

# Education news – targeted review of qualifications

Ian Boyd

This review includes the National Qualifications for Forestry and Wood Manufacturing as developed by the standard setting body FITEC. It also includes a local and provider-based qualification developed by Telford Rural Polytechnic, North Tec, Waiariki, Nelson Technical Institute, Aoraki Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre, and Turanga Ararau.

## Targeted review of qualifications

This year the NZQA has implemented a targeted review of qualifications. The purpose is to see what can be done about concerns raised by the government over the large number of qualifications registered on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The aim is to reduce the overlap and simplify the qualification system for learners, industry, and for training and education providers.

FITEC is the lead industry training organisation for the review of the forestry qualifications. One of the results of this review is to ensure there is a clear purpose for qualifications so that employees, employers, parents and students understand what skills and knowledge they will gain from completing these qualifications.

We took the approach that the qualifications are industry ones, managed by the industry, with local qualifications currently managed by each developer. Because industry needs and uses the qualifications, they must decide on their content and results.

FITEC helped the consultation process and coordinated the feedback to ensure the reviewed qualifications meet the needs of everyone involved. The review was conducted to ensure all mandatory stakeholders were included at all levels of the consultation. These qualifications are for the industry but providers were also considered and their view has been incorporated into the review results.

## Heading

The review has been conducted following a global economic recession resulting in unstable market conditions. There have been significant closures of sawmills and partial closures of a large pulp plant. Changes in technology have resulted in decreased numbers of people required in the working environment. In addition, the wood manufacturing sector has experienced a downturn in demand for its products. However, the recent earthquakes in Christchurch and Japan have provided stable demand for products and the forecast looks good for the sector.

The forestry sector is relatively stable but heavily dependent on the Asian export market, particularly

China. There is a five-year infrastructure build plan for China which, coupled with the slow return of the American domestic market, should see further stabilisation in the demand for logs.

The forestry sector employee profile, and therefore potential learner, is such that most do not have formal qualifications when they enter the workforce. Each employee is trained and works across a range of tasks. Most increase their skill level by changing roles across the sector rather than moving up the educational pathway.

This fits the employment pathways within the forestry and wood manufacturing sector. As an employee gains experience, and the role changes, a new strand at the same level may be trained rather than moving up a level.

## Structure of the review

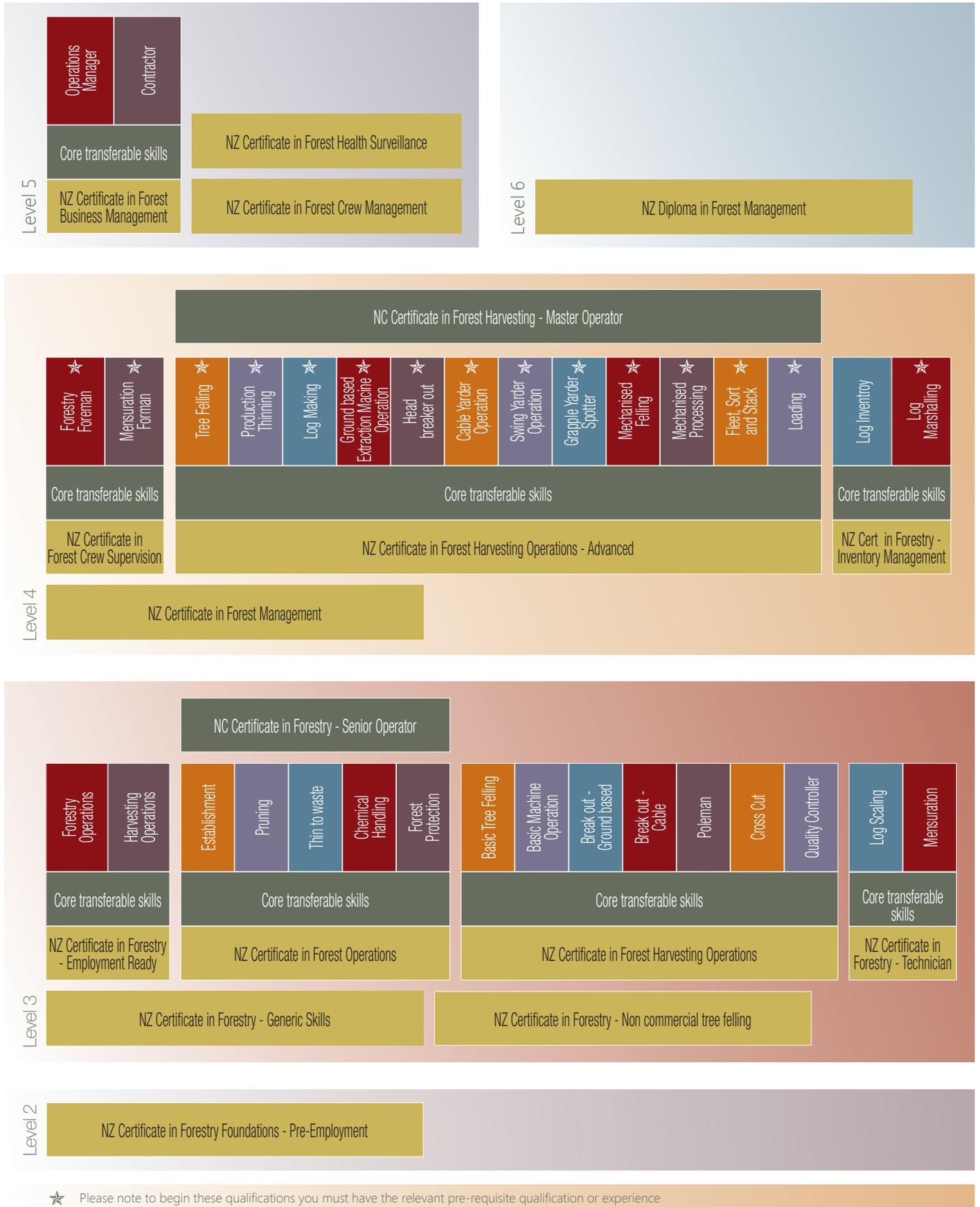
A governance group was set up to represent the sector and provide guidance and leadership in the development of New Zealand qualifications for forestry qualifications. We have two governance groups – solid wood and forestry. However, the industry view will be coordinated by FITEC to ensure there is one review plan and one application to NZQA on behalf of the wider forestry industry which includes solid wood, pulp and paper, tissue converting, wood panels and forestry.

