

08 August 2017

AN INDUSTRY DISCUSSION ON DEVELOPING TRAINING FOR FOREST MACHINE OPERATIONS

This concept document is intended to form the basis of discussions at an industry meeting in Rotorua on the 23 August (Distinction Hotel, 1:30 pm).

Background

There is growing awareness of the need to attract and train personnel into careers operating machines in the forest industry. Currently the existing framework lacks coherence, sufficient trainees, scale and adequate funding.

This meeting is intended to focus only on training and career development: the training process.

It does not ignore, but for the day sets aside, the need for a recruitment process: a marketing strategy, an awareness campaign, a charm offensive, to sell the forest industry as a rewarding career path. There is an accepted need for such a campaign to attract people to the industry, but this is a separate development, which hopefully will be influenced by and accelerated by any firm decisions arrived at on the day.

Toi Ohomai has demonstrated a successful training process, and the proposal offered here is that this should be expanded and increased in scope. Toi Ohomai now trains at the Basic Machine Operation level (level 3) and the time appears right to expand that capacity nationally. Both in numbers and in the Certificates offered.

Scope of this Proposal

The scope of this training discussion covers:

- Mechanical land prep,
- Mechanised thinning (production and thin to waste)
- All forest engineering machine operations,
- All forest harvesting machine operations.

Relevant Funding Factors

- **Government Funding I**
Competenz is an ITO. Their role is to set, maintain and assess standards, and to organise training to be funded by employers. Note the presence of other ITOs around the industry such as Connexis (Forest Engineering) and MITO (Quarries)

➤ **Government Funding II**

Polytechnics and their agents are funded to deliver training under government Polytech arrangements. Generally the funding stream is considerably greater than that through Competenz.

➤ **Employer Funding**

Currently this is almost exclusively provided by contractors. Included in this funding stream is any wages/salary paid while the learner is training. The proposal argues that some form of contribution from forest owners is required to assist training and we note that TLL has started that process.

Guiding Principles driving the current Proposal.

1. To gain maximum funding, training should be delivered through the Polytech system using Polytech administrative systems.
2. To gain maximum funding there should be a strong incentive to complete a New Zealand Certificate: *not* “task-based” units only.
3. A positive attitude is the greatest single requirement for those seeking employment in the industry. Skill levels are not as important as a willingness to learn, an outdoor focus, and a drug free, common sense work ethic.
4. Training in machine operation needs to make maximum use of simulators
5. Entry into the training system needs to be open to all: school leavers, those seeking a career change, and current forest workers wishing to upskill.
6. Entry into the training system needs to be available at any level of seniority: from basic machine operation to the most complex, provided the aim is a New Zealand Certificate.
7. Practical training as part of a Certificate will be in an operational crew managed either by a Polytech, or by an approved Contractor.
8. Funding support from forest owners is recommended and encouraged.
9. Bonding methods are available to protect employers

Proposal *(this statement is as broad as possible to allow the greatest flexibility)*

➤ **Entrants** new to the industry (from school or from other industries) and wanting machinery training enter a Polytech structure and complete the level 3 Basic Machine Operations NZ Cert. Training includes theory training (DKO units) simulator time, and practical experience. Entrants then enter the workforce proper and gain further experience within an employer’s operation. Practical experience is to be gained in either:

- approved employer crews or
- regionally based training crews managed and led by Polytech trainer/assessors

- **Training subsequent to the basic Machine Operations** – these are all level 4 Certificates - is done as a current worker. (previous entrants new to industry joined by those already in the industry) The current worker, with the employer, decides on a level of training and enters a Polytech structure. Practical experience is to be gained in their original crew
- There are three methods of covering costs in addition to those funds secured by the Polytech:
 - Entrant takes out a student loan
 - Employer pays the entrant a wage during training. A bonding process may apply
 - Entrant paid by employer but forest owner contributes to this cost

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Faster, focused and consistent
- Makes use of greatest funding stream
- Working now, on small scale
- Allows for trainees to be sponsored or self-supported
- Caters for mechanised operator demand
- Polytech crews have highly focused practical training

Weaknesses

- Machine based trainer/assessors have to migrate into the Polytech system
- May not be sufficient “approved” Contractor training crews
- Increased travel for Polytech trainer/assessors as their trainees are dispersed following workshop training
- May not be enough trainer/assessors
- Open to “bums on seats” mentality
- Means big ramp-up in simulator numbers, some high tech
- Polytech based crews of trainees may operate at considerably higher cost
- Contractor based crews may lose trainees to other contractors

Opportunities

- Use of simulators
- Bulk throughput of trainees
- Employers being assisted to pay for training
- Creates culture of contractors promoting training

Threats

- TEC may withdraw funding to Polytech system as Govt policy is that in employment, the employer pays for training
- Stops traditional training “contractor’s way”
- Lack of consistency across Polytechs



Fraser Field

Quality Manager

Rayonier Matariki Forest

DDI 09 358 9773 Mob 0274 635 117