and Paper
- Forest Management and Harvesting
- Pulp and Paper, including packaging and Hygiene Products
- Timber and wood processing and building solutions
- Furnishings
- Textiles, clothing and footwear.

ForestWorks will contribute to the following areas

1. Stakeholder Engagement

ForestWorks will establish, maintain and build networks across all these industry sectors and their value chains; and we will engage with a wide array of stakeholders to facilitate the delivery of program outcomes.

2. Workforce Planning

ForestWorks will collect and provide information regarding the workforce needs of these industry sectors, along with strategies to address these needs. This will inform the strategies and actions of the JSC. In addition, workforce planning activities may include mapping of occupation profiles and outlining education and career pathways.

3. Training Product Development

ForestWorks will work with these industry sectors to develop responsive and flexible training products informed by extensive workforce analysis.



Training Package Development

ForestWorks' core business is to develop training package products such as skill standards and qualifications. For this work we partnered with Skills Impact, which played the role of a Skills Service Organization (SSO) from 2016 to 2022. From 2023 onward, our partnership will be with Skills Insight, established as one of the Job and Skills Councils (JSCs).

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.

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

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
- **Qualifications:** a set of 12-20 units that describe a job role.
Example: FWP31019 Certificate III in Saw Technology.



2022-23 Training Package Projects

No new training package projects were commenced by ForestWorks between July 2022 and June 2023.

Completed Training Package Projects

The following training package projects were completed in 2022-23 through the Industry Reference Committee’s (IRC).

Project	Project Status
Responding and Assisting in Bushfires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Started in August 2021 ● Endorsed by AISC in August 2022
Sawmilling and Timber Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approved by State and Territory Ministers in January 2023 ● Published on training.gov.au in January 2023.



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 in relation to effective communication and awareness of hazards associated with recovery activities.

An analysis was conducted 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. These units are outlined below and they aim 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 unit: 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 will be hosted within the FWP Training Package, specifically in the Certificate IV in Forest Operations
 - » The second 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 will be consulted on for potential inclusion in the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Arboriculture as part of a future project.



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
 - » One unit for preparing the forest industry workforce to communicate effectively with members of the public or external stakeholders concerned about forest practices and
 - » 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 and Territory.



Tom Vassallo (ForestWorks) participating in a site visit as part of the Log Haulage Manual and Videos project

Training Resources Development



Log Haulage Manual and Videos Project

Project Objective and Collaboration

The Log Haulage Manual, published in 2014, is currently undergoing a comprehensive review and update. It describes safety standards and best practice for load restraint, loading and unloading trucks, and transporting forestry logs and produce. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) is in the process of developing a new Forestry Log Haulage – Industry Code of Practice, meaning the current Log Haulage Manual will need to be revised.

Led by industry, ForestWorks is reviewing and updating the Log Haulage Manual and producing some short educational videos to support some of the important safety practices outlined in the code. These resources are being created for industry, by industry, to make workplaces safer.

ForestWorks, with project partners Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA) and Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) are managing the project and have established a Project Steering Committee to oversee the project. The committee's role is to provide strategic direction and ensure the project's objectives are met.

Development Process and Stakeholder Involvement

To ensure the products developed meet industry requirements, a Subject Matter Expert Working Group (SMEWG) is also being established. This group will provide specialist technical advice on the content of the manual and videos.

There will be opportunities for broader industry stakeholders to provide feedback on drafts of the manual, as well as scripts and storyboards for the videos. This is a crucial part of the process so the manual and videos accurately reflect the contents and objectives of the Forestry Log Haulage Industry Code of Practice.

The involvement of stakeholders from the broader industry is highly valued throughout the project's duration. Opportunities for feedback have been and will be provided during the development stages of the manual, as well as for the scripts and storyboards of the videos.

Draft Materials and Feedback

The first draft of the revised Log Haulage Manual materials will be available for broader stakeholder industry feedback from mid-September to mid-October 2023. The second draft will be released for feedback in March 2023. The drafts of the video storyboards and scripts are expected to be released for broader stakeholder feedback in November 2023.

