

SUBMISSION

to the

**SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE
RELATIONS & EDUCATION REFERENCES
COMMITTEE**

**CURRENT AND FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS
INQUIRY**

From

**FOREST AND FOREST PRODUCTS
EMPLOYMENT SKILLS COMPANY
(FAFPESC)**



Submission from FAFPESC on behalf of the Forest and Forest Products Industry (which includes Pulp and Paper Manufacturing)

Preamble and Summary

This paper summarises the views from leaders in the Forest and Forest Products Industry with regards to the role of industry and industry advisory arrangements.

During October 2002, the Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee of the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia called for an inquiry and report into matters impacting on current and future skills needs.

This submission addresses a wide range of matters that fall within the framework of the Committee's inquiry, but the focus of this submission is on the importance of an industry led system, the role that Industry Training Advisory Bodies have in the system and the future of industry advisory arrangements in Australia.

It is of interest to note that each of the terms of reference for the inquiry as listed below, in some way involve industry, information about or from industry or government policy which applies to industry and industry advisory arrangements.

This supports the views outlined in this paper that without a well resourced and effective mechanism operating at a national level to involve industry in the VET system, the VET system will function well below its required capacity.

Therefore this inquiry cannot be completed without appropriate and adequate consideration of the role that industry plays in the VET system, and the mechanisms available for industry to contribute to, influence and benefit from the VET system.

Terms of Reference for the Inquiry

- ❑ *areas of skills shortage and labour demand in different areas and locations, with particular emphasis on projecting future skills requirements;*
- ❑ *the effectiveness of current Commonwealth, state and territory education, training and employment policies, and programs and mechanisms for meeting current and future skills needs, and any recommended improvements;*
- ❑ *the effectiveness of industry strategies to meet current and emerging skill needs;*
- ❑ *strategies to anticipate the vocational education and training needs flowing from industry restructuring and redundancies, and any recommended improvements; and*
- ❑ *consultation arrangements with industry, unions and the community on labour-market trends and skills demand in particular, and any recommended appropriate changes*

Submission Summary

The thrust of the submission is that the future of an effective vocational education and training (VET) system lies within the robustness and effectiveness of industry involvement and industry information within the context of government policy, funding and regulation of the VET system.

Without proper attention and resourcing being applied to industry involvement in a structured, national and stakeholder driven manner, our VET system has little chance of delivering the outcomes required by the economy, industry and those persons seeking employment within industry.

Introduction

Government and the VET system needs access to mechanisms that can provide information to ensure that the VET system meets the needs of industry. While there are other needs to be met by the VET system, this submission focuses on the needs of industry and skills for industry.

It does this for two reasons. The first being the philosophy that without economically viable enterprises operating as part of viable (and where possible growing) industries, the prosperity of all Australians are at risk. A key component of viable enterprises and industry is the competency and skills of the people who work in them.

The second reason is that this submission is made on behalf of leaders in the Forest and Forest Products Industry, by FAFPESC on behalf of the Board of the Forest and Forest Products Employment Skills Company and clearly focuses on the needs of industry. Please see the attachment for information about FAFPESC and its Board of Directors.

The submission

One of the most important features of Australia's VET system is that it relies upon the needs of industry as one of the key drivers of the system. This is a fundamental part of the VET system, without which it would not be able to provide the benefits for Australia and all Australians.

Government and the Australian National Training Authority recognise that there is an essential role that needs to be played by industry in order to maintain an industry led/driven VET system.

Given this inquiry and the ANTA review into industry advisory arrangements for the VET system a key question that needs to be resolved is, how and what is the best way to ensure industry's involvement, participation and the provision of industry information into the system?

The large range of information concerning skill development, skill shortages and job information that industry holds is vital to the VET system. Historically this information has not been collected statistically on a regular basis in a form that can be used by the VET system. There is wide recognition in some industries of the lack of meaningful job data as a result of outdated ASCO job classification system. This matter is currently being reviewed by the ABS with the review expected to take a number of years. Even without this problem, current statistical information does not provide the key types of information from industry as required by the VET system or often enough to assist in funding and priority decisions.

