



FITEC-Forestry – part of FITEC

FITEC (Forest Industries Training & Education Council) has its origins in a review of on-the-job training in forestry which the NZ Forest Owners' Association initiated in 1990.

Following that review, and with the proposed Industries Training Act in mind, FITEC was established as an umbrella body for forestry and solid wood processing.

In 1992 the Pulp & Paper and Wood Panels sectors joined FITEC.

The Industries Training Act 1992 provided for the establishment of Industry Training Organisations (ITOs), and FITEC was duly registered as the Forest Industry ITO covering the four sectors mentioned above.

Structurally, FITEC is the umbrella policy council under which four Sector Operating Committees (SOCs) attend to the specific needs of their individual sectors.

The Sector Operating Committees are therefore responsible both to their Sector and to the ITO.

FITEC has a direct link to the Forest Industries Council and effectively operates as the Council's Education and Training Committee.

FITEC-Forestry is the Sector Operating Committee for the forestry sector. It was established this year after the NZ Forest Owners' Association commissioned a report on the optimum structure that would allow for the sector to best meet the full education and training needs of forest growing and harvesting.

The NZFOA Executive Council deter-

mined that a single Forestry Sector Operating Committee be established with representation from Forest Grower, Silviculture and Harvesting contractor, employee and professional interests.

The Committee is separate from LFITB (Logging and Forest Industry Training Board) which stands outside the structure as an independent organisation. The LFITB will be contracted to provide services to FITEC-Forestry in its area of expertise – primarily the delivery of a structured training system for operators (broadly levels 1-4 on the qualifications framework).

It will be recalled that in 1994 the NZ Forest Owners' Association adopted a policy statement that required that all people working in forestry be qualified, or under training, for the work they were doing, by January 1996. This was an ambitious target and in the event was not achieved. Estimates of the level achieved vary (60%+) but there is no doubt that this policy had a significant influence on the uptake of training, and the numbers 'qualified' doubled between 1994 and January 1996.

The achievement to date has largely been due to the determined efforts of the larger and medium-size forest owners who support the policy and ensure that the contractors working in their forests take up the challenge. LFITB also increased its level of activity in support of the policy.

More progress has been made in harvesting operations than in silviculture. This is thought to be due at least in part

to the higher labour turnover in silviculture and to less interest on the part of silvicultural workers.

The challenge is to maintain the momentum and continue the progress.

To this end, the NZ Forest Owners' Association has now modified its policy statement to indicate support for the Unit Standards based NZ Qualifications Authority qualifications, and to demonstrate its ongoing commitment.

Thus:

"Forest Owners will ensure that all persons employed in their forest operations are qualified to appropriate NZQA standards for the task being undertaken or be undergoing recognised training to achieve those industry standards."

In my view it is important that other forest-owning groups – syndicates and farm foresters – commit to a similar philosophy.

This can be achieved by supporting and participating in the work of FITEC-Forestry and LFITB.

FITEC (and hence FITEC-Forestry) is responsible under the Act for all levels of education and training in the industry (levels 1-8 on the National Qualifications Framework) in so far as it has responsibilities to:

- set national skill standards for registration on the NZQA National Qualifications Framework;
- develop arrangements for the delivery of training on and off site;
- develop arrangements for monitoring the training and for the assessing of trainees.

FITEC is the agency that secures and is accountable for funds from ETSA (Education and Training Support Agency) which are applied, along with funds from Industry, to meeting the above responsibilities.

FITEC-Forestry will work as a committee with a very lean executive support structure.

Greg Steele has been appointed Sector Manager and is located in the FITEC offices on the FRI campus at Rotorua. He draws on FITEC for secretarial and accounting support.

Staffing will be kept to a minimum and FITEC-Forestry will contract the services it requires from outside providers with appropriate expertise.

New Zealand Forestry

invites you to submit material for inclusion in this publication

We accept:

- articles on a wide variety of forestry topics;
- comment on forestry or Institute of Forestry affairs;
- items on current events;
- letters to the editor;
- items from local sections;
- advertising.

Comments, letters, news items, and Institute news need to be with the Editor at the beginning of the month prior to publication.

The major contract will be with LFITB to provide the necessary services, network and support systems to ensure that structured training to NZQA standards is delivered to the people working in the forest on silvicultural and harvesting operations (generally levels 1-4 on the Framework).

