

Pathway to Tree Felling Skills Project

Final Report



**Skills
Insight**


ForestWorks

Skills Insight acknowledges that First Nations peoples have been living on and caring for country for thousands of years. This is respected in our values and the way we work.



This Skills Insight JSC project is being managed with the support of ForestWorks as part of our collaborative partnership. ForestWorks has an enduring and strong connection working with the forestry, timber, paper, fibre and furnishing industries and have been engaged by Skills Insight to deliver this project in partnership.



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1. Executive Summary

The Pathway to Tree Felling Skills Project, managed by ForestWorks as part of their collaborative partnership with Skills Insight, was established to develop a consistent national approach to managing pre-requisite skill requirements for the three manual tree felling units of competency at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels. The project sought to enhance safety in this high-risk training area while ensuring pathways remain fair and accessible for learners.

At the outset, the project reviewed national policy set out in the Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF), which requires that pre-requisites be introduced only where safety or regulatory needs clearly justify them. Consultations with State and Territory Training Authorities confirmed broad agreement with this principle, though jurisdictions varied in how strongly they supported formal pre-requisites.

Sector-specific and cross-sector focus groups were convened in mid-2025 with representatives from forestry, arboriculture, emergency services, and land management. These groups considered various options and endorsed including statements on pre-existing skills in the *Application* section of each unit, supported by a dedicated Evidence Guide. A further round of national consultation in August 2025 validated this approach and confirmed strong industry support.

The final recommendations propose redevelopment of the three manual tree felling units to include statements on the skills learners must already possess before enrolment. These statements will be reinforced through an Evidence Guide detailing the types of evidence - such as units of competency, recognition of prior learning, workplace evidence, skills tests and simulation, where appropriate - so that candidates may present to demonstrate the required skills. The Evidence Guide, together with supporting resources, would be incorporated into a revised Companion Volume User Guide. In addition, a national professional development program could be designed and delivered to trainers, assessors, compliance staff and careers advisers to ensure consistent application.

This report includes a structured activity plan for these recommendations, covering unit redevelopment, production of the Evidence Guide and support materials, design and national rollout of the professional development program, and a review of its effectiveness. Skills Insight will implement updates to the units of competency and the Companion Volume User Guide. Additional funding would need to be sought for the remainder of the activities described later in this report.

Several key lessons emerged during the project. Chief among them was the importance of balancing safety with accessibility and embedding flexibility in how evidence of pre-requisite skills can be provided. The staged consultation process proved critical in building consensus and credibility. Industry feedback confirmed that

clear guidance, robust support materials, and professional development are essential for adoption. Alignment with national VET policy and careful consideration of impacts on related qualifications were also identified as priorities.

In summary, the Pathway to Tree Felling Skills Project identified a practical, nationally supported approach that if implemented could enhance safety, provide clarity for learners and training providers, and strengthen the integrity of tree felling training. Its success will rely on ongoing collaboration across the forestry, arboriculture, land management, and emergency services sectors, supported by strong communication, comprehensive guidance materials, and targeted professional development.

2. Introduction

ForestWorks was engaged by Skills Insight, the Jobs and Skills Council for the forest and wood products industry, to explore and develop an approach to ensure individuals already possess the necessary pre-requisite skills before undertaking the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency.

This project builds on recent updates to the three manual tree felling units of competency.

At the outset of this project, information was collected on national policies regarding pre-requisites in training package qualifications, State and Territory training authorities' opinions on using pre-requisites, and the current approach to managing pre-requisite skill requirements in the manual tree felling units. The key outcomes of this work are described in this and the subsequent section of this report (2 and 3).

This information was used to develop an *Issues and Options Paper* that was presented to a series of focus groups, comprising representatives from forestry, arboriculture, emergency services, and land management sectors, in May and June 2025. The paper set out five different options for addressing the pre-existing skill requirements for the manual tree felling units of competency. The focus groups considered these, and a preferred approach was confirmed at the final cross-sector focus group held on 10 June 2025. The preferred approach was detailed in a report titled [Dealing with Pre-existing Skill Requirements in Manual Tree Felling Units of Competency](#).

The report, released on the project website in July 2025, outlined the recommended approach, which involves inserting a statement on pre-existing skill requirements in the Application section of each tree-felling unit and developing an *Evidence Guide* that illustrates how individuals can meet the pre-existing skill requirements in each unit. Acceptable forms of evidence may include relevant units of competency, recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessments, skills tests, and workplace-based evidence. It was agreed that the *Evidence Guide* should be included in the *Companion Volume User Guide - Fell Trees Manually*. Participants also recommended that a national professional development program be designed and implemented to

support the rollout of the new approach. The report included an activity plan to guide the development and roll-out of the recommended approach.

Following the publication of the report, ForestWorks conducted broad industry consultation in August 2025 to gather stakeholder feedback and confirm support for the recommendations and activity plan. ForestWorks reviewed the outcomes of these consultations, and the final recommendations and activity plan are set out in sections 4 and 5 of this report.

3. Advice on the use of pre-requisites in training package qualifications

At the outset of the project, a review was conducted on current national policies and practices regarding the use of pre-requisites in nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET) qualifications. This review focused on the guidance provided in the *Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF)*, as well as feedback from consultations with State and Territory Training Authorities held in April and May 2025 [See Appendix 1].

In the TPOF, pre-requisites are defined as units of competency that a learner must be assessed as competent in before being deemed competent in a subsequent, dependent unit. They are applied only at the unit level within training package qualifications.

The TPOF emphasises that pre-requisites should only be used when essential for enabling a learner to safely or effectively undertake the learning or assessment associated with a particular unit. Their use must be clearly justified based on workplace or training requirements. Importantly, pre-requisites must not be used to dictate or enforce delivery sequences or training pathways. The Framework highlights the importance of maintaining flexibility in training to meet learners' needs and aspirations and to support workforce mobility across different roles and industries. Therefore, the number of pre-requisites should be minimised to avoid creating unnecessary barriers to learner progression and to ensure national recognition of skills.

The TPOF classifies any change to a pre-requisite as a major change to a Training Package qualification. This includes the addition, removal, or revision of a pre-requisite. Such changes are significant because they can impact delivery, safety, learner access, and the integrity of learning pathways. Consequently, all proposed changes must demonstrate clear benefits for learner safety, industry relevance, and regulatory compliance while preserving accessibility and coherence in training.

Registered training organisations (RTOs) have specific responsibilities regarding pre-requisites. They must ensure that learners have met all required pre-requisites before

being assessed in a dependent unit. RTOs must also design training and assessment strategies that account for pre-requisites, offer recognition of prior learning or credit transfer where appropriate, and inform learners about any unit-level pre-requisite requirements and the options available to fulfil them.

Consultations with State and Territory Training Authorities confirmed that all jurisdictions align with the TPOF, although they vary in their emphasis. For instance, Victoria favoured eliminating pre-requisites through qualification reform. New South Wales argued that pre-requisites should not become barriers to training access and highlighted the importance of transparency regarding the cost and availability of pre-requisite units. Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory highlighted the challenges of delivering training in remote areas, emphasising the importance of pre-requisites in ensuring safety. South Australia stressed the necessity of pre-requisites in high-risk contexts. The Australian Capital Territory supported flexibility in training and cautioned against using pre-requisites to limit learner progression. Tasmania held a more neutral stance, recognising that pre-requisites may be essential in certain circumstances to ensure safety.

Pre-requisites can play a crucial role in safeguarding learners and upholding the quality and integrity of vocational education and training. However, the TPOF reinforces that their use must be carefully justified and should not impose unnecessary constraints on learners. While the Framework discourages an over-reliance on pre-requisites, it does not prohibit their use where clear safety, regulatory, or knowledge-based needs exist. This nuanced approach was broadly supported by the various State and Territory Training Authorities consulted during the preparation of the report.

4. Current advice on pre-requisite skills for basic, intermediate and advanced tree felling units in the FWP Forest and Wood Products Training Package

The current versions of the units of competency in basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling do not have pre-requisites.

The current advice on pre-requisite skills for these units is contained in the *Companion Volumes* for the FWP Training Package. The *Companion Volumes* assist industry and RTOs to deliver the units, qualifications and skill sets within a Training Package. *Companion Volumes* for the FWP Training Package consist of *Implementation Guides* and *User Guides*. They include information to help trainers adapt to any new changes in a training package, as well as additional information

about the impacts of regulation and licensing implications and workplace health and safety on their training. The advice contained in Companion Volumes is not mandatory.

The *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024* provides recommendations on pre-existing skills and knowledge requirements for trainees before enrolling in manual tree felling units. The guide notes that the introduction of pre-requisite units for tree felling trainees is a significant safety measure proposed by the industry to ensure that trainees embark on their training already equipped with the essential skills and knowledge to support a safe training and assessment process.

The guide further states:

“...after extensive discussions and a rigorous review of the potential options for pre-requisite units, it was determined that none of the available options are compliant with the Training Package Organising Framework.”