The industry intelligence that the VET system needs is currently in the hands of industry and needs to be transferred into the VET system on a regular basis. This requires cooperation from industry and a willingness to supply the information required. If there is a perception from industry or parts of industry that the VET system is not working towards meeting industry needs there is a significant barrier to passing on industry intelligence.

The provision of information and intelligence from industry into the VET system is not without expense to industry in the time and resources taken to gather and provide that information. This cost must be justified, therefore it is important that industry sees the results of its efforts through improvements in the VET system and in the result of a VET system that meets industry needs. Currently industry is provided with very little support to lead the VET system and to provide information to the VET system.

Poorly funding National ITABs and the now virtually dismantled and now Federally unfunded state based ITAB system has been the only assistance that industry has received for this key role.

Almost all industry participation in the VET system is done on a voluntary basis as an additional role to other industry activities. Unions have put a huge amount of time and effort into the VET system, funded by union membership funds.

The terms of this inquiry seeks to gather information about the best manner by which areas of skill shortage and labour demand in different areas and locations, with particular emphasis on projecting future skill requirements can be acquired and used by the VET system.

These projections and labour demand information needs to be based directly from information derived from industry sources.

The inquiry is also asked to determine the effectiveness of industry strategies to meet current and emerging skill needs. It needs to be noted that for most industries and particularly the Forest and Forest Products Industry, ITABs are the sole source of industry wide strategic planning for skills development to meet the current and future skills need.

Without a viable, well-funded, single industry system of ITABs, it is doubtful that many industries will maintain any sort of strategic approach to the development of skills.

The inquiry is examining the ability of the VET system to develop strategies to anticipate the vocational education and training needs flowing from industry restructuring and redundancies. Once again this information is best achieved by a mechanism that directly involves each industry on and industry by industry basis.

The inquiry also needs to report on consultation arrangements with industry, unions and the community on labour-market trends and skills demand in particular, and any recommended appropriate changes. As government would be well aware, consultation with a vast number of enterprises that make up an industry is not possible without representative structures. ITABs have varied in their degree of success, largely based on the extent by which they are representative of the industries they cover.

FAFPESC, as the industry owned ITAB for the Forest and Forest Products Industry strives to be representative of all sectors of the industry nationally with a balance between employer and employee representation.

It is difficult if not impossible to hear the views of industry, each industry does not have its own skills specific industry focused representative forum. This is the role of ITABs which have been used by government for many years as the basis of consultation with industry.

The recently proposed changes by ANTA as detailed below seeks to remove the industry by industry representative structure and replace it with a multi industry structure.

It is the well considered view of this industry that such a structure cannot work to represent the needs of industry as outlined below.

The inquiry is also seeking information on the effectiveness of current Commonwealth, state and territory education, training and employment policies, and programs and mechanisms for meeting current and future skills needs. In keeping with the thrust of this submission, we only wish to comment on government policy with regards to industry representation and involvement in the VET system.

At the moment the main vehicle for industry involvement in VET is through ITABs and enterprise contact with NACs and training providers. There is also a host of information available to industry, but the volumes are so high, many people in industry struggle to understand the issues

associated with the system. The extensive use of acronyms and the, what appears to be, constant change including names of departments, skills standards, etc overwhelms the average industry person who is willing to contribute to the VET system and ensuring that it meets the needs of industry.

Therefore a key role of ITABs is providing advice to industry, and industry enterprises as distinct from providing advice to government departments and training providers.

This part of the role is often not recognised by government and ANTA and consequently not funded or very poorly funded. This role however is critical to maintaining industry involvement, engagement and contact with the VET system.

Government policy should reflect the needs of industry as outlined in this submission and should provide an adequate resource for each industry to be involved in the VET system. ITAB resources should be increased by a minimum of 100% at a national level and consideration given to additional resources to allow for the National ITAB to maintain state and regional branch offices for the use of industry, but also training providers and government departments.

Why does the VET system need industry skill development bodies?

This submission is made on the understanding that all stakeholders recognise and support the key role that industry plays in providing information to support effective skills delivery mechanisms in Australia. This has been referred to in the past as an industry led or industry driven system. It is very difficult to maintain an industry led VET system if there is not a formal mechanism for ensuring the system is led by industry and if there is no mechanism for checking that the system meets the needs of industry.