Timeline

The project commenced in February 2023 and is scheduled to be completed in April 2024, with the release of videos and revised Log Haulage Manual.

Funding Source

Funding for this project has been made available as part of the NHVR's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative (HSVI), with support from the Australian Government.

North-East NSW Training and Development

Project Objective

The North-East NSW Training & Development project aims to support the forest and wood products industry in north-east NSW, affected by the 2019-2020 bushfires.

The project focusses on addressing challenges in delivering training in remote areas by developing an online accredited training program.

The online training program focuses on the following core competencies:

- FWPCOR2208 Communicate and interact effectively in the forest and wood products industry
- FWPCOR2210 Follow workplace health and safety policies and procedures in forest and wood products operations
- FWPCOR2211 Develop knowledge of the forest and wood products industry.

The online training program primarily targets individuals new to the industry as well as existing staff of sawmills, who can benefit from additional training. Since the identified units encompass skills relevant to the entire industry, they are applicable to a wide range of potential learners.

Development Process and Stakeholder Involvement

The project has made significant progress in its development, establishing partnerships and engaging with industry stakeholders:

- Extensive consultations have taken place with industry representatives to finalise training priorities. This process involved identifying target companies in the north-east NSW region and engaging with them to determine the specific training needs
- A Steering Committee has been established with an elected chair to provide guidance and direction for the project's activities and deliverables. This committee plays a crucial role in overseeing the project's development and ensuring its successful implementation
- The project has identified expert stakeholders, specifically training providers, who contribute to the development of training and assessment materials and assist in various aspects such as marketing, delivering the completed materials, and accessing government funding streams or industry-endorsed training funds
- The NSW CFMEU (Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining, and Energy Union) has initiated activities to identify worker representatives who will encourage the uptake of the training products developed through this project.

Timeline and National Accessibility

The project commenced in January 2023 and the online course is scheduled to be completed by December 2023. Once finalised, the training products will be made accessible to the entire forestry industry.

Funding Source

Funding for the project is provided through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Package, facilitated by the Department of Regional NSW.





Industry and Workforce Support Projects



ForestWorks is dedicated to creating a positive impact on the industry and workforce it serves, exemplified by its comprehensive support projects.

These efforts encompass three types of projects in 2022-23, each tailored to address distinct needs and challenges:

- **Support Payments and Services for Transitioning Workers**
ForestWorks has been the management of support payments and services provided to workers impacted by the transition from hardwood to softwood forestry or other employment
- **Training and Skills Development Support Programs**
ForestWorks has managed government-funded training and skills development support programs to enhance the capabilities of both workers and employers
- **Skills and Training Needs Assessments**
ForestWorks has conducted comprehensive skills and training needs assessments for the forest and timber industry. These assessments form the basis for strategic decision-making, ensuring effective resource allocation and facilitating targeted skills development initiatives.



Victorian Forestry Plan Workers Support Program

Overview

The Victorian Forestry Worker Support Program is funded by the Victorian Government's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and delivered by ForestWorks. Its objective is to provide support to forestry and timber workers who have been made redundant, had their employment terminated, or had their contracts finished as a result of the the Victorian Forestry Plan. This includes the Opal Australian Paper workers affected by the shutdown of its Maryvale white paper manufacturing machine.

Program Commencement

The program commenced in the last quarter of 2022. During the initial stage of the Program, governance bodies were established, and administration and finance services were set up to facilitate Program payments. Additionally, Workers Assistance Coordinators were recruited to provide immediate support to workers.

Community Engagement

From early stages, ForestWorks aimed to have a strong presence in the community. The Workers Assistance Coordinators participated in various community events in the Gippsland Region, including:

- The Heyfield Timber Festival on 18 February 2023
- A social/wellbeing event hosted by the CFMEU on 7 March 2023, focussed on bringing together impacted temporary workers from Opal Maryvale and providing options for assistance
- The Orbost Agriculture Show on 13 March 2023
- The Forest and Wood Communities Australia's 'The Unsplittable Logger Family Day' on 6 May 2023
- A community event hosted by ForestWorks in Orbost on 12 April, attended by 51 people including participants from First Super, Royal Flying Doctors Service, 2 potential employers and workers and their families
- The Alexandra Truck and Hot Rod Show on 11 June 2023 where the Workers Assistance Coordinator was able to engage with impacted workers and local community.

