

ForestFit

As an industry led project with a highly engaged Industry Reference Group (IRG), ForestFit is building upon and expanding existing initiatives by delivering:

- A nationally recognised and endorsed pilot Training Program for forest contractors
- A pilot Certification for forest contracting businesses to deliver quality services in accordance with industry standards and regulatory requirements.

Certification objectives

- Promote continuous improvement and sustainable business, safety and environmental practices.
- Create efficiencies in compliance and auditing of business, safety and environmental performance.
- Provide assurance to the forest industry and regulators of best practice implementation and risk management.

Issue 05

From pilots to national rollout

Refining ForestFit training and certification programs underway following successful completion pilots

Certification pilot

Twenty forest businesses across Australia participating in the ForestFit Certification pilot are finalising their audit findings to attain certification.

Feedback from the pilot demonstrated businesses have a better understanding of the gaps in their business practices, WHS practices and environmental compliance.

Key challenges focused on the large number of documents requested as part of the desktop assessment and the short timeframe to address non-conformances.

Readiness assessment

Yes/no assessment against standard criteria of readiness to be certified. The Certification completions survey showed participants were satisfied with the level of detail and alignment to the standard criteria.

Desktop assessment

An online assessment of business systems, procedures and documentation. Feedback received focused on the large number of the documents requested. Work is underway to simplify and merge any duplications.

Site assessment

An in-person assessment of on-site processes and documents. Participants were satisfied with the site-based approach and suggested this be extended.

Assessor meetings

Two-way communication between participants and assessors provided guidance on how to address non-conformances. Longer meetings will be considered to further support businesses achieve certification.

Resource Centre

Guidance and template documents to support documentation and evidence requirements of the standard were well received by participants. Further contextualization to the forest industry is required to fill any gaps identified in the certification pilot results.



The rigorous and extensive broad-ranging criteria was amazing for forest contractors such as us.

Participant national pilot.

Participate now

Take part in the next virtual industry and stakeholder briefing scheduled for February 2022 which will include:

- Overview of certification pilot
- Outcomes of the certification pilot
- Next steps.

If you would like to participate in the session or have any questions please contact us forestfit@afca.asn.au.

Contact us

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Refinement

Feedback and input received throughout the pilot will influence the final ForestFit Standard and criteria, certification framework, and processes to ensure the future development and national rollout of the Certification program is reflective of the needs of forest businesses.

The IRG will be meeting in Canberra on 07 February to review and finalise:

- Certification Framework and processes.
- ForestFit Standards and criteria.

ForestFit Training Program

The ForestFit Training Program was successfully developed with significant input by the ForestFit industry reference group (IRG) and piloted with 12 New South Wales (NSW) forest contractors from March-June 2021.

Refinements to the training modules based on participant feedback were delayed until the ForestFit certification criteria, which is closely aligned to the training modules, were finalised.

Training materials will be refined to:

- Ensure alignment and contextualisation with certification criteria.
- Ensure the training materials provide the necessary support for businesses to successfully complete certification.

Next steps

Deemed to comply

ForestFit is in the process of establishing a formal 'deemed to comply' relationship with Responsible Wood.

ForestFit certified businesses utilised by forest growers will be recognised as meeting the applicable requirements of the Responsible Wood Sustainable Forest Management certification.

JAZ-ANZ endorsement

ForestFit is in the process of applying for JAS-ANZ endorsement of ForestFit Certification.

ForestFit will be engaging third party conformity assessment bodies whose assessors have qualifications and expertise in auditing management systems and an understanding of forest industry and forest operations.

Standards Australia accreditation

Work is currently underway to better understand the benefits of having the ForestFit Certification standards recognised as an Australian Standard.



We found the pilot to be a very positive experience. Going forward we will utilise the knowledge gained to better form our own Safety management system.

Participant QLD State native forest pilot.

