



Australian  
Forest  
Products  
Association

## AUSTRALIAN FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

Submission to Jobs and Skills Australia - Analysis of Skill  
Shortages in the Forestry and Timber Industry

7 March 2025



## Submission to Jobs and Skills Australia - Analysis of Skill Shortages in the Forestry and Timber Industry

### Introduction

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to Jobs and Skills Australia regarding skill shortages in the forestry and timber industries. This submission is based on industry data collected from a range of members across Australia (who have provided their data directly into the Occupational Shortage List – Stakeholder Survey).

Members highlighted significant challenges in recruitment, workforce supply, and skills availability for key occupations in the sector.

### Identified Skill Shortages by ANZSCO Code

The following occupations were reported as experiencing significant skill shortages:

131231 Engineering Manager  
132232 Sawmill Manager  
133511 Production Manager (Forestry)  
232214 Other Spatial Scientist  
234113 Forester  
234312 Environmental Consultant  
323211 Fitter /welder  
323315 Saw Doctor/Technician  
341112 Electrician  
363113 Forestry Operations Supervisor  
394213 Wood Machinist  
511111 Contract Administrator  
733111 Truck Driver  
839140 Timber and Wood Process worker  
843111 Forestry Worker

We particularly note the following:

- **234113 Forester** is in significant shortage across the country. This is further exacerbated by the lack of undergraduate university programs to train new foresters.
- **323315 Saw Doctor/Technician** is also in shortage nationwide, yet it has not been recognised in previous Occupational Shortage Lists. Additionally, its removal from the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List has made the qualification less attractive, as prospective apprentices lose the associated employee benefits.

### Next year

Having reviewed the survey, we suggest that next year when the survey is undertaken:

- Provide an option for the provision of data about how many times a vacancy is advertised.



- It would be good to be able to provide additional information in relation to each occupation. For example, members explained that whilst a position may have been 'filled' it was by someone not qualified and will require significant in-house training.
- Some members had regional data for only some occupations. It would be good to provide regional/jurisdiction data in relation to vacancies where this was available. Unfortunately it was not an option by occupation.
- It would be good if, following the completion of the survey, a copy was emailed back to the person filling in the survey. This way the data can be forwarded to industry associations to enable an industry submission as well. This year to ensure members participated, we created a mirror survey, had members fill in the AFPA survey so we could capture the data, and then an AFPA staff member input data into the official Stakeholder survey on behalf of members. This enabled AFPA to follow up members who had not input their data (but we knew shortage was a priority issue for them).



**Australian  
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AFPA is the peak national industry body representing the resources, processing, and pulp and paper industries covering the forest products value chain.

AFPA represents all elements of the value chain from the sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple use natural forest resource including forest establishment and management, harvesting and haulage, processing of timber resources and manufacture of pulp and paper.