A closed Facebook Group has been created as a place where workers can:

1. find out what is happening - the Project Team post jobs as they become available, group training opportunities and upcoming events
2. communicate with others in a similar situation
3. ask general questions about the program

Worker Support and Registration

The Workers Assistance Coordinators have engaged with impacted workers who registered with the Program and conducted initial interviews to determine an immediate response. As of the end of June 2023, a total of 659 registrations were received, including 152 from sawmill workers, 220 from harvest and haulage workers and contractors, 14 supply chain workers, 4 community forestry workers and 269 from Opal workers (pulp and paper).

Training Assistance and Financial Planning Support

Training has been a significant area of assistance, with the approved training requests being processed by ForestWorks staff. Group training activities have started at Opal and sawmills, and ongoing financial planning support has been provided. Individual one on one individual financial planning has commenced within harvest and haulage sector.

RPL Tools and Skills Recognition

ForestWorks partnered with Timber Training Creswick and TAFE Gippsland to develop Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tools for:

- The harvesting and haulage sector
- The sawmilling and processing sector
- The pulp and paper manufacturing sector.

As of June 2023, the following skills recognition outcomes were achieved under the project:

- Timber Training Creswick scheduled company-level RPL events and completed company-wide skills recognition for Montana, Mectec and Parkside
- 70 approvals to undertake RPL across both sawmilling, harvest and haul and Opal.

Training approvals

As of June 2023 training plans have been approved for;

- Harvest & Haulage – 467
- Sawmill – 204
- Pulp and Paper – 298
- Supply Chain workers - 1.

Employment and Wellbeing Support

Registered participants have also received employment support services, as well as health and wellbeing support.

Job Mapping and Opportunities

Frame and Truss Manufacturers of Australia (FTMA) completed a job mapping and job description information package as part of the project. The information has been shared with the Workers Assistance Coordinators to inform workers about potential future employment opportunities.

Governance

Payment and Appeals Board and Workers Support Central Governance bodies have met every month since January 2023. ForestWorks Project Team meet weekly with DEECA.



Snowy Valley Skills Development Service (SVSDS)

Overview

Snowy Valley Skills Development Service (SVSDS) began in September 2021 and concluded in June 2023. The project received joint funding from the Australian Government and the New South Wales Government through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund.

The main objective of SVSDS was to support a minimum of 40 businesses and 400 displaced workers from the Snowy Valley forest and timber industry in adapting to the changing job requirements resulting from the bushfires.

Under SVSDS, workers and employers in the Snowy Valley forest and timber industry had access to various forms of support. This included identifying skills and training opportunities, developing workforce development plans, and enrolling in relevant vocational training programs offered by TAFE NSW and other training providers.

Outcomes

Key outcomes of SVSDS were as follows:

- Identification of business and employment opportunities in the region suitable for forest and timber industry businesses and workers
- Conducted 64 one-on-one meetings with forestry businesses to help them identify the skills required to capitalize on new opportunities in the region
- Completed 1000 training plans and 998 evaluation forms, supporting displaced workers in the forest and timber industry in accessing employment-focused upskilling and training. By June 2023, 637 unique learners had completed training.

The project had a significant positive impact for the forestry industry in the Snowy Valley Local Government Area (LGA) and adjoining LGAs by addressing its training needs. A wide range of forest industry employees participated in various courses tailored to their specific needs. Some of the courses included:

- 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
- Certificate IV Horticulture
- Firefighting - Forest Fighter Basic, Advanced Forest Fighter, and Crew Leader
- Drive 4-wheel drive on gravel roads.

The approved training consisted of a combination of accredited and non-accredited programs.

The program surpassed its targeted numbers, with a higher-than-expected uptake of training and received positive feedback from employees and employers alike.