In fact without the goal of ensuring that the VET system meets the needs of industry and a way in which that can be measured, it begs the question, whose needs is the system trying to meet and why? As stated previously, a VET system can not contribute directly to the prosperity of the country unless industry skills needs are addressed.

Part of this mechanism in the past has been delivered through a number of Industry Training Advisory Bodies or ITABs coming under the jurisdiction of the Australian National Training Authority or ANTA.

This system, while sound in concept and having delivered the basis for a huge change and huge improvements in the VET system has not been 100% successful in leading the VET system.

Why?

1. The majority of decision-making and influence of the VET system lies with Government and deliverers of Government Funded Training. Under this arrangement the Industry Advisory Bodies or ITABs of the past have had limited influence of the VET system resulting in a system is more of a Government and Provider led system than and Industry led system.
2. The role of ITABs has been very poorly funded for such a key set of roles in the system. ITABs have existed for the last 5 years with no increase of funding which effectively equates to a real reduction in funding of at least 5% each year.

The amount of funding provided to maintain industry skill development intelligence and knowledge structures is simply not sufficient to provide the degree of industry leadership required for the VET system.

How to Improve Industry Leadership, Influence and Involvement to Truly Create an Industry Led Vet System

The industry has worked with ANTA for many years to build and strengthen Industry leadership of the National VET system.

The industry has been supportive of a range of activities over the years, largely led by ANTA, that have been designed to build on the achievements of existing industry advisory bodies and increasing the capacity, financial sustainability and profile of national industry advisory arrangements.

However this process has been a continual struggle for the two reasons outlined above.

We will address the funding issue first. The budget for industry advisory arrangements has not been sufficient to meet the required roles. Last year the complete removal of federal funding to State Training Authorities for State ITABs resulted in a virtual dismantling of a national industry advisory network. With no increase in funding for National Industry Advisory arrangements is very unclear as to how Australia will maintain any sort of credible industry leadership in the VET system.

This situation is unfortunate to say the least. The current funding situation results in Industry ITABs (altogether) receiving 0.2% of the VET budget whilst State Training Authorities receive more than 3.6 billion dollars to spend on training delivery and related activities.

This does not provide a sound basis for an industry led system. The most significant issue that the industry led system has at this point of time is the under funding of the mechanisms that provide current skill standards information in the form required by ANTA. This information is provided with ongoing industry support and industry intelligence supplied on a volunteer basis. It is unfortunate, disappointing and disturbing that the VET system appears to be ignoring the single most significant issue, which is the proper resourcing of industry involvement in the VET system.

The second reason for many failings attributed to the “Industry led system” which, as stated earlier is more of a government and provider led system, is the limited influence that industry is able to exert on the system. The major tool that industry has to exert influence on the VET system is through ITABs and the Industry Training Packages that are generally developed and reviewed by the ITABs. However ITABs and the industries they represent have no direct influence on funding of the delivery of training, the rate of funding or what type of training is delivered. These decisions are all made by State Training Authorities (STAs) and providers, particularly TAFEs. STAs usually have engaged industry through state ITABs however many of industries’ concerns and issues have not been listened to or addressed at a state level.

Similarly ANTA has required National ITABs to provide it with information regarding what industry requires from the VET system. Despite ITABs delivery a wide range of information to ANTA, ANTA has very limited ability to act on this information.

ANTA’s Proposal to Create Eight New Industry Skills Councils

ANTA has proposed that improvements to the influence and operations of ITABs can be achieved through the abolition of ITABs and the creation of 8 skills councils (effectively a reduction in the number of ITABs) removing the role of strategic planning from ITABs, and restructuring the manner in which training packages (TP) operate and are reviewed. (Including the manner in which TP reviews are funded)

There does not appear to be any logic or rationale behind this approach except as an attempt to consolidate the limited funding that ANTA receives for the current 23 ITABs to 8 ITABs with a new name.

ANTA states the new arrangements will be required to have the strength and capacity to fully engage at enterprise and industry level. It is important to note that reducing the number of ITABs obviously does not reduce the number of enterprises or industries in Australia. Of significant concern is that the proposals, if implemented, will require the new skills councils to cover more industries and a much broader range and diversity of skills. As a result they will have a far more difficult job of engaging with industry (as they effectively will need to engage across multiple industries) and the number of enterprises they need to engage with will increase significantly.

