

J. W. GOTTSTEIN MEMORIAL TRUST FUND

The National Educational Trust of the Australian Forest Products Industries



**'IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN SAFETY CAPABILITY
AND LEADERSHIP IN THE AUSTRALIAN FOREST INDUSTRY'.**

AMANDA BELL

2022 GOTTSTEIN FELLOWSHIP REPORT

JOSEPH WILLIAM GOTTSTEIN MEMORIAL TRUST FUND

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Amanda joined AFPA in 2021 in the newly created position of FISM and displays great passion and enthusiasm for the Forest Industries.

Her role is to champion safety within the AFPA Growers Chamber and to develop and deliver safety strategies and work plans to support the Chamber objective of achieving improved health, safety, and wellbeing outcomes within the forest growing sector.

She holds a Bachelor of Business from Latrobe University and graduated from RMIT University in 2007 with a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Science (Occupational Health and Safety). Prior to joining AFPA, Amanda spent 9 years working as a consultant.

Amanda is the Secretariat for the Growers Chamber WHS Sub-committee, Chair of the ForestFit Technical Advisory Panel and a member of the Australian Institute of Health and Safety (AIHS), FarmSafe and Forestry Australia (FA).

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New Zealand

Tokoroa

- Graham Bengel, Operations Manager, FAST Harvesting

Rotorua

- Mark Preece, Engagement Lead, WorkSafe NZ
- Nic Steins, Quality, Health & Safety Manager, PF Olsen
- Mike Spiers, Harvesting & Distribution Manager, PF Olsen, NZ Forest Owners Association (NZFOA) Transport Council member, NZ Log Transport Council member
- Miriam Miller, H&S Coordinator, PF Olsen
- Paul Johnson, Harvest Manager, PF Olsen
- Demita Mita, CEO, Central North Island Wood Council

Tauranga

- Ian Brown, Principal, Woodhill Consulting Pty Ltd
- Chris Barnes, General Manager, Manulife Investment Management Forest Management (NZ)
- Glen Coleman, National Health and Safety Manager, Manulife Investment Management Forest Management (NZ)

Taupo

- Fiona Ewing, Former Executive Director Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC)
- Lee Perry, Independent Consultant

Wellington

- Joe Akari, CEO & National Safety Director, FISC
- John Lowe, Project Manager, FISC
- Richard Stringfellow, Toroawhi, FISC
- Wade Brunt, Toroawhi, FISC
- Nicci Rowswell, Senior Adviser, Te Uru Rakau - New Zealand Forest Service, MPI

Online Interviews

- Prue Younger, CEO, Forest Industry Contractors Association (FICA), FISC Safety Council
- Erica Kinder, CEO Southern North Island Wood Council

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents a weeklong study tour in New Zealand where the author sought ideas that if implemented in Australia, had the potential to enhance the safety leadership and capability of the forestry sector.

The information included was gathered from interviews and correspondence with the interviewees named in the acknowledgements.

In Australia an aging worker population, worker shortages, access to training pathways, and worker health and wellbeing are routinely identified as major challenges facing our forest and forest products sector. Whilst these are not exclusively health and safety issues, all have a potentially negative impact on safety outcomes and increases the risk of injuries.

The main observations made during the study tour of New Zealand included:

- New Zealand struggles with many of the same issues –
 - Attracting and retaining workers
 - Getting the safety message to the people on the ground
 - Aging worker population
 - Worker competency and certification
- New Zealand also struggles with the reputation and legacy of being a dangerous industry.
- The leadership program and risk management workshops run by Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC) has had strong uptake and highlighted some key, and fundamental challenges with the way we view risk.
- New Zealand invests in practical safety tools – with a focus on tangible outcomes, not just on research.
- Workers prefer face to face engagement. To be successful, the Toroawhi (Roving Reps) needed to be the right personality and fit for the job.
- FISC and Forest Industry Contractors Association (FICA) collaborate and work together to develop and implement programs that support business and workers to improve not only the safety, but the attractiveness of the industry with a strong focus on bringing new workers into the sector.
- There are eight (8) regional wood councils in New Zealand (similar to Australia's Forestry Hubs) that are active and successful in promoting forestry careers and training.
- New Zealand operates under one jurisdiction, where as Australia has many.
- FISC (via the safetree branding) publishes statistics on its website, including a quarterly performance dashboard, monthly incident reporting and information about forestry fatalities.