The well-known 'FIRS' modules will continue as an industry recognition of skills, but will in future be based on unit standards from the National Qualifications Framework. The modules will be awarded by FITEC-Forestry only after these unit standards have been achieved and registered with NZQA.

The Sector Operating Committee will continue to make use of Industry Advisory Panels to develop unit standards and design programmes and qualifications.

The Committee responsibilities are not confined to 'operator training' and cover the range from pre-entry (often school-based) to tertiary education. Industry Advisory Panels have been used to good effect in the development of the National Diploma in Forestry (replacing the NZCF), the new National Certificates in Forest Health and Quarantine. Moderation requirements, Unit standard development and 'packaging' into National Certificates, e.g., Mechanised harvesting. Working groups are also currently developing industry packages for environmental management and forest mensuration.

A comprehensive database is vital to effective management and monitoring of training and award systems. Development and management of a database will be contracted to LFITB. The database will ultimately cover all levels of learning in the forest industry and will provide information on trainee records of learning and achievement, monitor assessor activities and provide the information required to secure ongoing ETSA funding.

It is important to stress, however, that the organisation exists because of the industry's commitment to training and education and to safety in the workplace – not simply to capture Government funds, which alone are inadequate to support the programme.

Another important function of FITEC-Forestry is to promote education and training to the industry, and Institute members should see evidence of this in the near future.

FITEC-Forestry is part of the continued evolution of Education and Training in forestry. Initiatives taken nearly 20 years ago by Tasman Forestry, New Zealand Forest Service, New Zealand Forest Products regularised training, introduced commons standards, and gave rise to LFITB.

The new mandate for FITEC-Forestry from Forest Growers, Contractors and

other groups is part of the evolutionary process that strives for a well-qualified and skilled workforce at all levels, operating in an environment made as safe as possible and giving satisfaction to individuals who have a pride in their industry.

REPRESENTATION IN FITEC-FORESTRY

- Representing Forest Owners
 - NZ Forest Owners' Association 3
 - NZ Farm Forestry Association 1
 - Maori groups with commercial interest in forests 1
- Representing Contractors (Forestry Contractors Assn of NZ)
 - Harvesting 1
 - Silviculture 1

In recognition of the nature of contracting, provision is made for permanent alternates for the contractor

representatives. These alternates can attend all meetings if they wish and are able.

- Representing employees
 - Wood Industries Union of Aotearoa Inc 1
 - NZ Institute of Forestry Inc 1
- A secondment from FITEC will assist to ensure that responsiveness to the needs of Maori and other minority groups is met as required under the Act.
- In addition the committee will seek input from education and training providers at three levels
 - level 1-4 training providers
 - level 5-6 providers (polytechnics)
 - level 7-8 providers (universities)

Murray McAlonan

Forestry company's scholarship programme

Forestry company Rayonier New Zealand has called for applications for its annual scholarship programme.

The company will be giving a total of \$34,000 this year to the winning tertiary and secondary students from right around the country, including four forestry scholarships worth \$3000 each.

"We want to encourage forestry as a career choice and to help forestry students to achieve their goals. Assisting them financially is a practical and positive way to support their tertiary education, and it ensures the future vitality of the forestry industry," says Charles Margiotta, Managing Director of Rayonier New Zealand.

Previous recipients of the forestry scholarship include one from Waikato University and five from Canterbury University.

This is the first year students enrolled in the Waiariki Polytechnic forestry diploma programme have been eligible for the scholarship programme.

Students Impress

"We've been bowled over by the calibre of the students we have supported so far. They have really impressed us with their talent, their vitality and their clear vision of where they want to go in life," says Charles Margiotta.

The forestry scholarships are available for students in the final two years of the Bachelor of Forest Science and the Bachelor of Engineering (Forestry) from Canterbury University, the Bachelor of Science (Technology-Forestry) from Waikato University, the Bachelor of Engineering (Natural Resources) from Lincoln University and the Diploma in Forestry from Waiariki Polytechnic.

Recipients are selected by considering their community service, leadership skills, academic or vocational performance, extra-curricular activities and special interests.

General Grants

General grants ranging from \$500 to \$1000 are also available to enrolled polytechnic or university students, as well as secondary students intending to enroll in tertiary courses, who live near Rayonier New Zealand forest, operations or nursery locations. Under the general scholarship category, the courses don't have to be forestry related.

Rayonier New Zealand is one of New Zealand's largest forestry companies, with plantation pine forests, nurseries and processing plants located from Northland to Invercargill.