The proposal will also result in Strategic Planning for VET to be removed from industry and carried out by ANTA through structures that are somewhat remote from industry and particularly small and medium sized enterprises. This change is not in the best interests of industries, particularly diversified and vertically integrated industries like the Forest and Forest Products Industry and seems to be designed to meet the needs of the VET bureaucracy, rather than industry.

A key factor that appears to be overlooked is the recognised role that some existing ITAB organisations, such as FAFPESC, has in respect to implementation and support for industry development strategies and Government Action Agendas.

All of these roles are carried out together in the Forest and Forest Products Industry and to remove a key skills development role, and place that role in a multiple industry council will be detrimental to the industry and ANTA's aims for VET.

Industry Ownership and Acceptance

A key factor in encouraging and supporting industry contributions of information and intelligence to the VET sector is industry ownership of the process, the information and the sense that the Training Package is part of the industry infrastructure.

It is very likely that some of the Industry Skills Councils will be perceived as being further removed from industry than existing ITABs and with good reason. The breadth of different industry coverage and the wide range of unrelated stakeholders that have been proposed in some councils will only enable representation at the peak organisational level and direct contact with industry will be lost. The proposed structures in some cases, particularly with no increase in the total amount of funding available to engage industry will struggle to connect in a meaningful way with multiple industries.

A key driver in current successful ITABs is the degree of industry ownership felt by industry and the resultant acceptance and participation by industry in the role and advice provided by the ITAB.

It is difficult to see how the vast array of different stakeholders that will apply to some of the skill councils will lead to any acceptable degree of industry ownership.

FAFPESC currently and traditionally has an extremely high amount of industry acceptance and ownership brought about largely through Board Membership that in addition to involving industry organisations also directly involves key leaders from significant industry companies. This involvement is backed up by constant day to day contact with industry at a company and enterprise level. The range of services provided to industry by FAFPESC in addition to the roles provided by ANTA is another key reason for the high levels of industry acceptance, support and ownership of FAFPESC activities.

FAFPESC is of the view that to remove the role of ITABs from the current representative structures and place that role in diversified and non-coherent skills councils will disengage industry from the VET leadership process.

Industry involvement in the VET sector will only be genuinely and actively provided when each industry is of the view that the time and effort put in on behalf of the industry is reflected in benefits for individual enterprises or the industry as a whole.

The roles of properly funded industry peak skills bodies/councils/ITABs are;

- To actively support the development, implementation and continuous improvement of high quality nationally recognised training products and services, particularly the Industry Led Training Packages, which should be called Industry Skill Standards and Qualifications. (see below)
- To assist industries, enterprises and their workforce to integrate skill development with business goals and support accurate industry intelligence on future directions.
- To influence the direction and mechanism of the VET System and the VET funding system. This can be achieved through reports to ANTA on industry issues and industry intelligence and ANTA having the capacity and willingness to digest such reports and the influence to act on those reports through the State and Federal Training Authorities.

Training Packages

FAFPESC supports the concept of Training Packages becoming not only well supported but also a dynamic service to all users in industry and the training system, and not simply publications that are reviewed and re-printed every three years. FAFPESC has in the past suggested that the continuous improvement and movement of TP to an online system is the only future of Training Packages in most industries. Innovative methods of Training Package distribution, updating and user support should be developed and provided from the relevant Council as an authoritative and central source.

The name of Training Packages should be changed. At the moment industry users have high expectations from Training Packages as the name leads them to believe that they will contain training packages to use at an enterprise level, ie training and learning resources and training tools. Training Packages do not contain such items. They contain units of competence that describe the outcomes of learning processes which are industry skill standards, qualification rules and industry assessment guidelines.

FAFPESC submits that in order to make the VET system more understandable and useable by industry, Training Packages should be renamed to Industry Skill Standards and Qualifications.

Strategic Advice on Industry Directions and Training Needs

FAFPESC submits that the only way to receive strategic advice on behalf of an industry is through a national representative organisation. Obviously if such an organisation is providing advice on skills and training needs, it would be extremely beneficial if that organisation specialised in skills development and training above all else.

The concept of achieving as strategic approach by consulting with individual companies or working through government departments is not sound. A strategy for an industry must be devised and implemented by the industry, and the whole industry which requires a national approach.