The key opportunities for the Australian Forest Industry include:

1. A 'Work Ready' Forestry Orientation Course
2. A 'roving reps' style program for Australia (Toroawhi)
3. Establish a trans-tasman forestry safety alliance
4. A FISC style Agency / Council in Australia
5. Safety Leadership programs and training in new ways of looking at risk
6. Data that accurately represents Forest Industries

I would recommend that the Australian forestry sector continues to engage and work closely with our New Zealand counterparts and develop a relationship where we can share and discuss emerging issues, research opportunities, learnings and published guidelines with each other.

There is opportunity to explore further the establishment of a new safety agency for the Forestry Sector that could join the forest industries together (growers, processors, manufacturers, and contractors) to work toward one, simple goal – focused on Work Health and Safety (WHS) improvements and sustainability of the industry.

A trial program in Australia, adopting a similar ‘bottom up’ culture shift focused on improved worker health and wellbeing has merit. Funding opportunities for such a program should be explored and where possible implemented. As a starting point, this could involve forming strategic relationships and partnerships with existing and established organisations that provide these services – such as Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds and Rural Alive and Well (RAW).

All identified opportunities highlighted in this report will be presented to the AFPA Chamber and WHS Sub-committees for consideration and implementation. Where required, a detailed business case will need to be developed, particularly where industry funding is required in order to be successfully implemented.

2. AIM

This research project aims to identify and explore the key safety issues and challenges currently faced by the Forestry Sector in Australia, then examine any opportunities to enhance safety capability and leadership in Australia. Programs and initiatives in New Zealand are explored that have had a positive impact on safety culture, a noticeable decline in fatality and injury rates and / or a benefit to employee health and wellbeing. This paper summarises programs of work that are particularly interesting or potentially applicable in the Australian forestry setting and identifies both the potential benefits, and likelihood of implementation.

3. SCOPE

This report documents a weeklong study tour in New Zealand. The study explores both the safety initiatives and programs, as well as the associations and groups that develop and run the programs that have had a positive impact on safety culture, injury reduction, industry attractiveness or enhanced health and wellbeing.

The information was gathered from interviews and correspondence with the interviewees named in the acknowledgements.

A survey of Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Growers Chamber members undertaken in July 2022, identified five (5) key WHS challenges currently faced by the Australian forest industry as:

1. Skilled worker shortage
2. Contractor management
3. Aging worker population
4. Training and compliance
5. Worker health and wellbeing

Aware of another Gottstein Fellow, David Bennett's review into Contractor Certification Schemes, the focus of this study tour was on exploring programs or initiatives that address the other four (4) reported emerging issues.

Although not intentional, the identified initiatives and opportunities are focused towards the growing and harvesting sector. This is primarily due to the structure of the New Zealand forestry sector and the scope and strategic focus of the various councils and associations interviewed. That said, there is potentially opportunity for the programs and initiatives highlighted in this report to apply across the whole of the forest industries and extend throughout the entire value chain.

4. INTRODUCTION

The forestry sector in Australia has employees and contractors working in high-risk environments and as a sector has a reputation of being one of the more dangerous to work in.¹

Naturally, safety is gaining an ever-increasing focus, partly due to the obvious concern for worker health and safety, however, equally important is the image and attractiveness of the industry and its ability to attract and retain employees. This problem is not unique to Australia, with New Zealand, Canada and the United States reporting similar issues with attracting young people to a life in the forest.²

A 2015 study published in the International Journal of Forest Research found that “Workplace health and safety strategies have traditionally focused on improving the physical safety of forestry workplaces. It is equally important to consider the broader wellbeing of workers, not only to ensure their quality of life, but also to support a healthy and sustainable workforce with low turnover”.³

The Growers Chamber WHS Sub-Committee (WHSSC) was established in 2013 and is currently made up of 34 representatives. The objective of the WHSSC is to provide a forum for consultation and disseminate information on WHS matters which are likely to affect employees, contractors, and visitors to Australia’s commercial forests.

The WHSSC meets quarterly to discuss injury trends, research projects, work plans in progress, and opportunities for research funding and establishment of working groups with the aim of improving safety performance of Growers across Australia.

A similar committee is also established for the AFPA Softwood Manufacturing Chamber.