In lieu of including pre-requisites in the tree felling units of competency, the guide notes that industry agreed to recommend the following, emphasising the value of prior experience:

- Fell trees manually (basic): Individuals who seek to undertake this unit must have prior skills and knowledge in the safe startup, shutdown, maintenance, and operations of a chainsaw to ensure their own safety and uphold the training provider's responsibility for safety.
- Fell trees manually (intermediate): Individuals who seek to undertake this unit must have prior skills and knowledge in safely starting up, shutting down, maintaining, and performing basic operations such as trimming, cross-cutting and basic tree felling with a chainsaw to ensure their own safety and uphold the training provider's responsibility for safety.
- Fell trees manually (advanced): Individuals who seek to undertake this unit must have prior skills and knowledge in safely conducting intermediate tree felling operations using a chainsaw to ensure their own safety and uphold the training provider's responsibility for safety.

The industry not only strongly recommends but expects that individuals enrolling in any of the tree felling units have pre-existing skills and knowledge of chainsaw operation specific to tree felling and associated risk level. This ensures they approach the training with the requisite safety awareness and competence necessary for each skill level: basic, intermediate and advanced. Training providers are recommended to implement the structured sequence of skills and knowledge outlined in Figure 1, verifying prospective trainees' completion of the respective course before allowing enrolment in tree felling units.

Figure 1: Sequence of Recommended Skills and Knowledge Verification for Prospective Tree Felling Trainees

| Tree felling unit | Recommended skills and knowledge before enrolment* |
|--|---|
| <i>FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)</i> | Completion of any of the following units: <i>AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws</i> <i>FWPCOT2256 Trim and cut felled trees, or</i> <i>FWPHAR2209 Trim and cut harvested trees</i> |
| <i>FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate)</i> | Completion of <i>FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)</i> |
| <i>FWPCOT3351 Fell trees manually (advanced)</i> | Completion of <i>FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate)</i> |

*This includes the current versions of the listed units or their predecessors.

If an individual has acquired knowledge and skills corresponding to those listed in Figure 1 through informal learning or coaching, they could undertake a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) process. This can be done either within the enrolment in a qualification or before enrolling in the tree felling unit, to assess the equivalency of their skill level.

This recommendation does not establish a compliance element for training delivery. Instead, it provides guidelines that emphasise the importance of safety and the responsibility of training providers for ensuring their own safety. It entrusts training providers with the responsibility to consider prior skills and integrate it into their risk assessment processes. In essence, this becomes a responsibility for risk assessment.

5. Stakeholder engagement and project outcomes

This project was carried out in close consultation with industry and other key stakeholders. The stakeholder engagement strategy employed in this project consisted of three key stages.

Stage 1: Consultations on the use of pre-requisites in training package qualifications

During this stage of the project, ForestWorks consulted with Skills Insight on national policy concerning the use of pre-requisites and alternative methods for recognising existing skill requirements in training package qualifications. This was based on the guidance in the *Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF)*. Given the recency of the *TPOF* and the demands being placed on the *Training Package Assurance Body (TPAB)*, Skills Insight advised ForestWorks that it was not required to engage directly with the TPAB. However, Skills Insight did recommend that ForestWorks consult with all *State and Territory Training Authorities* on the use of pre-requisites in training package qualifications. In April and May 2025, ForestWorks met with each of these bodies to gather their views on the use of pre-requisites [See Appendix 1]. The outcomes of these consultations were outlined in section 3 of this report.

Stage 2: Focus groups on pre-requisite arrangements for the manual tree felling units of competency at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels

During May and June 2025, a series of stakeholder focus groups examined the pre-requisite arrangements for the manual tree felling units of competency at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels. The consultations included sector-specific focus groups covering forestry, emergency services, land management, and arboriculture sectors, as well as a cross-sector focus group held on 10 June 2025. A list of participating organisations in the focus groups is provided in Appendix 2.

The purpose of these consultations was to gather expert views and develop a consensus position on pre-requisite arrangements for the manual tree felling units of competency at the basic, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Each of the sector focus group sessions followed a structured process facilitated by ForestWorks. Participants were provided with an *Issues and Options Paper*, which set out the background to the project, the key issues impacting on the development of pre-requisite arrangements for the three manual tree felling units and a set of options for addressing the pre-existing skills requirements for these units. The five options presented in the paper were:

- Option 1 – Retain the current arrangements.
- Option 2 – Amend the current units of competency to include explicit pre-requisite requirements for the basic, intermediate and advanced tree felling units of competency.
- Option 3: Enhance the guidance provided in the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually* and roll this out to industry stakeholders on a national basis.
- Option 4 – Establish an industry accord to support the adoption of the advice in the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually*.
- Option 5 – Apply the principles of the National Qualification Reform process to redesign the existing tree felling units.

The sector-specific focus groups discussed these options, and a preferred approach was confirmed at the final cross-sector focus group session held on 10 June 2025. The preferred approach was detailed in a report titled *Dealing with Pre-existing Skill Requirements in Manual Tree Felling Units of Competency*. This report, published on the project website in July 2025, outlined the recommended approach, which involves including a statement on pre-existing skill requirements in the Application section of each tree-felling unit and developing an *Evidence Guide* that shows how individuals can meet these pre-existing skill requirements. A set of draft statements for inclusion in the Application of each unit of competency was developed during the consultation process [See Appendix 3]. The *Evidence Guide* developed for each unit of competency will identify the forms of evidence that candidates may present to show that they have achieved the unit's pre-existing skill requirements. The forms of evidence may include relevant units of competency, RPL assessments, skills tests, and workplace-based evidence. It was agreed that the *Evidence Guide* should be included in the *Companion Volume User Guide*.

Participants also suggested that a national professional development programme be designed and implemented to support the rollout of the new approach. The report also contained an activity plan to guide the development and implementation of the recommended approach.

Stage 3: Broad industry consultation to validate the draft recommendations and activity plan

Following publication of the report on the outcomes of the sector-specific and cross-sector focus groups, ForestWorks conducted a broad industry consultation in August 2025 to gather stakeholder feedback and confirm support for the recommendations and activity plan.

The broad industry consultation involved gathering stakeholder views through:

- distributing the report containing the recommendations and activity plan to the participants in the focus groups for the forestry, emergency services, arboriculture and land management sectors that were conducted in May and June 2025 and broader stakeholders via email and the project website, respectively
- conducting three virtual review and feedback sessions to consider the draft recommendations and activity plan
- providing opportunities for stakeholders to submit written feedback and suggestions for refining the draft recommendations and activity plan.

The three virtual review and feedback sessions were conducted at the following times.

| Date | Time | Duration | Format |
|----------------|---------|------------|--------|
| 5 August 2025 | 2.00pm | 60 minutes | Online |
| 7 August 2025 | 11.00am | 60 minutes | Online |
| 13 August 2025 | 2.00pm | 60 minutes | Online |

These sessions, which were open to all trainers, assessors, industry personnel, careers and course advisers, RTO compliance staff, and others with an interest in the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency. The objectives of these sessions were to:

- brief stakeholders on the policy regarding pre-requisites in Training Package qualifications
- outline the draft proposal for addressing pre-requisite skill requirements in the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency, as detailed in the draft report, *Dealing with Pre-existing Skill Requirements in Manual Tree Felling Units of Competency*
- gather stakeholder feedback on the recommendations and activity plan outlined in the draft report
- outline the next steps in the *Pathways to Tree Felling Skills Project*.

ForestWorks facilitated the review and feedback sessions. A copy of the presentation used in these sessions is included as Appendix 4. There was strong support among participants for the proposed approach to managing pre-existing skills requirements outlined in the draft report, [See Appendix 7]. Feedback from participants indicated that the recommended approach:

- clearly outlines the pre-existing skill requirements for each unit, and including this in the Application section of the unit ensures that RTOs delivering the units must meet these requirements
- provides flexibility in how individuals can show that they meet the pre-existing skill requirements through the provision of an *Evidence Guide* that recognises different forms of evidence such as assessed units of competence, skills test, RPL results and workplace evidence
- is consistent with the way in which many RTOs currently assess candidates' pre-existing skills and as such will not require major changes to existing practices
- avoids making changes to key components of the three tree felling units of competency, namely the elements, performance criteria and assessment arrangements
- presents a low-impact change from a compliance perspective
- is elegant and balances the need for having mandatory pre-existing skill requirements for each unit with the need for flexibility
- is unlikely to have any impact on enterprise-based RTOs, which have established training pathways with specified pre-existing skill requirements but may benefit RTOs involved in providing commercial or short-course programs that require a clear statement of pre-existing skill requirements for each of the three felling units.

Although the approach was widely accepted, participants pointed out that the following issues need to be addressed in further developing the approach:

- The proposed *Evidence Guide* needs to be robust and provide clear guidance for trainers, assessors and regulators on the types of evidence that may be used to meet the pre-existing skills requirements in the tree felling units.
- Attention needs to be given to identifying any impact that establishing mandatory pre-existing skill requirements for the tree felling unit may have on the delivery of the *AHC20520 Certificate II in Arboriculture* and *AHC30824 Certificate III in Arboriculture*.
- The proposed approach will constitute a major change to the three tree felling units of competence and this will need to be managed in line with the processes outlined in the *Training Package Organising Framework*.

Stakeholders were also invited to comment on the activity plan in the draft report, which was designed to facilitate the implementation of the approach to addressing pre-existing skills. There was widespread support for the activity plan during review and feedback sessions, with no suggestions for modifications to the plan.