In the past there have been many attempts at devising forums to look at VET issues in a strategic sense, recent ANTA has proposed a national VET forum whose proposed membership is

dominated by large employer organisation, the ACTU, State and Territory Training Boards. Such a forum will not be able to develop strategies for each industry, will not have specific knowledge on industry issues and will not provide for proper industry involvement.

This skills forum may be of use to ANTA and the VET system, but should not have the key role of strategic advice in relation to the needs of industry. That can only be provided by each industry through a proper industry representative structure, rather than as proposed, by state training authorities, large employer bodies, the ACTU and a handful of Chairs from Skills Councils.

Conclusion

The inquiry's terms of reference focus on how the VET system can best address the skill needs of Australia.

This paper argues that the single most important type of skill need is the skill needs of industry.

Each industry has different skill needs and requires its own skills development strategy to meet those needs.

The only effective mechanism to feed information from industry into the VET system and to assist industry with the development and implementation of a skills strategy is a national VET organisation for each industry, put in place as a result of government policy. One skill body for each industry.

Existing government policy already supports such a mechanism, what needs to now occur is proper resourcing of these bodies and proper recognition of the role they play.

With the provision of appropriate resources, and the provision of appropriate amounts of influence, Australia can move forward with a genuinely industry led system. This type of system, despite all the rhetoric about the current system, has yet to be tried.

This submission can be summarised as follows;

The most effective form of skills system for Australia is an industry led system.

Each industry requires support to maintain a properly structured and resourced industry skill development body whose main function is to ensure that the VET system is able to meet the needs of industry and that industry has a range of strategies to meet current and emerging skill needs.

This system is almost in place, however it is hugely under resourced and potentially about to be dismantled by ANTA.

The Forest and Forest Products Industry believes that government policy can change this situation and provide a firm foundation for the future of Australia's VET system.

FAFPESC

Skills development for the Forest and Forest Products Industry

Working with industry to achieve skills development outcomes through:

- National Strategic Planning
- Supporting improvements to skills infrastructure
- Management of industry projects
- Training Package and support materials development
- Co-ordination of industry based skills networks
- Providing direction and advice to industry and government
- Assisting industry to develop and recognise existing and new skills

Who is FAFPESC?

The Forest and Forest Products Employment Skills Company (FAFPESC) is an industry owned and managed organisation whose primary role is to assist the Forest and Forest Products Industry in Australia to recognise and develop the skills of its employees.

FAFPESC is the declared National Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) for the industry. This means that FAFPESC is recognised by the Federal and State governments as the organisation that provides industry and government with advice on vocational education and training, and provides leadership to assist the industry to progress skills development in a nationally consistent way across the whole industry.

FAFPESC works across all industry sectors:

- Forest Growing & Management
- Harvesting & Haulage
- Sawmilling & Processing
- Timber Product Manufacturing
- Wood Panel/Board Production and Manufacturing
- Pulp and Paper Manufacturing
- Timber Merchandising

The FAFPESC Board of Directors

FAFPESC is an industry led organisation. The Board of Directors of FAFPESC is made up of leaders from industry of the highest calibre representing all sectors of the industry and most geographical regions.

Directors contribute their industry knowledge, expertise and time to the management of FAFPESC operations and the strategic direction of skills development, leading to benefits for the whole industry.

The FAFPESC Board is one of the few national forums where leaders from all industry sectors and the industry union, meet on a regular basis (8 times per year) to develop common approaches, through consensus, to industry skills issues.

- The FAFPESC Board of Directors seeks to ensure that the FAFPESC Board is truly representative of industry, by ensuring that any vacancies are filled by industry representatives holding senior level strategic positions within enterprises or industry organisations. These include industry leaders from all sectors and most States and Territories in Australia. Current Directors of the FAFPESC Board are:

Mr Trevor Smith (Chair)	CFMEU - Forestry and Furnishing Products Division - National Office
Mr Richard Brooks (Deputy Chair)	Timber Merchants Association
Mr Michael O'Connor	CFMEU - Forestry and Furnishing Products Division - National Office
Mr John Crawford	Amcor Fibre Packaging
Ms Jane Calvert	CFMEU - Forestry and Furnishing Products Division - VIC Branch
Mr Steve Gomer	Auspine Pty Ltd
Ms Jannene Wall	Australian Hardboards Pty Ltd
Mr David Kirner	CFMEU - Forestry and Furnishing Products Division - SA Branch

