



Improving industry's capacity to develop and

12<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Carole Gardner  
Review of Mutual Recognition Schemes  
Productivity Commission  
LB2 Collins Street East  
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Carole,

**Ref: Review of Mutual Recognition Schemes, Productivity Commission**

ForestWorks, the national learning and skill development organisation for the forest, wood, paper and timber products industry wishes to make a limited response to the review process that is currently underway.

ForestWorks has the responsibility for the national industry skill standards, qualifications and assessment processes for the forest, wood, paper and timber products industry and is cognisant of the COAG agreements and the national training system agreements relating to recognition of qualifications.

The forest, wood, paper and timber products industry, like any industry has licensing requirements, for example, requirements for heavy equipment and lifting equipment, regulated by state WorkCover authorities. The forestry industry has specific state based industry licenses that apply to people working on state government land, harvesting state government owned trees. In all cases the licenses are almost exclusively based on the national industry skill standards and qualifications.

The above scenario provides two issues with regards to mutual recognition with New Zealand. The first (which applies to Australians as well) is the requirement to learn state specific forest management approaches prior to achieving the state licence. The second is far more problematic in so much that 95% of all forestry licences are based on Australian national competency standards and it would be impossible to achieve a licence without having these parts of qualifications. Therefore the lack of mutual recognition of qualifications between New Zealand and Australia provides a barrier to work and employment for New Zealanders in Australian Forest Industries (harvesting sector only).

Initial discussions have taken place as part of the review of the forest and forest products training package and the pulp and paper manufacturing training package between ourselves and the New Zealand Forest Industries Training and Education Council, who facilitate all training for the wood industries in New Zealand.

Work that is to be progressed includes mapping of units of competence and qualifications; analysis of units and to develop a more transparent or accessible statement for dealing with applications for mutual recognition.

**ForestWorks Ltd**

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We also have opportunities to investigate parallels in New Zealand as we develop skill sets that support licensing and regulatory profiles.

We would support any outcomes from the review that can assist us in ensuring that the qualifications between Australia and New Zealand are mutually recognised in an accessible and efficient manner for the person seeking employment and the employer recruiting.

Therefore we are supportive of any efforts that can be made to ensure mutual recognition in fact occurs at a VET qualification and competency unit level.

Thankyou again for the opportunity to provide a response to the draft review report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael Hartman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Hartman  
**CEO**