Four organisations submitted written comments during the broad consultation process. A summary of the feedback received, and the follow-up actions taken by ForestWorks is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Summary of written submissions from stakeholders and follow-up action

| Organisation | Jurisdiction | Feedback | Action |
|--|--------------|---|---|
| <i>South Metropolitan TAFE</i> | WA | Supports approach to dealing with pre-existing skill requirements Provided advice on wording of statements to be inserted in Application section | Response acknowledging feedback sent to South Metropolitan TAFE Advice forwarded to Project Team for consideration |
| <i>TAFE NSW</i> | NSW | Supports approach to dealing with pre-existing skill requirements | Response acknowledging feedback sent to TAFE NSW |
| <i>Northern Territory Arboriculture Association [NTAA]</i> | NT | Supports approach to dealing with pre-existing skill requirements and proposed activity plan | Response acknowledging feedback sent to NTAA |
| <i>Victorian Primary Industries Curriculum Maintenance Manager Service (VPICMMS)</i> | Vic | Raised technical questions regarding the proposed approach and its consistency with the Training Package Organising Framework. | Response acknowledging and responding to feedback sent to VPICMMS (Appendix 5)) |

A list of organisations that participated in the broad industry consultations is provided in Appendix 6.

ForestWorks reviewed the outcomes of these consultations and prepared the final recommendations and activity plan. These are set out in sections 6 and 7 of this report.

6. Final recommendations

The report, *Dealing with Pre-existing Skill Requirements in Manual Tree Felling Units of Competency*, outlined the outcomes of the focus groups, detailed the recommended approach for addressing pre-existing skill requirements in the three manual tree felling units of competency, and outlined a series of draft recommendations. As noted in the preceding section of this report, these recommendations were validated in August 2025 through a broad industry consultation process and the final four project recommendations are:

1. *Re-develop the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency*, in line with TPOF processes, to include a description of the pre-existing skills that an individual must hold. This is to be included in the Application section of each unit. The statement for each unit should be based on the pre-existing skills statements in the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024* and the outcomes of the *Pathways to Tree Felling project*.
2. *Develop an Evidence Guide* that outlines the evidence that individuals may present to demonstrate they have met the requirements of the pre-existing skills statement included in the revised application section of the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency.
3. *Review the Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024*, to include:
 - the *Evidence Guides* for pre-existing skills requirements in the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency, described in part 2, and
 - a set of support materials to assist RTOs implement the proposed new arrangements for recognising pre-existing skills based.
4. *Design and roll out a national professional development program*, virtual or face-to-face, for RTO compliance staff, trainers, assessors, careers advisers and industry personnel that addresses:
 - the proposed changes to the *Application* section in each unit of competency
 - how to apply the proposed *Evidence Guide* and support materials to be included in the updated version of the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024*.

7. Final Activity Plan

This proposed Activity Plan requiring submission to and approval from DEWR is designed to incorporate the pre-existing skills requirements into the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency and to provide professional development support for trainers, assessors and other RTO personnel engaged in the implementation of these new arrangements.

The Activity Plan comprises five activities. These are:

- Activity 1: Redevelop basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency to incorporate pre-existing skill requirements
- Activity 2: Design an *Evidence Guide* on pre-existing skills and support materials for each unit of competency and incorporate it in the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024*
- Activity 3: Design a professional development program
- Activity 4: Roll out professional development program to stakeholders nationally
- Activity 5: Review the professional development program.

Activity 1: Redevelop basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency to incorporate pre-existing skill requirements

Objectives:

- Review the outcomes of the research project undertaken in 2025 that sets out the recommended approach for incorporating the pre-existing skills required into the three manual tree felling units of competency. Confirm with Skills Insight and the Assurance Body the process for making the proposed changes to the basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency and the *Companion Volume User Guide*. Conduct broad industry consultations to validate the proposed changes to the units of competency. Update the units of competency to include the statements on pre-existing skills. Submit the redeveloped units of competency for endorsement and listing on the national register. The objective of this stage is to redevelop the basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency to include pre-existing skill requirements.

Methodology:

- Consult with the Assurance Body, Skills Insight and State and Territory Training Authorities on the process for making the proposed changes to the basic,

intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency and the *Companion Volume User Guide*.

- Review outcomes of the *Pathway to Tree Felling Skills project* undertaken by ForestWorks in 2025 and recommendations related to the inclusion of pre-existing skills in the three units of competency.
- Organise one online workshop with key stakeholders to validate the pre-existing skills statements to be included in the Application of the three manual tree felling units of competency.
- Re-develop the three manual tree felling units of competency and associated documentation in line with requirements of the Quality Assurance body and the *Training Package Organising Framework*.
- Submit the re-developed units of competency and associated documentation to the Assurance Body for endorsement.
- Manage all communications from submission through to listing of redeveloped units of competency on the national training register.

Deliverables:

- Re-developed versions of the basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency listed on the national training register.

Activity 2: Design an Evidence Guide on pre-existing skills and support materials for each unit of competency and incorporate in the Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually

Objectives

- Develop a clear and practical *Evidence Guide* that outlines how individuals can demonstrate the pre-existing skills required for each unit of competency and a set of support materials to assist users to implement the *Evidence Guide*. Integrate the *Evidence Guide* and support materials guide into a revised edition of the *Companion Volume User Guide - Fell Trees Manually*.

Methodology

- Review outcomes of the *Pathways to Tree Felling Skills project* undertaken by ForestWorks in 2025 to identify types of evidence that may be presented of pre-existing skills in the three units of competency.
- Develop draft *Evidence Guide* and support materials for the pre-existing skill requirements for each unit of competency.
- Conduct two national online workshops to validate the draft *Evidence Guide* and support materials with trainers, assessors and other stakeholders.

- Draft the final version of the *Evidence Guide* and support materials validated with stakeholders through an online workshop with the key stakeholders.
- Finalise and incorporate *Evidence Guide* and support materials into the *Fell Trees Manually Companion Volume User Guide* in line with the requirements of Skills Insight and the Assurance Body.

Deliverables

- *Evidence Guides* on pre-existing skills and support materials incorporated into the *Companion Volume User Guide* – Fell Trees Manually.

Activity 3: Design a professional development program

Objectives

- Design a structured professional development program that supports trainers, assessors, career advisers, RTO compliance personnel and industry stakeholders to implement the pre-existing skill requirements in the redeveloped units of competency and apply the *Evidence Guide*.

Methodology

- Identify the roles and learning needs of trainers, assessors and other stakeholders related to interpreting and applying pre-existing skill requirements identified in the basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency.
- Consult with stakeholders to identify the appropriate mode of delivery of the proposed professional development program – online, face-to-face, blended delivery.
- Review other professional development programs used in the forest and wood products industry to identify success factors.
- Develop learning outcomes for the professional development program.
- Design program format, content and support materials for the professional development program considering the preferred mode of delivery.
- Pilot the program in one region and refine program and support materials based on feedback.

Deliverables

- Fully actionable professional development program [online, face-face or hybrid format] and support materials.

Activity 4: Roll out professional development program to stakeholders nationally

Objectives

Deliver the professional development program across Australia, enabling trainers, assessors and other stakeholders to effectively implement the pre-existing skill requirements in the redeveloped units of competency and apply the *Evidence Guide*.

Methodology

- Develop a national roll-out schedule for the proposed professional development, in consultation with key stakeholders.
- Promote the professional development program to trainers, assessors, career advisers, RTO compliance personnel and industry stakeholders.
- Facilitate and monitor the delivery of the professional development program.
- Collect participant feedback for continuous improvement.

Deliverables

Professional development program delivered to trainers, assessors, career advisers, RTO compliance personnel and industry stakeholders in all States and Territories.

Activity 5: Review professional development program

Objectives

- Evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the professional development program and identify areas for improvement based on implementation experience.

Methodology

- Design an evaluation framework that includes a national online workshop and key respondent interviews.
- Collect and analyse data on the take-up of the program and feedback from participants and facilitators, if the face-to-face delivery mode is utilised.
- Identify program strengths and improvement areas.
- Prepare a review report that includes findings and recommendations, as well as a review of lessons learned and potential applications to other projects with a professional development component.

Deliverables

- Evaluation Report on the Effectiveness of the Professional Development Program with Recommendations for Future Iterations.

8. Supplementary materials to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations

In addition to updating the manual tree felling units of competency, a range of supplementary materials will be needed to support the implementation of the recommendations and activity plan described in the preceding sections of this report. Some, if not all, of these materials could be published in an updated and expanded version of the current *User Guide*. It is recommended that consideration be given to developing the following support materials.

1. Information kit for candidates

This kit will provide candidates with clear information about the pre-existing skills required before enrolment in each of the three manual tree felling units of competency. It will outline:

- Why pre-existing skills are essential for safety and competency
- The pre-existing skills needed for each of the three manual tree felling units of competency
- How the assessment of pre-existing skills is carried out
- The types of evidence candidates can provide
- Training and skill development options for those who lack or have gaps in their pre-existing skills
- Candidate rights, responsibilities, and available support options.

2. Candidate self-assessment checklist for use before enrolment

A pre-enrolment, self-assessment checklist will be created for each of the three manual tree felling units of competency. It is planned that candidates will use the checklists to reflect on their existing knowledge, skills, and experience regarding the pre-requisite skill requirements of the unit they aim to enrol in. The checklists will assist candidates and RTOs in determining whether candidates are prepared to undertake training in the relevant manual tree felling unit of competency or if further preparation (e.g., refresher training) is necessary. A sample self-assessment checklist for the pre-requisite skills for *FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)* is provided at Appendix 9.