Mr Craig Smith	CFMEU - Forestry and Furnishing Products Division - NSW Branch
Ms Cate Stuart	Dept of Education, Science & Training
Mr Terry Edwards	Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (FIAT)
Ms Kaye Adams	Green Triangle Forest Products
Mr Scott McLean	CFMEU - Forestry and Furnishing Products Division - TAS Branch
Ms Julie George	Hyne & Son Pty Ltd
Mr Tim Woods	CFMEU - Pulp and Paper Workers Branch
Mr John Downes	Kimberly Clark Australia
Ms Kate Carnell	National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI)
Mr Wayne Foss	Tasmanian Logging Association
Mr Chris Northover	CFMEU - Pulp and Paper Workers Branch
Mr Kevin Collison	Timber and Building Materials Association (TABMA)
Mr Nick Murray	Victorian Association of Forest Industries

Industry Relationships and Consultation

In addition to the FAFPESC Board providing high level input into skills development for the industry, FAFPESC strives to build relationships and consult with a wide range of industry stakeholders. These include large, medium and small enterprises from all industry sectors, training and service providers, industry organisations, employer associations and the CFMEU Forestry and Furnishing Products Division, representing the interests of employees in the industry. The above organisations work closely with FAFPESC in many important areas relating to skills development.

Just a few of the organisations FAFPESC has recently worked with:

- CFMEU Forestry and Furnishing Products Division
- Forest and Wood Products Industry Council and the Human Capital Working Group
- Regional and State Based Training Networks and Industry Training Advisory Boards
- Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation
- Auspine
- Carter Holt Harvey
- Green Triangle Forest Products
- Department of Natural Resources and Environment (Victoria)
- State Forests of New South Wales
- Crozier Tumberumba
- Hudson Frames and Trusses
- Finemores Transport
- Fennings Pty Ltd
- Victorian Association of Forest Industries
- National Association of Forest Industries
- Timber Merchant's Association
- Ford Timbers Pty Ltd
- GN & LV Leeson Pty Ltd
- Ryam Logging Pty Ltd
- Cable Logging Pty Ltd
- Parks Victoria
- Highland Pine Products
- AKD Softwoods
- Dahlsens Building Centres
- Hancock Victorian Plantations
- Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Council
- JL Gould Sawmills
- Regional and State Based Training Networks and Industry Training Advisory Boards
- GB Lilley Doors
- Walker Cypress Mills
- Forestry SA
- French Enterprises
- Harris Daishowa (Aust) Pty Ltd
- Timber Traders Industrial Association
- Western Plantation Timber
- Forestry SA
- Glenn Innes Correctional Centre
- Pempine
- Wespine Industries
- Pryda Australia Pty Ltd
- Hancock Victorian Plantations
- Timber and Building Materials Association
- Tasmanian Logging Association
- Bowen's Timber and Hardware
- Kimberly Clark Australia
- Paperlinx
- Amcor Fibre Packaging
- Hyne & Son
- Forestry Tasmania
- Mitek Australia
- Neville Smith Timber Industries
- Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
- Child Labour Schools Company

The FAFPESC Team

FAFPESC activities are carried out by a small but dynamic team of core staff comprising an Executive Officer, one or more industry Project Officers and Administrative Support.

FAFPESC staff have a wide range of skills that are able to be applied to the many and varied activities carried out by FAFPESC. Staff have industry knowledge, expertise in the field of vocational education and training and a high quality project management capacity.

The Pulp and Paper sector of the industry supports and maintains, through FAFPESC, the Pulp and Paper Industry Skills Development Unit. Working directly with enterprises and the CFMEU Pulp and Paper Workers' Branch, the unit provides services and manages skills development initiatives across the sector.