The governance group will –

- Look strategically across the sector
- Consider current and future workforce development needs
- Provide critique during the development of qualifications
- Communicate progress to their specific networks, and obtain feedback and communicate it back to the team and the governance group
- Develop consistency of results for graduates
- Provide final endorsement of the qualifications
- Promote qualifications to the sector.

Under the governance group there are a number of steering groups and advisory groups to provide

## Proposed forestry qualifications



sector-specific technical information to ensure the qualification results can be met. Industry is the main target for the qualifications, but providers also are involved in the consultation.

There has been participation from the industry across all levels. The resulting qualifications, when completed, should see a rise in participation. This is reflected in the large numbers attending the steering and advisory group meetings.

The consultation process for forestry has involved 121 participants from across the country including forest owners, contractors, providers and assessors. For solid wood, 21 companies with over 150 people have been involved, for wood panels 100 per cent of the sites have participated, and for pulp and paper 90 per cent of companies took part. The overwhelming support for the review has confirmed the need for qualifications and the desire by the industry to commit to formal training.

### Forestry

Forestry includes 17 qualifications, down from the 30 which are currently registered on the framework. Some of the main changes and points of interest are listed below.

- Many of the strands remain the same
- Improved visibility of pre-employment qualifications
- Forestry operations and harvesting operations are split into separate qualifications
- A new chemical handler and forest protection strand at level 3
- Adding a master operator qualification at level 3 and master harvester at level 4 to recognise the time and skills of these operators
- Addition of a basic machine operation strand into the level 3 forest harvesting operations
- Addition of a non-commercial tree felling qualification
- Separation of silvicultural and mensuration crew supervision into a stand-alone qualification
- New qualifications at level 4, forestry operations management for forest company staff along with log marshalling and log inventory for the log yard or port environment.
- New level 5 for operations managers and contractors.

### Solid wood manufacturing

There have been significant changes to the structure of the saw doctoring qualification so that

the time to become qualified is reduced from seven years to three. This has been achieved by starting the qualifications at level 3, a more appropriate level. In addition –

- Timber grading will now include mechanical stress grading and verification
- Laminating and finger-jointing qualifications have been separated into two distinct qualifications
- The timber treatment skills section has been updated to include the new practices to treatment and advances in technology
- There is now a new qualifications at level 5 in advanced processing which focuses on productivity improvement and process analysis

### Wood panels, furniture, pulp and paper

For wood panels the level 2 to 4 qualifications core skill sector has more emphasis on transferable skills, particularly around environmental health and safety. The qualifications now include more flexibility for processes such as drying, pressing and lathe operations. The level 4 qualifications for wood panels and pulp and paper now introduces process improvement and leadership

The furniture review has seen strong support for a pre-employment qualification which could be taught in schools, private training establishments and polytechnics. There will be transferable skills applicable to any wood manufacturing sector. The main change in pulp and paper qualifications will enable a lot more flexibility for processes such as de-watering, and dry end and wet end operations

### Biosecurity

Work is continuing to identify and define the coverage for the biosecurity sector as part of a wider pest management qualification review. We are working with the Ministry for Primary Industries, regional councils, Department of Conservation and other ITOs to ensure the sector is catered for in the upcoming review. It is probable that the review will include pre and post-border monitoring, quarantine activities and recent incursion control.

### The next stage

The next stage is to gain support from the governance group for the draft qualification pathways and strategic purpose statements. The NZQA have received draft applications for them to develop and these are to be followed in December with applications. For detailed information on the qualification pathways, or if you have feedback, please go to [www.fitec.org.nz/troq](http://www.fitec.org.nz/troq).

*Ian Boyd is the CEO of Forest Industries Training and Education Consortium*