3. Evidence Guides and Support Materials

The *Evidence Guides* will specify the types of evidence candidates can present to demonstrate they possess the pre-existing skills required for the manual tree felling units of competency. A separate *Evidence Guide* will be created for each of the three manual tree-felling units. These guides will provide benchmarks for the type, amount, and quality of evidence needed to assess whether a candidate has the necessary skills before enrolling in a manual tree-felling unit. The types of evidence that may be included in the *Evidence Guides* are:

- Completed units of competency that cover the pre-existing skills required for the manual tree felling units of competency.

Figure 3 provides an indicative list of units of competency that candidates may present to show that they meet the pre-existing skill requirements for the three manual tree felling units. Industry stakeholders must verify this list during the development of the *Evidence Guides*.

Figure 3: Units of competency that may meet the pre-existing skill requirements for the manual tree felling units

| Tree felling unit | Units that may meet the pre-existing skill requirements* |
|---|---|
| <i>FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)</i> | Completion of any of the following units: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws</i>• <i>FWPCOT2273 Trim and cut felled trees</i>• <i>FWPHAR2209 Trim and cut harvested trees</i>• <i>AHCPCM205 Fell small trees</i>• <i>AHCARB317 Dismantle trees</i>• <i>FWPCOT2259 Cut materials with a hand-held chainsaw</i> |
| <i>AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws</i> | Completion of any of the following units: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)</i> |
| <i>FWPCOT2273 Trim and cut felled trees</i> | Completion of any of the following units: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate)</i> |

-
- *FWPHAR3205 Harvest trees manually (intermediate)*
-

*This includes the current versions of the listed units or their predecessors.

- The results of an RPL assessment that leads to the award of a unit of competency that meets the pre-existing skills required for a manual tree felling unit.

For example, an individual who completes an RPL assessment for *FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)* can use this to show that they have the pre-existing skills required for *FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate)*. To facilitate access to RPL, it is proposed that RPL tools will be created for *FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic)* and *FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate)*. These tools will enable individuals who do not hold these units to quickly gain formal recognition and use this to meet the pre-existing skill requirements for the next level of manual tree felling. Each RPL tool will include a candidate and an assessor guide. The candidate guide will comprise of the following:

- instructions for the candidate
- skills and knowledge requirements
- self-assessment checklist- enabling candidates to reflect on their competency level before formal enrolment
- evidence Options - such as workplace logs, supervisor reports, photographs/videos of work, previous qualifications, or third-party attestations
- candidate declaration.

The assessor guide will comprise of the following:

- instructions for the assessor
- evidence review checklist
- knowledge questions
- RPL assessment outcome statement.

The conduct of any RPL assessments must comply with existing ASQA and RTO processes and lead to the award of the relevant nationally recognised certification.

A sample RPL assessment tool is provided in Appendices 10a and 10b. This is provided for illustrative purposes only.

- The outcome of a skills test that verifies an individual has the pre-existing skills required for a manual tree felling unit.

It is proposed that a skills test will be developed to assess the pre-existing skills required for each manual tree felling unit. At this stage, it is expected that the skills test will include both a knowledge component and a practical skills component. The knowledge test may consist of multiple-choice questions. Candidates must pass the knowledge test to proceed to the practical assessment, with a pass mark of 80% planned. Consideration should be given to developing an online repository containing a bank of multiple-choice questions and practical assessment tasks that trainers and assessors can access.

The skills test is used to verify that a candidate has the required pre-existing skills and, in itself, will not lead to any form of national recognition.

A sample skills test is provided in Appendix 11, for illustrative purposes only.

- A selection of workplace evidence that confirms an individual possesses the pre-existing skills required for manual tree felling.

The *Evidence Guides* will outline the types and verification required for acceptable workplace evidence of pre-existing skills. The types of workplace evidence may include:

- Workplace documentation, such as pre-start inspection checklists, chainsaw service and maintenance logs, and completed job safety analyses (JSAs) or safe work method statements (SWMS).
- Work samples that demonstrate applied competence, for example, stumps showing correct scarf and back cuts, site preparation records, or sketches of felling plans.
- Third-party evidence from supervisors, employers, or qualified co-workers verifying the candidate's consistent performance of tree-felling tasks.
- Photographic or video evidence showing correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE), safe work area preparation, and proper felling and cutting techniques.
- Knowledge evidence collected through oral questioning, written responses, or participation in safety briefings and toolbox talks on chainsaw operation, hazard control, and emergency procedures.
- Self-generated records, such as candidate diaries, logbooks, or reflective notes detailing chainsaw use, problem-solving, and decision-making in work contexts.

This evidence could be drawn from real or simulated workplace environments that reflect industry conditions. This may include forestry sites, arboriculture worksites, emergency service operations, or controlled training environments with access to suitable trees. The workplace evidence presented should

demonstrate that the candidate can apply skills consistently across a range of situations and environments. Multiple forms of evidence should be provided over time to ensure reliability and authenticity.

- Evidence collected through high-quality simulation methods, including Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), or training stands.

Sometimes, access to suitable trees for training and assessment may be limited. To ensure candidates can demonstrate the required pre-existing skills safely and effectively, supplementary evidence from VR, AR, or training stands might be used. VR uses immersive simulations with headsets and controllers to replicate real-world tree-felling scenarios. Candidates can practise site assessment, tree selection, cutting sequences, and hazard identification in a safe, repeatable environment. AR involves overlaying digital guidance onto real-world logs or training environments via tablets, phones, or AR glasses. It can illustrate correct cut placement, hinge wood, or fall direction to reinforce safe practice. It is not recommended that ForestWorks undertake the development of VR/AR resources. However, consideration should be given to including this option in the *Evidence Guides*. VR/AR products will likely become more readily available to support chainsaw operator training. For example, Forestry South Africa and manufacturers such as Stihl have or are in the process of developing VR/AR resources that support chainsaw operator training. An alternative, which has been in use for some time, is the use of training stands. These are physical structures, such as mounted logs or designated practice trees, at training facilities that enable learners to practise scarf cuts, back cuts, hinge wood, and safe positioning under controlled conditions.

While these tools cannot fully replace evidence from live workplace felling, they offer valuable opportunities to build, demonstrate, and assess skills. Evidence from VR/AR or training stands could be combined with other forms of workplace evidence (e.g., documentation, third-party reports) to confirm that skills are applied in accordance with industry standards and workplace safety requirements.

4. Professional development program and support materials for trainers, assessors and other personnel on the proposed arrangements.

To support the design and roll-out of the national professional development program, a suite of support materials will be required. It is envisaged that the program may be delivered through face-to-face, self-directed or online learning. The support materials required would include:

- A comprehensive outline of the professional development program that details the learning objectives, schedule, and expected outcomes, and can be delivered through face-to-face, self-directed, or online learning.

- Participant learning materials, including the revised units of competency and materials to support the implementation of the *Evidence Guides*, in downloadable PDF/Word format that cover the new requirements, structured into short, engaging sections suited to face-to-face, self-directed or online learning.
- Trainer handbook and guidance notes, including the revised units of competency and materials to support the implementation of the *Evidence Guides*, available in downloadable PDF and Word formats for quick reference to assist online, self-directed, and face-to-face delivery.
- A presentation slide deck with embedded notes, available for self-paced study or facilitated webinars.
- A website to support the roll-out of the professional development program. This would serve as the central hub for access, engagement, and ongoing reference. It could support live webinars and/or facilitated face-to-face sessions, including Q&A, peer discussions, shared reflections, webinar recordings for those unable to attend live sessions, and a discussion forum or moderated chat space for peer learning and the sharing of good practices.
- FAQs and quick reference fact sheets covering the key changes to units and the *Companion Volume User Guide*.

Evaluation and feedback forms- to gather Insight for continuous improvement.

Materials described in this section are outside the scope of this project.

9. Organisations that supported the final recommendations and activity plan

The final recommendations and activity plan, detailed in sections 5 and 6 of this report, were developed during the initial consultation phase, which comprised three sector-specific and one cross-sector focus group conducted during May – June 2025 – see section 5 of this report. The organisations that supported the approach to addressing pre-existing skills requirements in the manual tree felling units of competency developed through these focus groups are listed in Appendix 7.

The organisations that expressed support for the proposed recommendations and activity plan during the broad industry consultation or validation phase of the project (6-20 August 2025) are listed in Appendix 8.

10. Lessons learned

The Pathways to Tree Felling Project offers valuable Insight into developing and securing industry support for new approaches to recognising pre-requisite skills and other aspects of Training Package development. The main lessons learned from this project are outlined below.

1. Finding a balance between safety and accessibility.

The project reinforced industry commitment to ensuring safety in tree-felling training and assessment activities. Across all sectors – forestry, emergency services, arboriculture, and land management – stakeholders strongly supported clearly defining pre-existing skill requirements. At the same time, they stressed that any system must avoid imposing unnecessary barriers to entry. By incorporating requirements into the Application section of units and providing flexible evidence options, the project identified a practical solution that balances both objectives.

2. The importance of structured consultation in developing alternative approaches and building consensus across stakeholder groups.

The staged consultation process – which included engagement with Skills Insight, Public Skills Australia, and State and Territory Training Authorities, sector-specific and cross-sector focus groups, and broad industry validation – was critical in gaining industry acceptance. Involving stakeholders early helped to identify risks, clarify expectations, and strengthen the credibility of the final recommendations.