Reporting

The final quarterly report and acquittal reporting has been completed and submitted with an underspend of approximately \$500.





Skills Gap and Training Needs Analysis (Murray Region Forestry Hub)

ForestWorks conducted a regional study for the Murray Region Forestry Hub to assess the current and future workforce skills and training requirements of the forestry and wood products industry in the Hub region. The study aimed to identify workforce gaps, skill needs, training opportunities, and challenges in attracting, recruiting, and retaining workers. The information gathered from this study could be used for understanding the industry's skills and training needs in the Hub region and supporting the growth of a competent and safe workforce through effective strategies.

The report emphasised the importance of prioritising workforce planning and implementing effective recruitment strategies to address the workforce, skills, and training needs. It highlighted the need to attract and retain new workers, especially younger generations, and to continue providing ongoing training even after the conclusion of the Snowy Valleys Skills Development Service in June 2023. Creating a positive work culture was also identified as essential for long-term success in the forestry and timber industries.

The report put forth twenty- one (21) recommendations, focusing on actions and strategies to address sustainable workforce and skill gaps. These recommendations were categorised into four main areas of focus:

1. Skills and Training Delivery - Strategies for Improvement
2. Securing the Future Workforce - Strategies for Workforce Planning
3. Securing the Future Workforce - Strategies for Attraction
4. Securing the Future Workforce - Strategies for Recruitment and Retention



The project was completed in June 2023.

Forestry Training and Education Future Skills Assessment (South and Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub)

The South and Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub engaged ForestWorks to conduct a regional study to assess the current and future skills and training requirements of the forestry and wood products industry.

Specifically, this study identified workforce gaps, skill needs and training opportunities for future success in the industry, as well as challenges in attracting and recruiting workers.

This information was intended to support the south and central Queensland forestry industry with its current and future goals and support the growth of a trained and safe workforce through the implementation of appropriate strategies in partnership with training organisations.

The project also examined the operating model and benefits of establishing a training and career hub for the forest and timber industry in South and Central Queensland.

The research drew on consultation with relevant industry stakeholders, as well as desktop research. The result was a report providing recommendations to guide the decision-making of the South and Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub and government.

The project commenced in October 2022 and was completed in March 2023.



Skills Gap and Training Needs Analysis (Northern Territory and Ord Valley Forestry Hub)



The Northern Territory and Ord Valley Forestry Hub contracted ForestWorks to conduct research on the current and future skills and training needs of the forest industry within the Hub's geographic area. This area includes the northern part of the Northern Territory and the Ord Valley region of Western Australia.

The research drew on data and information gathered through desktop research, as well as interviews with industry businesses and training providers, and input from industry support organisations. The result was a report providing recommendations, which can be used by the Northern Territory and Ord Valley Forestry Hub and government to guide their decision-making.

The project commenced in October 2022 and was completed in February 2023.



Burns (Chair, ForestWorks Board of Directors) and Michael Borowick (Chief Executive Officer, ForestWorks)

Skills and Training Advisory Services

During 2022-23, ForestWorks continued to meet with government, industry peak bodies, business, unions, workers, and training providers 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.

National and State -based groups were engaged with to ascertain a broad range of industry viewpoints on 2022- 23 current trends and issues.

Forestry Workforce Training Program

Overview

In 2022, the Australian Government announced a \$10 million investment over four years for the Forestry Workforce Training Program. The program aims to support the delivery of qualifications, competencies, and credentials relevant to the industry.

ForestWorks was contracted to conduct a scoping study to inform the program so that it aligns with the specific training and accreditation needs of the industry. A key approach used to meet these requirements involved consultations with a vast array of stakeholders.



Denise Campbell-Burns (Chair, ForestWorks Board of Directors) and Michael Borowick (Chief Executive Officer, ForestWorks)

Consultation Forums

Nine stakeholder consultation forums were held by ForestWorks from 6th to 13th June 2023 to inform the scoping study. The forum's objective was to gather expert insight from industry stakeholders on key challenges and barriers to workforce education and training, including identifying key thematic data to support the delivery of the skills and training needed by the industry.