There currently does not exist a coordinated group looking at safety performance and improved working conditions across the entire forestry value chain (end to end).

¹ Serious Injuries claims rise with agriculture, forestry, fishing still most dangerous industries, ABC News, November 21 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2021-11-26/serious-injury-claims-agricultural-industries-most-dangerous/100652010>

² The job no one wants: why won’t young people work in logging? <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/23/logging-industry-work-employment-oregon>

³ Beyond physical health and safety: supporting the wellbeing of workers employed in the forest industry

5. SETTING THE SCENE

5.1 Current state of play. The safety of our industry in numbers

In 2018, an analysis by Finder Insights found Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing to be some of the most dangerous jobs in Australia. ⁴

A 2021 report from the ABC reported that “Agriculture, forestry and fishing held its place as the most dangerous industry per hour worked and per employee for the 20th straight year”. ⁵

Whilst overall in Australia, fatality rates in all industries have decreased 50% (from 2007 to 2020) The Safe Work Australia Key WHS statistics Australia 2021 report, again ranked forestry, fisheries, and agriculture number 1 for both serious claims by industry and fatalities. ⁶

Worker fatalities by industry, 2020



Agriculture, forestry and fishing

13.1

fatalities per
100,000 workers



Transport, postal and warehousing

7.8

fatalities per
100,000 workers



Construction

3.1

fatalities per
100,000 workers

Serious claims by industry, 2019-20p*



Agriculture, forestry and fishing

9.6

serious claims per
million hours worked



Manufacturing

9.1

serious claims per
million hours worked



Transport, postal and warehousing

8.9

serious claims per
million hours worked

⁴ <https://www.finder.com.au/most-dangerous-jobs-australia>

⁵ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2021-11-26/serious-injury-claims-agricultural-industries-most-dangerous/100652010#:~:text='Agriculture%2C%20forestry%20and%20fishing',executive%20officer%20Maree%20Gooch%20said.>

⁶ <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-10/Key%20work%20health%20and%20safety%20statistics%20Australia%202021.pdf>

Here, it is important to note - a key challenge for industry, is the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) itself which is used for the collection, publication and analysis of industry statistics. When reported alongside Fisheries and Agriculture, we do not get a true picture of what is happening in our Sector. For example, between 2016 and 2020, there were 211 fatalities recorded in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries division, however when we look at the sub-classification (forestry and logging) only 12 (5.6%) of these fatalities occurred in the forestry and logging industries.

Table 1: Number of worker fatalities in select ANZSIC classifications, 2016 to 2020 Australia

ANZSIC industry codes	Number of fatalities between 2016 and 2020
Agriculture, forestry & fishing (Division)	211
Forestry & Logging (Subdivision)	12
Forestry (Class)	5
Logging (Class)	7

5.2 Is Forestry Really ‘Dirty, Dumb and Dangerous?’

When we review the Victoria Government Gazette (No. S 274 published Wednesday 1 June 2022)⁷ (of which there is likely an equivalent in other states, however each jurisdiction calculates its Industry Rates differently) which lists the Industry Rates and Industry Claims Cost rates for each Industry Classification – a multiplying factor applied in the calculation of Workers Compensation Premium Notices.

Industry Rates are reviewed annually, and generally respond to the volume and cost of claims that occurred across the industry in the year prior. The more injuries and the higher the cost – the higher the Industry Rate.

The Gazette provides an opportunity compare Forestry and Logging against all other industries. In Victoria, Forestry and Logging clearly outperforms Fishing and Agriculture in almost all classifications except for Cotton, Sugar Cane and Rice Growing. Some examples are provided in the table below (Table 2) for comparative purposes.