3. The value of prioritising flexible approaches to evidence collection and meeting pre-requisite requirements.

Stakeholders welcomed the inclusion of various forms of evidence, such as a range of units of competency, RPL, workplace documentation, skills tests, and simulated practice. This flexibility ensures fairness for candidates with different learning pathways and helps RTOs maintain compliance without undue burden.

4. The need for clear guidance and support materials for trainers, assessors, course advisers and regulators.

Feedback highlighted the need for a comprehensive *Evidence Guides* and clear support materials. Well-designed guidance for trainers, assessors, course advisers, and regulators will be essential for the consistent implementation and maintenance of confidence in the new arrangements proposed in this report.

5. The need for alignment with national VET policy and engaging with State/Territory Training Authorities.

The project showed that changes of this nature must be carefully aligned with the *Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF)*. Engaging with Skills Insight and State / Territory Training Authorities helped ensure compliance and prevent unintended conflicts with national policy.

6. The role of professional development in the successful implementation of changes to Training Package units of competency/qualifications.

Stakeholders identified professional development as essential for successful implementation. Trainers, assessors, and compliance staff require targeted support to understand and apply the new arrangements proposed in this report. Without this, there is a risk of inconsistent implementation across jurisdictions and training providers.

7. Anticipating the impact of changes on other Training Package qualifications.

It became clear that changes to pre-requisite skill requirements may affect other qualifications, especially in arboriculture and emergency services. Future work must consider these effects and include engagement with other relevant Training Package developers.

8. The importance of communication and transparency in building trust amongst key stakeholders.

Regular communication through posting updates on the project website helped maintain transparency and build trust. Stakeholders appreciated these updates and the chance to give feedback. This highlights the importance of creating well-structured engagement strategies in national skills projects.

Appendices

Appendix 1: State and Territory Training Authorities consulted on pre-requisite use in Training Package Qualifications

| State and Territory | State and Territory Training Authority |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Australian Capital Territory</i> | Skills Canberra |
| <i>New South Wales</i> | Education and Skills Reform, NSW Department of Education - New South Wales |
| <i>Northern Territory</i> | Department of Education and Training - Northern Territory |
| <i>Queensland</i> | Department of Employment, Small Business and Training - Queensland |
| <i>South Australia</i> | Skills Initiatives, Department of State Development, - South Australia |
| <i>Tasmania</i> | Skills Tasmania |
| <i>Victoria</i> | Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions - Victoria, Victorian Skills Authority and the Victorian Primary Industries Curriculum Maintenance Manager Service (VPICMMS) |
| <i>Western Australia</i> | Department of Training and Workforce Development - Western Australia |

Appendix 2: Organisations that participated in focus groups

| Organisations |
|---|
| Australian Timber Trainers Association |
| Country Fire Authority |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action - Victoria |
| Department of Fire and Emergency Services - Western Australia |
| East Gippsland TAFE |
| Fire Tasmania |
| Foresite Training |
| Lemke Timber Training |
| MTO Group |
| National Workplace Services Group |
| NSW SES |
| NSW TAFE |
| Public Skills Australia |
| Rural Fire Service - NSW |
| TAFE Tasmania |
| Timber Training Creswick - Victoria |

Appendix 3: Draft Statements for inclusion in the Application section of the tree felling units devised by participants at the sector-specific and cross-sector focus groups held May - June 2025

FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic) - Before commencing this unit, individuals must be able to safely start up, handle, operate, shut down and maintain a chainsaw. This can be verified by meeting the evidence requirements in the current version of the *User Guide - Fell Tree Manually*.

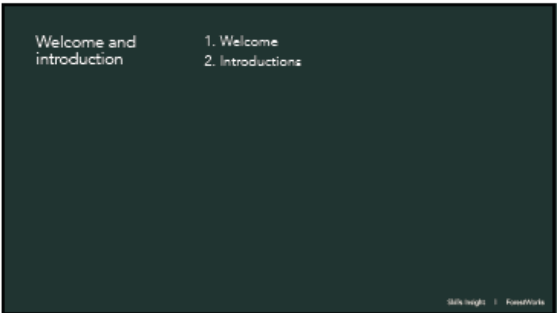
FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate) - Before commencing this unit, individuals must be able to safely start up, handle, operate, shut down and maintain a chainsaw and perform trimming, cross-cutting, and basic tree felling techniques. This can be verified by meeting the evidence requirements in the current version of the *User Guide - Fell Tree Manually*.

FWPCOT3351 Fell trees manually (advanced) - Before enrolling in this unit, individuals must have skills and knowledge in safely conducting intermediate tree felling operations using a chainsaw. This can be verified by meeting the evidence requirements in the current version of the *User Guide - Fell Tree Manually*.

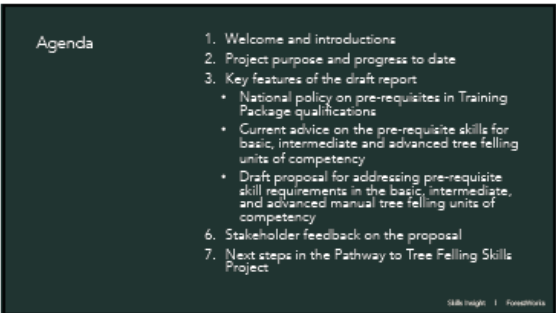
Appendix 4: Presentation: Review and feedback sessions



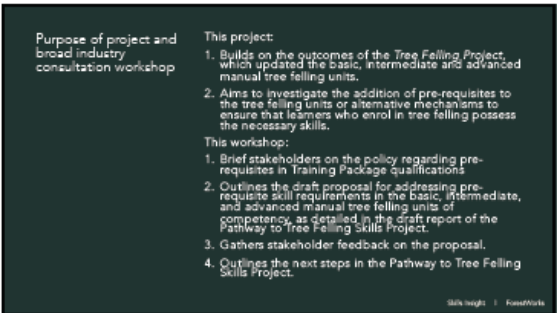
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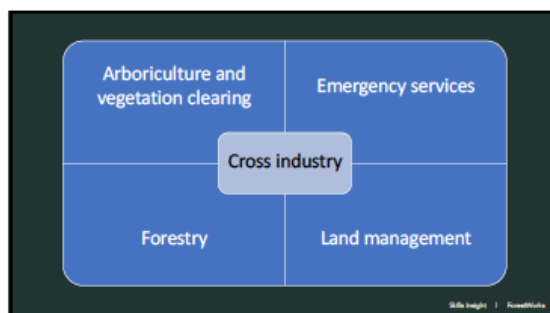
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6



7



8

Pre-requisite policy and practice

- A review was conducted of national policies regarding pre-requisites in Training Package qualifications, including consultations with State and Territory Training Authorities.
- The Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF) is the key policy document.
- Pre-requisites are units of competency that a learner must be assessed as competent in before progressing to a subsequent, dependent unit.
- Pre-requisites should only be used when necessary to enable a learner to undertake learning or assessment safely or effectively.
- Pre-requisites should not be used to sequence training delivery or structure training pathways.
- Maintaining flexibility is crucial for meeting learners' needs and supporting workforce mobility.
- The use of pre-requisites should be minimised to avoid creating unnecessary barriers to learner progression.

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Current advice on the pre-requisite skills for basic, intermediate and advanced tree felling units of competency

- No pre-requisites for current units
- Current advice on pre-requisite skills in the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024*
- Guide notes that the introduction of pre-requisite units for tree felling trainees is a significant safety measure proposed by the industry to ensure that trainees embark on their training already equipped with the essential skills and knowledge to support a safe training and assessment process.

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In lieu of pre-requisites, the Guide notes industry agreed to the following:

- Fell trees manually (basic):** Individuals who seek to undertake this unit must have prior skills and knowledge in the safe start-up, shutdown, maintenance, and operation of a chainsaw to ensure their own safety and uphold the training provider's responsibility for safety.
- Fell trees manually (intermediate):** Individuals who seek to undertake this unit must have prior skills and knowledge in safely starting up, shutting down, maintaining, and performing basic operations such as trimming, cross-cutting, and basic tree felling with a chainsaw to ensure their own safety and uphold the training provider's responsibility for safety.
- Fell trees manually (advanced):** Individuals who seek to undertake this unit must have prior skills and knowledge in safely conducting intermediate tree felling operations using a chainsaw to ensure their own safety and uphold the training provider's responsibility for safety.

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| Tree felling unit | Recommended skills and knowledge before enrolment |
|---|---|
| FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic) | Completion of any of the following units: AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws FWPCOT2256 Trim and cut felled trees, or FWPHAR2209 Trim and cut harvested trees |
| FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate) | Completion of FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic) |
| FWPCOT3351 Fell trees manually (advanced) | Completion of FWPCOT3350 Fell trees manually (intermediate) |

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Five options for addressing pre-existing skills proposed for consideration by industry stakeholders

1. Retain current arrangements
2. Amend the current units of competency to include explicit pre-requisite requirements for basic, intermediate and advanced tree felling
3. Enhance the guidance in the Companion Volume – User Guide *Fell Trees Manually* and roll out to industry stakeholders on national basis
4. Establish an industry accord to support the adoption of the advice in the Companion Volume – User Guide *Fell Trees Manually*
5. Apply the principles of the National Qualifications Reform process to redesign the three tree felling units of competency.