Achievements

- FAFPESC has influenced the direction of Australia's skills and training system towards an industry led system that delivers nationally consistent, assessment based outcomes for skills development.
- FAFPESC has been responsible for working with industry and has built an industry led system that delivers nationally consistent, assessment based outcomes for skills development for the forest and forest products industry.
- In 1992 FAFPESC developed the first set of national industry competency standards for the forest and forest products industry, and was an active pioneer in the development of competency-based training systems
- In the mid 1990s, FAFPESC was directly responsible for implementing 1500 accredited traineeships across all industry sectors
- In 1995, FAFPESC conducted a successful overseas mission to benchmark education and training issues and developed the report "The Way Forward – Progressing Change"
- In 1998, the Pulp and Paper industry sector received the ANTA Board Award for outstanding success in skills development through the use of the FAFPESC built skills development and recognition model.
- FAFPESC has supported and assisted the industry to put in place over 1000 workplace trainers and assessors, and provided support services for them
- FAFPESC co-ordinates the ITAB network, which includes State Industry Training Advisory arrangements.
- FAFPESC has, in consultation with industry, developed:
 - the Forest and Forest Products Industry Training Package covering 6 industry sectors, available on CD-ROM and in print form, made up of:
 - 500 Units of Competence covering all work functions
 - an assessment framework and guidelines for the conduct of assessment
 - a Qualifications Framework which offers industry formal certificate courses for the first time
 - Assessment Instruments and Learning Materials for the Training Package
 - a range of tools for industry designed to assist in skills development activities
- FAFPESC developed, in consultation with industry, the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package
- FAFPESC has established and now manages an industry owned assessment only RTO, FAFPESC Assessment, to provide high quality assessment and skills recognition services to the industry
- FAFPESC Assessment has been directly responsible for the formal recognition of skills to more than 10,000 employees, with more than 35,000 Statements of Attainment issued

What does FAFPESC do?

Through the FAFPESC Board, FAFPESC works with industry to plan and implement Skills Development strategies across the whole industry. The current Industry Strategic Plan has three objectives and a number of goals that the industry wants to achieve. The three objectives are:

- The industry has access to a nationally consistent, strategic approach to skills development
- Enterprises can access an industry led, competency based, skills development infrastructure
- Industry is actively involved and committed to improvement through skills development

In order to assist the industry to improve business and the development of all employees, FAFPESC works with enterprises, managers and employees and their representatives, government and training providers to encourage the development of high quality, competency based, nationally recognised training and skills development products and services for the industry. This includes working with:

- *over 4000 industry enterprises providing information encouragement and assistance to develop a learning culture through the implementation of a planned approach to skills development*
- *a wide range of industry organisations to gather and provide strategic industry advice*

- *Australia's vocational education and training system including numerous government departments at a state and federal level to ensure industry access to skills recognition and accreditation, financial incentives and support services*
- *over 100 training providers and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to assist with the development of high quality, customer-focussed, cost effective services for the industry.*

This is done through:

- Strategic Planning and Advice
- Industry Projects
- Skills Development Materials and Resources, including Training Package Development
- FAFPESC Assessment Services
- Communication Networks
- Participation in Industry Activities
- Presentation and information services

Strategic Planning and Advice

FAFPESC assists industry to work towards its vision of skills development for the industry - one that is:

- Nationally consistent, and recognised by government and industry
- Industry led and driven
- Competency based – focussing on assessment outcomes

This is done through the National Industry Strategic Plan for Skills Development - developed by FAFPESC through consultation with industry. The Strategic Plan maps out a pathway of industry objectives and goals that when reached, will turn the vision for skills development into reality.

The goals are:

- Develop and maintain an Industry Strategic Plan
- Ensure the system is national and industry led
- Carry out a range of industry initiatives
- Produce Skills Development materials
- Support and influence infrastructure
- Encourage and support skills recognition
- Provide information and encourage participation
- Assist enterprises
- Encourage a workplace learning culture

FAFPESC assists industry to achieve the goals in the Strategic Plan through development of resources and materials (including Training Packages), by providing information, advice and assistance, and through strategic projects – paving an accessible pathway between industry and the training infrastructure.

The Strategic Plan is also used by government to develop policies and priorities for training infrastructure and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. In other words, with the assistance of FAFPESC, industry has influence over the VET system nationally.

Industry Projects

FAFPESC has a high quality project management capacity, and is one of the few industry organisations with a national Board of Directors representative of all industry sectors. Through its direct links with industry, enterprises and government departments and coupled with past achievements, this capacity makes FAFPESC a sought after organisation that can be used to progress industry wide initiatives. In addition to normal activities, FAFPESC is currently working on two major industry projects.