Table 2: WorkCover Industry Classification, Industry Claim Cost Rates and Industry Rates 2022

WorkCover Industry Classification	WorkCover Industry Description	Industry Claims Cost Rate	Industry Rate
A03010	Forestry	1.314%	2.185%
A03020	Logging	0.831%	2.031%
A05100	Forestry Support Services	1.314%	2.185%
A01910	Horse Farming	4.602%	5.675%
A01710	Poultry Farming	2.430%	3.277%
A01520	Cotton Growing	1.159%	1.759%
A05220	Shearing Services	2.852%	5.035%
A02020	Offshore Caged Aquaculture	1.649%	2.338%
A04120	Prawn Fishing	1.649%	2.338%

⁷ <http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2022/GG2022S274.pdf>

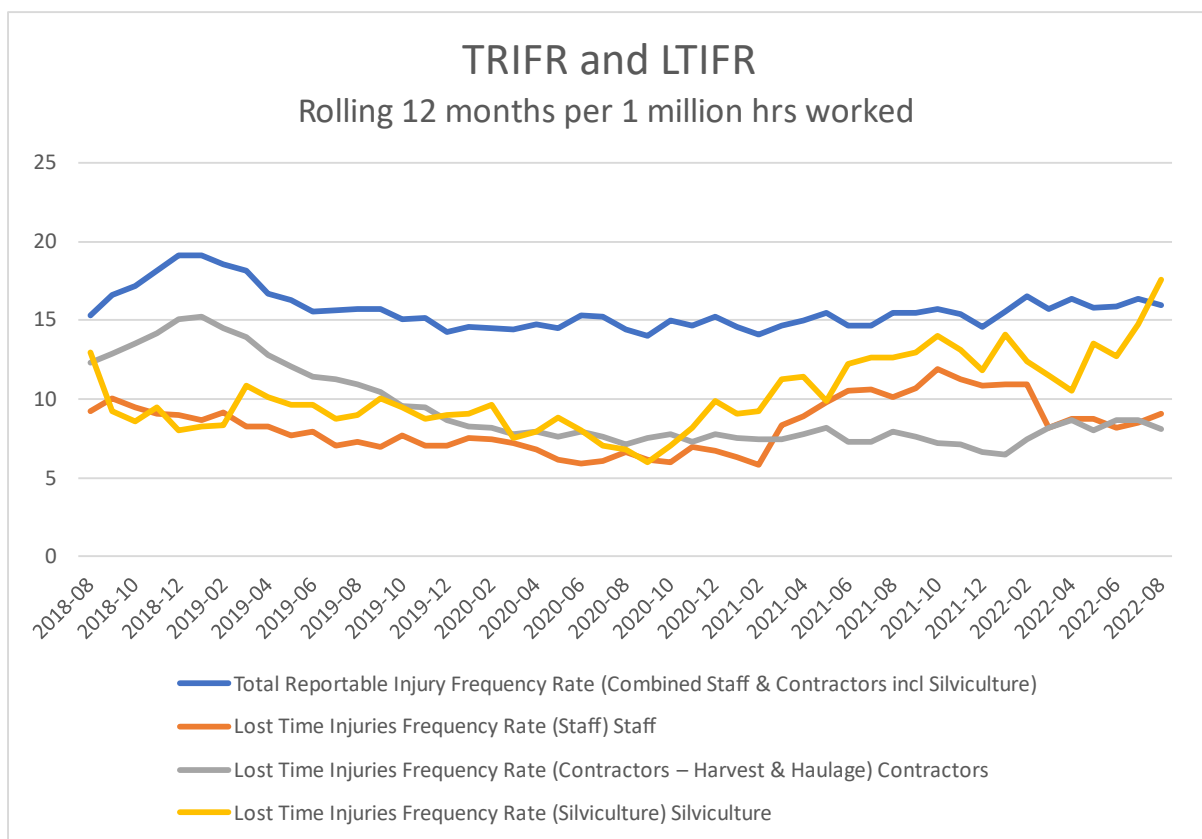
From this we could conclude that we are inherently safer than agriculture and fisheries, however the publishing of the annual SWA data (and our links to agriculture and fisheries as a product of ANZSIC code) and a lack of available published industry data to counter the narrative means we are perceived as being dangerous, by association.

This is discussed in further detail in section 6.5 – Data that accurately depicts Forest Industries.

5.3 Forest Safety Data Series

Despite the great work being undertaken by Industry and several successful programs, initiatives, guidance materials and research projects aimed at reducing risk, both the Total Recordable Incident Frequency Rate (TRIFR) and the Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) remain steady and unchanged. And, when compared to other industries (like construction) lag, behind in safety performance.

Table 3: FWPA Forest Safety Data Series TRIFR and LTIFR 2018-2022



5.4 Why should we look to New Zealand?

Prior to 2015, the New Zealand (NZ) forest industry had an injury rate double that of any other sectors and the fatality rate was 15 times the overall rate for all sectors.⁸ Following an Independent Forest Safety Review (IFSR), the Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC) was established. In 2020, and again in 2021, NZ recorded 3 fatalities each year, a significant improvement from the 10+ prior to 2016.