Slide 13 | FossilSkills

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Industry consultations and outcomes

- Sector-specific / cross-industry focus groups were conducted to consider the options.
- Key outcomes:
 - Safety is the primary driver for pre-requisites.
 - National policy aims to minimise pre-requisites.
 - A statement be included in the Application component of each unit describing the pre-existing skills needed by individuals undertaking the unit.
 - An Evidence Guide be included in the companion volume that identifies acceptable forms of evidence of pre-existing skills.
 - A professional development program be developed that supports the implementation of the proposed arrangements.

Slide 14 | FossilSkills

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Recommendation 1

Re-develop the basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency, in line with TPOF processes, to include a description of the pre-existing skills that an individual must hold. This is to be included in the Application section of each unit.

The statement for each unit should be based on the pre-existing skills statements in the Companion Volume User Guide: *Fell Trees Manually* – April 2024 and the outcomes of the Pathway to Tree Felling project.

Slide 15 | FossilSkills

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Sample sentences for inclusion in units

FWPCOT3325 Fell trees manually (basic) - Before commencing this unit, individuals must be able to safely start up, handle, operate, shut down and maintain a chainsaw. This can be verified by meeting the evidence requirements in the current version of the User Guide – *Fell Tree Manually*.

➔

FWPCOT3330 Fell trees manually (intermediate) - Before commencing this unit, individuals must be able to safely start up, handle, operate, shut down and maintain a chainsaw and perform limbing, cross-cutting, and back tree felling techniques. This can be verified by meeting the evidence requirements in the current version of the User Guide – *Fell Tree Manually*.

➔

FWPCOT3351 Fell trees manually (advanced) - Before enrolling in this unit, individuals must have skills and knowledge in safely conducting intermediate tree felling operations using a chainsaw. This can be verified by meeting the evidence requirements in the current version of the User Guide – *Fell Tree Manually*.

Slide 16 | FossilSkills

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Recommendation 2

Develop an evidence guide that outlines the evidence that individuals may present to demonstrate they have met the requirements of the pre-existing skills statement included in the revised application section of the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency.

Slide 17 | FossilSkills

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Evidence Guide

Evidence

- Units of competency
- Skills test
- RPL
- Workplace or other evidence

Slide 18 | FossilSkills

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Recommendation 3

- Review the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024*, to include:
- the evidence guide for pre-existing skills requirements in the basic, intermediate, and advanced manual tree felling units of competency, and
 - a set of support materials to assist RTOs implement the proposed new arrangements for recognising pre-existing skills base.

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Recommendation 4

- Design and roll out a national professional development program, virtual or face-to-face, for RTO compliance staff, trainers, assessors, careers advisers and industry personnel that addresses:
- the proposed changes to the Application section in each unit of competency
 - how to apply the proposed Evidence Guide and support materials to be included in the updated version of the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024*.

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Proposed activity plan

Five-phase activity plan:

1. Re-develop basic, intermediate and advanced manual tree felling units of competency to incorporate pre-existing skill requirements
2. Design an evidence guide on pre-existing skills and support materials for each unit of competency and incorporate it in the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually – April 2024*
3. Design a professional development program
4. Roll out professional development program to stakeholders nationally
5. Review the professional development program

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Discussion

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Discussion questions

1. What are the main benefits and limitations of the proposed approach to addressing pre-existing skills in the basic, intermediate, and advanced tree felling units of competency?
2. Does the proposal maintain an appropriate balance between upholding training quality and minimising unnecessary barriers to learner participation?
3. Is the proposed Evidence Guide a practical, fair, and accessible tool from the perspective of both learners and training providers?
4. How well do the recommendations support RTOs, trainers, and industry in consistently identifying if individuals possess the required pre-existing skills?
5. To what extent does the proposed activity plan cover the key components needed to implement the recommendations effectively?
6. What risks, challenges, or unintended consequences might arise from adopting the proposed recommendations, and how could these be mitigated?
7. Are there any gaps or areas for improvement in the proposed approach that should be addressed before implementation?
8. Based on what you've reviewed, do you support the proposed recommendations? Why or why not?

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Outcomes of discussions

- Key points of agreement
- Outstanding issues

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Next steps

- Review outcomes of broad consultation
- Report including recommendations and Activity Plan

Slide 25/26 | ForestWorks

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Other business

- Questions
- Thanks for participation

Slide 26/26 | ForestWorks

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Appendix 5: Feedback from Victorian Primary Industries Curriculum Maintenance Manager Service and ForestWorks response

Feedback from VPICMMS – 19 August 2025

I am just chasing up an email that I sent to you August 6 with some questions about the Pathway to Tree Felling Project. Just letting you know that I have not received a reply to date. Given that August 20 is the last day for feedback in the project public consultation, please record the following as official feedback for this project.

Regarding Recommendation 1 in the report - Dealing with pre-existing skill requirements in manual tree felling units of competency. A draft report on the recommendations and approach to implementation.

The recommendation states that the Application section of the three re-developed tree felling units will have statements based on the pre-existing statements in the *Companion Volume User Guide: Fell Trees Manually - April 2024* and the outcomes of the Pathways to Tree Felling project. Will the statements in the Application be included through reference to the Companion Volume (mandating a non-endorsed training package product in an endorsed unit of competency) or will the actual wording that appears in the companion volume be included in the unit Application, i.e. the endorsed unit will contain the wording?

The second comment relates to statements added to the Application section instead of the inclusion of one or more pre-requisites for each unit. The description of what to include in the Application section of unit template (TPOF July 1, 2025, section 2.2.3) from Appendix A TPOF, and on the template itself, the Application is about how the unit is practically applied in the industry and context(s). Would the additional advice you are proposing to include in the Application conform with the template guidelines?

No other issues with recommendations 2, 3 and 4 to record at this stage or the Activity Plan outlined in the draft report.

I am happy to discuss further if needed.

Please record these comments as feedback from the Victorian Primary Industries CMM Service.

Response from ForestWorks – 20 August 2025

Dear Anne

Thank you for your comments on the draft proposal for addressing pre-existing skills requirements for the three manual tree felling units.

The matters you raise are well considered, and I thought that it might be helpful to share ForestWorks' thinking with you on the three matters raised in your email.

The first issue involves using an endorsed component (Unit Application) to specify a non-endorsed component (Companion Volume). We agree that there are situations where referencing a non-endorsed component, such as the Companion Volume User Guide [CVUG], within a unit could be problematic - especially if the CVUG can be updated separately from the unit itself. Therefore, the wording in the Application must be explicit, with the CVUG providing supplementary advice. This way, the CVUG content does not form a requirement but offers information to help meet it. In this context, the wording describing the expected skills is the key requirement, while the CVUG offers examples of how these skills might be achieved. Although the way the expected skills are recognised could change over time, the requirement, in this case, to safely start up, operate, and maintain a chainsaw, remains the same.

The second issue relates to the information that may be included in the Application section of the template. The draft wording is consistent with the current advice in the TPOF and associated template. In the template, there is a guide question which states, "Who might use this unit?" Our response to this question is that the user is an individual who can safely start up, operate and maintain a chainsaw.

The third issue concerns the need to consider the principles of the National Qualification Reform process in any redevelopment of the three manual tree felling units. This has been a primary consideration throughout the project. We understand that these principles are embedded in the TPOF, which came into effect on 1 July 2025. The solution proposed in the draft project report is consistent with the seven quality principles outlined in the TPOF. ForestWorks recognises that the draft proposal will constitute a 'major change' to the three-manual tree felling units and will redevelop the units through a future project using TPOF processes and the appropriate template.

I hope this clarifies the approach we propose to take in addressing the pre-existing skills requirements for the three manual tree felling units.

I greatly appreciate your comments and thank you for your engagement with this vital project.

Regards

Belinda Tierney

General Manager

Appendix 6: Organisations that participated in the broad industry consultations

Organisations

AFCA

Allens Training Pty Ltd

DEECA (Vic)

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions (WA)

Department of Trade, Employment & Training (Qld)

Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA)

Food, Fibre & Timber Industries Training Council

G & T Images (VR e-learning)

MTO Group

Northern Territory Arboriculture Association

NSW Rural Fires Service

Power Safety Training Australia

South Metropolitan TAFE - Western Australia

TAFE NSW

Tasmanian Safety & Training Services

TasTAFE

Timber Training Creswick

Tocal College

Victorian Primary Industries Curriculum Maintenance Manager Service

Appendix 7: Organisations that supported the approach for addressing pre-existing skills requirements in the sector-specific and cross-sector focus groups (Consultation Phase)

Organisations

Australian Timber Trainers Association

Country Fire Authority

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action – Victoria

Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Western Australia

East Gippsland TAFE

Fire Tasmania

Foresite Training

Lemke Timber Training

MTO Group

National Workplace Services Group

NSW SES

NSW TAFE

Public Skills Australia

Rural Fire Service – NSW

TAFE Tasmania

Timber Training Creswick - Victoria

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

Wodonga TAFE - Victoria

Appendix 8: Organisations that supported the final recommendations and activity plan during the broad industry consultation phase - 6-20 August 2025

Organisations

AFCA

Allens Training Pty Ltd

DEECA (Vic)

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions (WA)

Department of Trade, Employment & Training (Qld)

Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA)

Food, Fibre & Timber Industries Training Council

G & T Images (VR e-learning)

MTO Group

NSW Rural Fire Service

Power Safety Training Australia

South Metropolitan TAFE (WA)

TAFE NSW

Tasmanian Safety & Training Services

TasTAFE

Note: The Victorian Primary Industries Curriculum Maintenance Manager Service (VPICMMS) raised a number of technical questions regarding the proposed approach and its consistency with the *Training Package Organising Framework*. ForestWorks sought advice on these matters from Skills Insight and responded to the VPICMMS. A copy of the letter from VPICMMS and the response from ForestWorks is provided as Appendix 5.

