

VFCA

Victorian Forest Contractors Association

The role of Forest Contractors in the timber industry is often understated and for many years they have not had access to training opportunities provided to other industries. Through the formation of ForestWorks the information on training and skills development is now filtering through to the Forest Contractor sector and with the continuation of the work being undertaken by ForestWorks this will develop into better skilled and educated sector of the timber industry.

The VFCA is a Forest Contractor representative organisation, particularly focused on the native forest harvest and haulage sector. The organisation was established to represent contractors at varying levels of government and give them a voice in decision making processes that were impacting on their future.

Over time the Association has changed and is now focused on assisting members in ways that will allow their businesses to grow and stay competitive. Training is one of these areas and through the relationship with ForestWorks the message is getting out there on the need for training and skills development.

The information flow from ForestWorks to the Association and then onto member contractors is ensuring that contractors are aware of what is available to them in training assistance but more importantly is providing an opportunity for contractors to have a say in the development of training packages that they will eventually utilise.

This knowledge transfer is ensuring that training for the sector is based on real experience and that the training is deliverable in such a way that it is minimalistic in disruption to business. This has always been a major impediment for Forest Contractors as having staff of the job has a major impact on production.

As mentioned, Forest Contractors have been, unfortunately, the meat in the sandwich in the political debate over forestry and it has only been in recent times that there has been a lessening of the focus on forestry as a political pawn allowing Forest Contractors to look at their business structures and undertake training for their staff.

Having an organisation such as ForestWorks available to assist with training enquiries and provide the conduit for Forest Contractors into the often complex and confusing world of RTOS and other varying training acronyms, will, over time see more and more Forest Contractors realise the importance of training and take up the opportunity to skill their workforce. This will only happen if Forestworks can continue their invaluable work in assisting the industry.

The VFCA recognises the importance of ForestWorks to the timber industry as our industry skills council organisation. The VFCA hope that government will commit to programs that support skills councils such as ForestWorks. ForestWorks is making a difference for Forest Contractors and given the opportunity will no doubt become even more efficient in assisting the timber industry.

Yours truly

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Representing the businesses at the cutting edge of forestry