⁸ Final Report, Independent Safety Review, October 2014, p. 6

The IFSR was an in depth look into the health and safety issues in the New Zealand Forestry Industry which identified that long term, system wide and integrated change was needed in the Forestry Industry to prevent further injuries and loss of lives, and for the industry to be sustainable.

The FISC is an industry led body in New Zealand with the mandate to work in collaboration across the full plantation forestry sector, representing one voice in health and safety.⁹

Their website states that “Our overall objective is zero fatalities and serious harm: Together towards zero. There is a real opportunity to work in partnership and embrace the new health and safety legislation as a way to think differently about achieving safe outcomes”.

“In delivering our objective we will also improve the overall public image of the forestry industry and raise our profile as an employer, and career, of choice”.¹⁰

The FISC ‘Strategy on a page’¹¹ identifies improvements to capability and capacity, retention and attraction of people, culture as well as information sharing with and from the sector as key focus areas for the organisation. Numerous long-term initiatives and programs are identified under the pillars of Leadership, Engagement, Risk, Capability and Performance. These closely mirror the strategic objectives identified by the Growers Chamber WHSS Committee in its 2022-2025 Safety Health and Wellbeing Strategy.¹²

It was for this reason, that the primary motivation to undertake this Gottstein Fellowship Study tour was that I saw an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation with Forest Growers in New Zealand, the FISC and other key players in the industry to explore opportunities to apply some of their learnings here in Australia, acknowledging some AFPA members also have operations in New Zealand.

5.5 The ‘Cost of doing nothing’

While there are costs inherent in providing safe and healthy workplaces, the cost of doing nothing is even greater. Bis Oxford Economics estimated that the cost of doing nothing in the construction industry was estimated to be \$4.2 Billion dollars in lost productivity costs as a result of “the lost wellbeing from work-related fatalities, injuries or illnesses”. The report also highlighted that this figure does not include “other significant wellbeing impacts of the current construction culture including the prevalence of ill-mental health and stress experienced by employees in this sector”.¹³

The loss of productivity (presenteeism) for mental health related illness could not be directly attributed to the current construction culture however was estimated at \$643 million. As the report also estimates 148,620 construction workers had a moderate / severe mental illness – this equates to \$4320 per worker; A significant cost for any business, in addition to the usual operating overheads.

This report highlights the importance of looking at psychosocial risks and worker health and wellbeing as well as the physical risks that we are adept at measuring and monitoring.

⁹ <https://www.fisc.org.nz/overview.html>

¹⁰ https://www.fisc.org.nz/uploads/6/6/2/5/66257655/fisc_strategy_on_a_page.pdf

¹¹ FISC Annual Report, April 2022, p.9

¹² https://cdn.ausfpa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Safety-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2020-2023-V5.pdf?_ga=2.229012828.1112035712.1666149267-72299962.1643069831&_gl=1*5pnxki*_ga*NzlyOTk5NjluMTY0MzA2OTgzMQ..*_ga_CG5MCJJV4G*MTY2NjE0OTI2Ny44NC4wLjE2NjYxNDkyNjcuMC4wLjA.

¹³ The Costs of Doing Nothing, Daniel Crook & Andrew Tessler, May 21

<https://cultureinconstruction.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/The-Cost-of-Doing-Nothing-Report.pdf>

6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDUSRY

The key opportunities for the Australian Forest Industry are outlined below.

6.1 Establishment of a work ready forestry orientation course

Summary:

- The 'Generation Program' and 'Forestry Base Camp Course' aims to provide a real opportunity for young people to be introduced to the range of employment opportunities in the forest industries
- The program is aimed at 16-24 year olds who are not currently studying or employed
- Offers structured learning pathways and opportunities for upskilling (From level 4, through to Diploma and Degree).
- Focus on creating training and education that is sustainable and focus on meeting the industries needs in 10 years, not on short term / short sighted fixing of training gaps now.
- Programs developed and run by the various wood councils (similar to Forestry Hubs).
- Supported by Contractors and Forest Owners
- Potential employment opportunities and enrollment in forestry apprenticeship program
- Described as a comprehensive 12-16 week introduction to the forest and wood industries, providing individuals with the fundamental skills for entry level employment.
- New Zealand Program Specifics:
 - Delivered in partnership with the Toi-ohomoi (polytech)
 - Accredited to deliver the program unit standards components
 - Program partially govt funded
 - Program includes drug and alcohol testing and counselling
 - Run on average twice per year
 - Min 8 per intake. 10 is a great number, ideally 12.
 - Field trips part of the program (field trips aligned with the unit being delivered)
 - Provided breakfast and lunch (also nutrition advice) as well as pastoral care
 - 50% completion rate on average (the last course 19 started and 9 completed)
 - The tutor really needs to be able to handle teenage personality
 - Course includes fitness 3 mornings per week (education and body awareness)
 - Participants provided CV writing support so that they finish the course with a CV
 - Soft skills – communication (acceptable and unacceptable conduct and behaviour)
 - Course includes a mock induction
 - Course runs four (4) days, 20 hours per week. Some flexibility offered for work / caring obligations.
 - Graduate with a level 2 forestry certificate
 - Next steps is Level 3 Woodmill program (simulators and on-site practical experience at live site)
 - Challenge is finding enough work experience places

Expected Benefits:

- Increased worker attraction and retention
- Enhanced talent pool
- Increased knowledge of forestry as a career with school leavers
- Streamlined programs
- Strengthen relationships with TAFE
- Development of work ready skills and pathways for further study

Opportunities for Implementation in Australia:

- The Australian Government is investing \$10 million over four years in the Forestry Workforce Training Program, which aims to support the delivery of skills and training to meet the requirements of Australia's forest and wood products sectors.
- AFPA HR Sub-committee has provided a paper to ForestWorks which clearly outlines the priorities, opportunities and current barriers faced by industry.

Further information:

<https://www.toiohomai.ac.nz/study/course/introduction-new-zealand-forestry-sector-level-5>

<https://www.forestrycareers.nz/training/on-a-training-course/gisborneeast-coast/>

https://eastlandwood.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/EWC_CareersInfoSheet.pdf

6.2 A “roving reps” style program for Australia (Toroawhi)

Summary:

- Toroawhi translates to “Together we create change”
- Create connections and provide support to the workers on the ground. Build trust and lead with empathy
- Primary purpose is worker engagement and wellbeing NOT safety audits (if however a serious safety hazard is identified, they will raise with the contractor)
- Link in with various counselling and support services (early intervention)
- In NZ, this project has ministerial oversight - Toroawhi is a worksafe sponsored trial program for two years with two fulltime workers on a contract basis. FISC working closely with WorkSafe to ensure the project's success.
- Important that the Roving Reps have extensive industry experience, and preferably strong ties to the local communities and a ‘non assuming’ personality that can talk to contractors
- Long term culture change program. After 18 months (and taking into account covid interruptions) the culture has changed from one of cold calling and using contacts to make contact with the coupe crews, to where crews / contractors are calling and asking them to come and visit their sites
- No set agenda, KPI's or outcomes – simply going to the crews and talking about safety and wellbeing. Finding out the issues, understand the risks, facilitate discussions
- If it can't be resolved on site, will escalate the issue to the contractor / grower / manager

Expected benefits:

- A stronger focus on worker health and wellbeing would have a positive impact on safety and performance
- Improved safety culture, without talking about safety culture!
- Opportunity for early intervention – helping link in with existing support services
- Address new psychosocial risk reform – regulations now specify equal emphasis on psychological wellbeing as physical safety
- Injury reduction, and increasing a sense of belonging and connectedness

Opportunities for Implementation in Australia:

- Unlikely by adopting the current NZ operating model, however, could be successful if a strategic relationship can be established with an existing national provider offering support services
- Alliance partner would need to have an understanding of Forest Industries and the various workforce and geographical challenges (i.e. rural and isolated)
- The WHSSC has identified worker wellbeing as one of the key activities in the 2023 workplan, which was endorsed by the Growers Chamber at the February 2023 AFPA meeting.