Appendix 9: Sample Pre-Enrolment, Self-Assessment Checklist of Pre-Existing Skills for FWPCOT2275 Fell Trees Manually (Basic)

Sample - Candidate Pre-Enrolment Self-Assessment Checklist

Note: This pre-enrolment self-assessment checklist is provided for illustrative purposes only. It is not to be used for candidate self-assessment.

Instructions:

For each statement, tick the box that best describes your current level of confidence or ability.

Yes/Confident – I can do this task correctly and safely on my own.

Partly/Somewhat – I have some ability but may need more practice or guidance.

No/Not Yet – I cannot do this task safely or have never done it before.

1. Start-Up Procedures

| Skill | Yes | Partly | No |
|--|-----|--------|----|
| I can check that the work area is safe before starting a chainsaw. | | | |
| I can complete pre-start safety checks (chain brake, throttle lock, chain tension, fuel, oil). | | | |
| I can start a chainsaw safely on the ground using correct technique. | | | |
| I can demonstrate safe starting when a chainsaw is warm. | | | |

2. Handling and Operation

| Skill | Yes | Partly | No |
|--|-----|--------|----|
| I can carry a chainsaw safely with the bar facing backwards and chain brake engaged. | | | |
| I can maintain correct grip and stance while operating the chainsaw. | | | |
| I can demonstrate safe throttle control during cutting. | | | |
| I can recognise and avoid the kickback zone of the bar. | | | |
| I can cut small logs on the ground without creating unsafe situations. | | | |

3. Safe Operation Practices

| Skill | Yes | Partly | No |
|--|-----|--------|----|
| I always wear and use correct PPE (helmet, eye/ear protection, trousers, gloves, boots). | | | |
| I can identify common hazards (slopes, weather, unstable logs, overhead obstacles). | | | |

I can follow site safety and communication requirements.

I understand how to respond to an emergency or incident.

4. Shut-Down Procedures

| Skill | Yes | Partly | No |
|-------|-----|--------|----|
|-------|-----|--------|----|

I can safely stop a chainsaw using the correct method.

I can allow the chainsaw to cool down before transporting or storing.

I can secure and transport a chainsaw safely between tasks.

5. Maintenance

| Skill | Yes | Partly | No |
|-------|-----|--------|----|
|-------|-----|--------|----|

I can refuel and add chain/bar oil safely.

I can check and adjust chain tension.

I can sharpen a chain or recognise when sharpening is required.

I can clean and inspect the air filter, guide bar and sprocket.

I can identify when a chainsaw requires professional servicing.

6. Candidate Reflection

1. Which areas did you mark as “Partly” or “No”?
2. Do you need refresher training before progressing to the tree felling unit?
3. What evidence can you provide to support your responses?

Candidate Declaration:

I confirm that the information in this checklist is accurate and reflects my current ability.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 10A: Sample RPL Tool for FWPCOT2275 Fell Trees Manually (Basic) – Assessor

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Tool Assessor

Unit of Competency: FWPCOT2275 – Fell trees manually (basic)

Candidate and Assessor Details

Candidate Name

Date of Application

RTO

Assessor Name

Instructions for Assessors

1. Review the candidate's self-assessment and evidence provided.
2. Use the Evidence Review Checklist to record whether sufficient evidence is supplied for each performance criterion.
3. Indicate the verification method used (e.g., observation, documents, oral questioning, third-party report).
4. Add comments to justify your decision on each criterion.
5. Ask the five knowledge questions provided in Section 4 to confirm underpinning knowledge.
6. Review the evidence by applying rules of evidence (valid, sufficient, authentic, current) and decide whether RPL should be granted.
7. Record the overall outcome.
8. Provide feedback to the candidate.
9. Ensure all documentation is signed, dated, and stored in accordance with RTO and regulatory requirements.

1. Purpose

This tool assists assessors in reviewing and validating the candidate's prior skills and knowledge for the unit of competency FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic).

2. Evidence Review Checklist

Element 1: Prepare for felling

| Skill/Knowledge | Candidate Evidence | Verification Method | Assessor Comments |
|--|--|---|-------------------|
| Identify and confirm work requirements (tree species, site conditions). (PC 1.1, 1.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Select and wear PPE. (PC 1.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Assess environmental conditions and hazards. (PC 1.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Select and check tools/equipment. (PC 1.5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Establish exclusion zones and emergency procedures. (PC 1.6) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Element 2: Assess tree and plan felling

| Skill/Knowledge | Candidate Evidence | Verification Method | Assessor Comments |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Assess tree size, shape, lean, wind, | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation | |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| defects, surroundings. (PC 2.1) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Identify intended felling direction and confirm safety. (PC 2.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Select cutting technique for small, basic trees. (PC 2.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Prepare escape route(s). (PC 2.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Element 3: Fell tree

| Skill/Knowledge | Candidate Evidence | Verification Method | Assessor Comments |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| Apply safe start-up, operation, shutdown of chainsaw. (PC 3.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Maintain safe positioning while working. (PC 3.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Cut scarf/face notch correctly. (PC 3.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Complete back cut safely, control fall. (PC 3.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Retreat safely along escape path. (PC 3.5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
|---|--|---|--|

Element 4: Complete felling operations

| Skill/Knowledge | Candidate Evidence | Verification Method | Assessor Comments |
|--|--|---|-------------------|
| Check felled tree for stability and hazards. (PC 4.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Clear work area, move/stack products. (PC 4.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Clean and maintain tools/equipment/chainsaw. (PC 4.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Complete workplace records/reports. (PC 4.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided <input type="checkbox"/> Not Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Document review <input type="checkbox"/> Oral questions <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

3. Knowledge Questions

The assessor may use the following questions to confirm the candidate's underpinning knowledge after reviewing the candidate's evidence.

| Question | Candidate Response | Assessor Comments |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| What personal protective equipment (PPE) must you wear when felling a tree, and why is each item important? | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| What factors do you check when assessing a tree before felling (e.g. lean, wind, hazards)? | | |
| What daily checks and maintenance tasks should you perform on a chainsaw before use? | | |
| Explain the purpose of the scarf (face) cut and the back cut when felling a tree. | | |
| What steps do you take to minimise environmental impacts and ensure the site is left safe after tree felling? | | |

4. Outcome

After reviewing the evidence, the candidate is assessed as:

- ☐ Competent via RPL
- ☐ Not yet competent - further evidence required
- ☐ Not yet competent – training recommended

Assessor Signature

Date

Appendix 10B: Sample RPL Tool for FWPCOT2275 Fell Trees Manually (Basic) – Candidate

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Tool Candidate

Unit of Competency: FWPCOT2275 – Fell trees manually (basic)

Candidate Details

Candidate Name

Date of Application

RTO

Assessor Name

Instructions for Candidates

1. Read through the key skills and knowledge required for this unit.
2. Complete the self-assessment checklist honestly by ticking the boxes where you believe you already have the skill.
3. Read Section 4 – Suggested Evidence to help you decide what types of supporting materials or evidence to include in your application to prove that you have the required skills and knowledge.
4. In the column titled 'Evidence I have provided', list any documents, photographs, video recordings, or references that support your claim. Remember to number each item, provide a brief description of the item and submit each item with this application
5. Sign the Candidate Declaration to confirm the evidence you provide is accurate.
6. Submit this tool and your evidence to your assessor or RTO contact person.

1. Purpose

This tool assists candidates in identifying and presenting evidence of their prior learning for FWPCOT2275 Fell trees manually (basic). It helps determine whether you already meet the competency requirements without completing the full training program.

2. Skills and Knowledge Requirements

A person who is competent in basic manual tree felling will have:

- Knowledge of workplace health and safety (WHS) requirements when using chainsaws and felling trees.
- The ability to inspect and maintain a chainsaw (basic checks, sharpening, fuel/oil mix).
- Skills in tree assessment (lean, weight distribution, hazards).
- Be able to prepare the work site, establish exclusion zones, and select and use PPE.
- Skills in performing standard cuts for felling small, basic trees (e.g. scarf/face cut, back cut).
- The ability to control fall direction and retreat safely.
- Knowledge of environmental considerations and reporting requirements.