A total of 270 stakeholders were directly invited to participate in the forums, which were organised for the following sectors, interest groups and themes:

- First Nations
- Gender Diversity
- Pulp and Paper
- Forest Growers, Harvesting and Haulage
- Timber Processing and Timber Building Solutions
- Associations and Hubs
- Government Departments and Agencies
- Skills and Training Agencies
- Australian Forests Products Association (AFPA) Peak Body.

The following key focus areas were discussed during the consultations:

1. Attracting and retaining the next-generation workforce
2. Revitalising regional training capacity
3. Developing training programs for future-proofing skills
4. Recognising portable skills for mobility

Deliverables and Timeframe

ForestWorks will consolidate the feedback gathered from stakeholder forums into a comprehensive report and present recommendations to the Australian Government to consider by October 31st 2023.



NSW Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB)

2022 - 2023 was another productive year for the NSW ITAB. Some specific highlights from the year included:

- Consultation 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 Smart and Skilled High Performance Providers
- Participating in consultations with IBSA regarding the review of the qualifications in Cabinet Making, Timber and Composites Machining, Furniture Making and Coopering
- Supporting the NE NSW Forestry Hub in convening a workshop on regional skills needs and priorities to support for future skills development
- Participation in the Mid North Coast Local Industry and Schools Forum, to support school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

The ITAB contract has been renewed until June 30th , 2024.





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.

ForestWorks implements the role of Executive Officer tasks under the Common Funding Agreement. The current contract commenced January 2022 and runs until December 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 Manufacturer 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 four (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 Liaison with 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 Taskforces as established through out Victoria.

Current discussions between IAG members and the VSA remain predominantly focused 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. Ability to deliver RPL services to all workers impacted by the Victorian Forestry Policy remains a focus with success in developing and delivering RPL Tools and Training and Assessment materials for sawmilling and harvest and haulage and pulp and paper sectors. Work remains to secure FCL support for PPM Cert II and Cert III.

Skills Verification Program (FOLS)

ForestWorks administers the Skills Verification Program FOLS. 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. Workers have a transportable portfolio of verified skills that can be recognised by employers and forest managers.



Workforce Statistics

On 30th June 2023, there were just over 3,600 active FOLS-holders in the cloud-based database.

We anticipate that this number will fall slightly over the next three (3) years as the Victorian Forestry Plan is rolled-out. ForestWorks can generate reports from this database that present the demographics and skills of the national forestry workforce.

Essential Training Standards

This table lists the numbers of FOLS holders who possess the required Competencies (or their equivalent predecessor units) as specified in the AFPA/AFCA Essential Training Standards. It's important to note that this table does not include FOLS holders who received training through state-based vocational training schemes, although this information is available in the FOLS database.

Competency	FOLS
Environmental Care Procedures ¹	1039
WHS Policies and Procedures ¹	995
Operate Excavator with Log Grapple	747
Operate Skidder	445
Transport Forestry Logs	419
Trim and Cut Harvested Trees	540
Operate Crawler Tractor	281
Operate Forwarder	342
Falling	239
Conduct Mechanical Processor Operations	262
Operate Feller Buncher	248
Operate Loader	225
Falling (Intermediate)	138
Operate Single Grip Harvester	152
Fell Trees Manually (Basic)	40
Conduct Tractor Operations (Civil)	12
Operate Wood Chipper	3
Performing Landing Duties (Chaser)	16
Operate Yarder	14
Hook Up Felled Trees (Choker)	6

Source: FOLS Database (30 June 2022/2023)

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



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:

- What the industry needs from FOLS
- Matters of policy that affect the operation of the system and
- 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 at any time.

Drive for Efficiencies in the System

The skills verification program (FOLS) 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 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 service delivery to the industry. The new portal went live in November 2022 and dramatically simplified administrative tasks for ForestWorks and the users of the system.

Supporting industry to develop workforce skills

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Promoting sustainable forest management in Australia and around the world.

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