Further Information:

<https://www.growingnz.org.nz/great-workplaces/programmes/safetree-toroawhi>

<https://safetree.nz/2020/10/07/toroawhi-pilot-safer-driving-video-latest-performance-dashboard-certification-review/>

6.3 Establish a trans-tasman forestry safety alliance

Summary:

- Continue to engage in conversation with New Zealand forestry sector
- Many of the current issues and challenges are common to both countries
- Opportunity to talk about emerging issues and share learnings
- Connection of the 'brains trust of safety' both in Australia and New Zealand.
- Link FISC and FICA with AFPA and the Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA)

Expected benefits:

- Increased knowledge sharing
- Opportunity to establish a worker exchange program or networking for job seekers
- Sharing of guidance material and resources that can be amended to meet local jurisdictional requirements
- Collaborate on joint projects
- Reduce Risk
- Share R&D expenses

Opportunities for Implementation in Australia:

- FISM building relationships with FISC and FICA and has regular meetings to discuss challenges and opportunities in industry in both countries
- Next year FISM will recommend formalising a partnership, set terms of reference and agree on mission and purpose for the group, as well as some key deliverables.

6.4 Explore a FISC style agency / council for Australia

Summary:

- Scope of FISC advised to be anything that takes place 'Inside the gate', excluding transport activities (transport is excluded from FISC scope in NZ as this sits with the NZ Log Transport Council – a separate organisation)
- FISC challenge is building better relationship with the NZ Log Council

- FISC partly funded by Forest Growers Levy Trust. 9% (\$900K – covers secretariat). Have to complete an application every year (CEO salary, office manager, office amenities and travel)
- \$250K to run certification scheme (Safetree – similar to ForestFit)
- Accident Compensation Corporation funded (ACC) contract is \$500k for 3 years.
- Additional funding on a project basis - \$300K for the Torowahi, \$200K for project manager, \$100k for leadership studies
- FISC structure
 - Director
 - PM
 - Admin
 - Comms person (contract)
 - Torowahi
 - Accounts (part time)
- FISC Governance
 - Board
 - Worker reps
 - Forest industry reps
 - Contractor reps
 - Chair
 - Maori rep
 - Government reps (no voting rights)
 - Technical advisory groups
- FISC Challenges:
 - Forestry focus is on attraction of new workers to the industry, not of retention
 - When you centralise, it is much harder to operationalize
 - There is a lack of focus on health. FISC could do more to promote physical and mental health and better work conditions
 - Additional skills needed to communicate and influence
 - Industry wants more from FISC, but FISC didn't have more funding
 - Implementation generally not factored into the project (the project doesn't finish when the work does, how is it socialized, communicated, promoted)
 - The issue is that the main people that participate are the ones who are always going to participate but it is the ones who don't that really need to get on board
 - Forest growers don't hold each other accountable
 - How do you engage with the parts of the industry that don't usually engage?

Expected benefits:

- Introduce technical advisory groups
- A 'one voice' health and safety organisation working across the entire forestry sector
- Bring together the contractors and forest growers / owners into a neutral setting – safety is a shared goal and shared responsibility
- Opportunity to explore a stewardship focus (safety, environment, sustainability) model
- Centralised funding model and dedicated project management resources

Likelihood of implementation in Australia:

- Uncertain. Will require a comprehensive cost benefit analysis as well as 'buy in' from industry and government agencies.

6.5 Data that accurately depicts Forest Industries

Summary:

- FISC publish statistics about the forest industry via the SafeTree webpage.
- Monthly Incident Recording Information System (IRIS) reports uploaded showing information about the type, frequency and severity of incidents that occurred in that month.
- Quarterly dashboard published showing a snapshot of overall health and safety performance



Expected benefits:

- Industry in control of its own narrative
- Disassociation with agriculture and fisheries if forest industry regularly publishes its own statistics and metrics
- Improved social licence
- Assist with attraction and retention of workers to industry if forestry is perceived as safe

Opportunities for implementation in Australia:

- The WHSSC has identified collation of industry WHS Data for internal and external circulation and publication on the WHS webpage (e.g. monthly dashboard or annual report) as an activity in the 2023 workplan – which was endorsed by the Growers Chamber at the February 2023 meeting.

Limitations / Challenges to implement:

- Will require approval from all Growers that currently contribute to the FWPA monthly data series to approve publication of aggregate (deidentified) industry data.