3. Self-Assessment Checklist (Candidate to Complete)

Element 1: Prepare for felling

| Skill/Knowledge | I have this skill | Evidence I have provided - number each item, provide a brief description of the item and submit with this application |
|---|--|---|
| I can identify and confirm the work requirements, including tree species and site conditions. (PC 1.1, 1.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can select and wear the required PPE. (PC 1.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can assess environmental conditions and identify hazards in the felling area. (PC 1.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can select appropriate tools and equipment, and check their serviceability. (PC 1.5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can establish and communicate exclusion zones | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| and emergency procedures. (PC 1.6) | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|

Element 2: Assess tree and plan felling

| Skill/Knowledge | I have this skill | Evidence I have provided – number each separate item, provide a brief description of the item and submit with this application |
|--|--|--|
| I can assess tree size, shape, lean, wind load, defects, and surrounding factors. (PC 2.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can identify the intended felling direction and confirm it is safe. (PC 2.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can select an appropriate cutting technique for small, basic trees. (PC 2.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can prepare escape route(s) before commencing cuts. (PC 2.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |

Element 3: Fell tree

| Skill/Knowledge | I have this skill | Evidence I have provided – number each separate item, provide a brief description of the item and submit with this application |
|--|--|--|
| I can apply safe start-up, operation, and shutdown of the chainsaw. (PC 3.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can position myself safely while working. (PC 3.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can cut scarf/face notch correctly for direction control. (PC 3.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can complete the back cut safely and control tree fall. (PC 3.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| I can retreat safely along a prepared escape path. (PC 3.5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
|---|--|--|

Element 4: Complete felling operations

| Skill/Knowledge | I have this skill | Evidence I have provided – number each separate item, provide a brief description of the item and submit with this application |
|---|--|--|
| I can check the felled tree for stability and hazards. (PC 4.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can clear the work area and safely move or stack products. (PC 4.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can clean and maintain tools, equipment, and chainsaw after use. (PC 4.3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |
| I can complete workplace records and reports as required. (PC 4.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure | |

4. Suggested Forms of Evidence

The types of evidence that might be provided to support your claim of competency include:

- Photographs or video of chainsaw use and tree felling.
- Workplace records/logbooks of tree felling activities.
- Statements or reports from supervisors/employers.
- Previous training certificates (e.g. chainsaw operation, WHS).
- Personal work diary entries or job sheets.

5. Candidate Declaration

I declare that the evidence provided is a true and accurate reflection of my skills and experience.

Candidate Signature

Date

Appendix 11A: Sample Skills Test for Assessing Pre-Requisite Skills
Required for FWPCOT2275 Fell Trees Manually (Basic) – Candidate

Pre-requisite Skills Test

Unit of Competency: FWPCOT2275 – Fell trees manually (basic)

Knowledge Test

Instructions:

This knowledge test consists of 10 multiple-choice questions.

Select the best answer for each question.

Circle your chosen answer.

Note: You must achieve a pass rate of 80% to proceed to the practical skills test.

Candidate Details

Name:

Date of Application:

RTO:

Q1. Before starting a chainsaw, what is the most important first safety step?

- A. Check that the fuel cap is tightened securely
- B. Confirm that the work area is free of people and obstructions
- C. Put on the correct personal protective equipment (PPE)
- D. Test whether the throttle trigger moves freely

Q2. Which combination of PPE is best to use when operating a chainsaw?

- A. High-visibility vest, gloves, sunglasses, steel-toe boots
- B. Hard hat, hearing protection, chainsaw chaps/trousers, gloves, safety boots, eye protection
- C. Respirator, rain jacket, safety glasses, sneakers
- D. Earplugs, safety vest, dust mask, rubber boots

Q3. What is the recommended operator stance when using a chainsaw in felling operations?

- A. Feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, saw close to body, both hands on handles
- B. One hand on the rear handle, leaning over the saw to increase downward force
- C. Standing side-on with feet together to keep out of the cutting line
- D. Kneeling close to the log for better accuracy

Q4. What is the safest method for starting a chainsaw in the field?

- A. Drop-starting: holding the saw with one hand while pulling the starter cord with the other
- B. Placing the saw on firm ground, chain brake engaged, foot through rear handle, left hand on front handle
- C. Bracing the saw against a stump, chain brake disengaged for quicker cutting
- D. Balancing the saw on your thigh while pulling the cord

Q5. *Complete the following sentence.* The primary function of the chain brake is to:

- A. reduce engine speed when cutting small diameter timber.
- B. stop the chain instantly if kickback occurs.
- C. keep chain tension correct during cutting.
- D. prevent the guide bar from overheating.

Q6. *Complete the following sentence.* Kickback is most likely to occur when the

- A. bottom of the bar is used to cut with full throttle.
- B. tip or upper quadrant of the bar nose contacts the log or another object.
- C. chain is cutting at very low speed with light pressure.
- D. operator maintains a firm grip and proper stance.

Q7. If a chain becomes dull during felling operations, what is the correct action to take?

- A. Increase downward pressure and reduce throttle to avoid stalling
- B. Continue cutting until the chain breaks, then replace it
- C. Stop work and sharpen or replace the chain before continuing
- D. Cool the chain with water between cuts to reduce wear

Q8. Which refuelling practice best reduces the risk of fire or injury?

- A. Refuel in the shade with engine idling to keep it cool
- B. Refuel at least 3 metres away from ignition sources, with engine switched off
- C. Refuel directly on site, even if close to sawdust piles, for efficiency
- D. Refuel while the saw is hot so vapour does not condense inside the tank

Q9. Why must chain tension be checked frequently during chainsaw operations?

- A. A chain that is too tight cuts more slowly but increases operator fatigue
- B. A loose chain can derail, damage the bar, and cause serious injury
- C. A chain at the correct tension eliminates the need for lubrication
- D. Over-tightening the chain increases cutting efficiency and extends chain life

Q10. After completing felling tasks, what is the best maintenance procedure?

- A. Leave fuel in the tank to prevent seals from drying out, then store saw outside
- B. Clean the bar groove, check and tighten chain, inspect the air filter, store in a dry secure place
- C. Remove the spark plug to prevent accidental starting, then hang saw by the bar
- D. Run the saw until empty to protect the carburettor, then store on its side

Finish

Pre-requisite Skills Test

Unit of Competency: FWPCOT2275 – Fell trees manually (basic)

Knowledge Test - Answer Key

This answer key provides the correct options for the multiple-choice assessment on safe handling, operation, and maintenance of a chainsaw. Use this sheet for marking trainee assessments.

Q1: c) Put on the correct personal protective equipment (PPE)

Q2: b) Hard hat, hearing protection, chainsaw chaps/trousers, gloves, safety boots, eye protection

Q3: a) Feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, saw close to body, both hands on handles

Q4: b) Placing the saw on firm ground, chain brake engaged, foot through rear handle, left hand on front handle

Q5: b) Stop the chain instantly if kickback occurs

Q6: b) The tip or upper quadrant of the bar nose contacts the log or another object

Q7: c) Stop work and sharpen or replace the chain before continuing

Q8: b) Refuel at least 3 metres away from ignition sources, with engine switched off

Q9: b) A loose chain can derail, damage the bar, and cause serious injury

Q10: b) Clean the bar groove, check and tighten chain, inspect air filter, store in a dry secure place

Appendix 11B: Sample Skills Test for Assessing Pre-Requisite Skills
Required for FWPCOT2275 Fell Trees Manually (Basic) – Practical
Component – Candidate

Pre-requisite Skills Test

Unit of Competency: FWPCOT2275 – Fell trees manually (basic)

Candidate – Practical Component

Instructions:

You are required to safely demonstrate skills in preparing, handling, operating, and maintaining a chainsaw.

You must wear all required personal protective equipment (PPE).

You will perform tasks under supervision but without direct instruction once the test begins.

Note: Unsafe practices will result in immediate termination of the test.

Candidate Details

Candidate Name

Date of Application

RTO

Task Description

You are required to:

1. Prepare the worksite – identify hazards, confirm safety measures, and communicate with your supervisor.
2. Prepare the chainsaw for use – conduct checks, mix fuel, and perform maintenance tasks.
3. Operate the chainsaw – demonstrate safely cross-cutting fallen timber using compression and tension cuts with a handheld chainsaw.
4. Shut down and maintain – clean, store the chainsaw, and complete workplace documentation.

In performing this task, you must follow current workplace health and safety legislation, regulations and related industry standards and codes of practice applicable to chainsaw operations.

Pre-requisite Skills Test

Unit of Competency: FWPCOT2275 – Fell trees manually (basic)

Assessor – Practical Component

Assessment Purpose

To confirm that the candidate can safely demonstrate skills in preparing, handling, operating, and maintaining a chainsaw.

Resources Required

- Chainsaw in safe working condition
- Fuel, oil, tools (files, spanners)
- PPE (helmet, visor, gloves, hearing protection, safety glasses, boots)
- Timber/logs suitable for cross-cutting

Observation Checklist

| Task Area | Task | Successfully completed (✓/X) | Assessor Comments |
|----------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Preparation | • Identifies worksite and confirms with supervisor | | |
| | • Identifies and reports hazards and risks | | |
| | • Confirms first aid, emergency procedures, and safety measures | | |
| Chainsaw Preparation | • Selects correct tools and materials | | |
| | • Conducts pre-start checks (bar, chain, spark plug, air filter) | | |
| | • Mixes fuel at correct ratio and fuels chainsaw safely | | |
| | • Reports faults clearly | | |
| | • Communicates with team using signals/voice | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| Chainsaw Operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions and supports timber correctly | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses timber for defects/embedded hazards | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects appropriate cutting methods (compression, tension) | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operates chainsaw safely to cross-cut timber | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains safe body position, grip, and stance | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates environmental awareness | | |
| Post-operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports damage/malfunctions | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleans and stores chainsaw according to manual | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposes debris responsibly | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes documentation | | |

4. Outcome

Having observed the candidate, the candidate is assessed as having:

☐ Passed

☐ Not passed – training recommended

Assessor Signature

Date