Industry Data Collection Project

The development of and access to an industry database is part of the foundation to meet the 12 Strategic Imperatives for industry growth identified by the Forest and Wood Products Industry Council. With funding support from the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation, FAFPESC has begun a major industry project to develop a database for industry use that will provide accurate, in-depth information on the size, scope and nature of the industry. The project includes an extensive survey of all industry enterprises and organisations, effectively taking a “snapshot” of the industry. Information gathered in the project will assist and support industry to pursue opportunities for expansion, industry development and to improve the viability of the industry.

Victorian FISAP - Workers Assistance Project

FAFPESC is actively involved in the FISAP program in Victoria, as Project Managers of the Workers Assistance Project, providing services to employees and employees who have been retrenched through industry restructuring, including re-training opportunities and facilitating partnerships with RTOs to have the employees' skills recognised and further developed.

Past Projects

- RTO Map for industry enterprises (2002)
- "Small Steps to Big Results – Assessment and Skills Recognition for the Forest and Forest Products Industry" (2002)
- "A guide to Vocational Education and Training (VET) for the Forest and Forest Products Industry (2002)
- "A planned approach to skills development – How to build an Enterprise Training Plan" (2002)
- Learning Resource Catalogue - listing all available learning materials for Units of Competence (2001)
- Trainer and Assessor Guide (2001)
- 35 new Learner Guides based on industry competency standards (2001)
- National WELL (Workplace Language and Literacy) National Co-ordination Project – Co-ordinated all WELL activities at a national and State level, and facilitated the incorporation of best practice language standards into the National Competency Standards (1998)
- Project to develop awareness of language and literacy considerations for workplace trainers and assessors (1999)
- Project to develop a CD-ROM to assist in the development of numeracy skills for industry employees (1998)
- National School to Work Co-ordination – Co-ordinated all school based VET courses for the industry at a national level (1995-2000)

Future Projects

- New Forest and Forest Products Industry Strategic Plan for Skills Development 2004-2008 incorporating additional statistical information
- Project designed to lift the public profile of manufacturing careers in the Forest and Forest Products Industry
- Project to develop Support Materials for workplace trainers and people responsible for overseeing Trainees and Apprentices.

Skills Development Materials and Resources

Training Packages

A major part of FAFPESC's role is to develop and maintain industry Training Packages as the foundation of an industry led system. The Forest and Forest Products Industry Training Package and the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package have been developed and maintained by FAFPESC with a high level of industry input and consultation – crucial to ensuring that the Training Packages reflects industry needs. FAFPESC works closely with governments and state bodies to ensure that the Training Packages fit into and are used by government infrastructures.

Resources

FAFPESC also has a range of tools available to industry that assist enterprises to conduct skills development activities, such as booklets, videos, case studies, learning materials, assessment instruments and model training plans. A number of these resources can be downloaded from the FAFPESC website at www.fafpesc.com.au

FAFPESC Assessment

FAFPESC Assessment Pty Ltd is an industry owned and managed Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (Assessment-only) established to assist enterprises to access the highest quality nationally recognised skills development and assessment. FAFPESC Assessment helps industry enterprises by:

- Working with full-service RTOs to ensure enterprises have access to comprehensive skills development and recognition services
- Issuing Nationally Recognised Statements of Attainment and Skills Record Books with industry credibility, through assessment conducted by industry registered assessors working through a partnership with an RTO
- Providing RTO Assessment only services directly to enterprises that are not adequately serviced by other RTOs
- Assisting to provide industry consistent outcomes for licensing purposes

Contact Details

FAFPESC is always keen to ensure that the whole of industry has access to the services, products and assistance provided by FAFPESC. If you would like to be included on FAFPESC distribution and consultation lists, or would like further information on any products or services, please contact us or visit the FAFPESC website.

Forest and Forest Products Employment Skills Company
1 Grattan Street
PO Box 361
Carlton South, Victoria 3053
Telephone: (03) 8663 2166
Facsimile: (03) 8663 2167
Freecall: 1800 807 132
Email: fafpesc@fafpesc.com.au
Website: www.fafpesc.com.au