Further Information:

<https://safetree.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Dashboard-March-2022.pdf>

<https://safetree.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-IRIS-Q3.pdf>

6.6 Enhance leadership and explore new ways of looking at risk

Summary:

- FISC run two workshops - Understanding Risk and Leadership
- The Leadership workshops were initially developed as a collaboration with FISC and the Learning Wave using ACC funding
- Understanding Leadership workshops
 - Delivered all over the country
 - 1000 participants
 - Leadership does not equal management
 - Peer to peer
- Where the skills have been embedded FISC have seen significant improvements in crews
- It was beneficial for FISC to deliver the workshops to mixed audiences, roles / age / gender / position in the supply chain

- The Understanding Risk workshops were developed by Lee Perry, as part of a FISC initiative, with funding from WorkSafe NZ.
- Outcome of the risk workshops was that the issues are universal and not always directly related to the work environment
 - Outside work pressure
 - Relationship problems
 - Problems with kids
 - Financial pressure
 - Fatigue
 - Pressure to perform
- Risk Workshops were designed to be delivered to workers, contractors (crew owners) and forest managers / owners in sequence to build on the information gathered in the earlier sessions.
- A key challenge for FISC was that even though these workshops were funded and were seen as beneficial, they couldn't always get good attendance because businesses didn't have the time to develop and invest in their people

Expected benefits:

- Create safer and more productive worksites
- More effective communication
- Develop emotional intelligence and provide skills to manage different situations
- Broader understanding of the link between understanding and managing risks well and how this benefits the team, their performance and the broader enterprise
- Empower employees to be more proactive in risk management

Opportunities for implementation in Australia:

- The 2023 workplan for the WHSSC has been agreed.
- Leadership and Risk are both included in the WHSSC strategic plan and should be explored in 2024. Opportunities for enhancing WHS leadership as well as culture programs that look deeper at the safety maturity of our industry, analysing how and why decisions are made and identifying ways to improve communication and collaboration to drive change should be a priority.

Further Information:

<https://safetree.nz/resources/leadership/>

7. CONCLUSION

The study tour to New Zealand was a worthwhile experience, and numerous opportunities for Australia's Forest Industry were identified.

A particular highlight was meeting Fiona Ewing who was instrumental in the establishment of FISC and the successful rollout of a number of their programs.

There is enormous potential in the establishment of a formal link between the various member organisations that operate both here in Australia and in New Zealand, given that the project has highlighted so clearly that the strategic objectives, workforce challenges and identified opportunities are so similar.

Many of the opportunities identified can be implemented easily and cost effectively utilising the existing expertise and resources in industry in Australia. That the AFPA Growers Chamber WHS Subcommittee, supported and led by the FISM takes carriage of some of the activities makes sense given that several of the opportunities directly link and align with existing projects outlined in the work plan – and working groups have already been established.

The Toroawhi program is doing well in NZ and well supported by both industry and government agencies, however it is unlikely that a similar program here would succeed – given Australia is a much larger country and our workforce is geographically dispersed. It makes more sense to build relationships with organisations that already have the reach and develop forestry specific programs whilst leveraging off their existing networks of program managers and counselors.

Serious consideration of the establishment of a Forest Safety Agency / Council with broad reach across industry is warranted, however requires considerable further investigation in terms of scope, membership, links with government agencies (e.g WorkSafe) governance framework, external oversight and influence and strategic impact. Whether this would sit within AFPA or be an independent organisation is also for consideration. The establishment of FISC was mandated by the Independent Forestry Safety Council and established quickly to address many of the serious deficiencies within the forestry sector in NZ. With the benefit of hindsight, many interviewed felt FISC had the potential to be more, and that transport was not included within the scope of FISC was a serious oversight. We have the luxury of taking our time and thinking through all the risks, challenges, and opportunities of such an organisation, the first question being how it would be funded, structured, and governed – with FISC receiving \$900K per year through the forest growers trust, \$500k over 3-years through the ACCC and additional funding for specific projects – a significant investment. This is not a small investment.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC) website www.fisc.org.nz

Forest Industry Contractors Association (FICA) website www.fica.org.nz

Log Transport Safety Council www.logtruck.co.nz

NZ Forest Owners Association www.nzfoa.org.nz

New Zealand Forest Service <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/forestry/>

Southern North Island Wood Council www.sniwoodcouncil.co.nz

Southern Wood Council www.southernwoodcouncil.co.nz

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