

# Pulp and Paper Manufacturing





Employs over  
15,000 people<sup>57</sup>

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Over 600 businesses<sup>58</sup>

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Industry value added  
\$2.51 billion<sup>59</sup>

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Revenue of \$10.75 billion<sup>60</sup>

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'Australia's Pulp and Paper Manufacturing industry generates products that can be found in virtually every business and household across Australia, ranging from the paper used in books and magazines to cartons, paper stationery, tissues, nappies, paper towels and sanitary goods.

A world leader in sustainability and innovation, the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing industry uses independently certified renewable resources, internationally recognised best practices for recycling, and continuously improves its energy/water efficiency and emissions.'<sup>61</sup>

Australia is reliant on the skills of the pulp and paper workforce to produce a range of essential everyday products, from printing and packaging materials to sanitary and medical supplies. Over the past few years, industry has continued to use its skills to meet a range of challenges, from supply chain issues and market disruptions to natural disasters and harvesting bans.

There continues to be strong demand for pulp and paper products, especially as industry adapts to meet consumer demand for more eco-friendly and sustainable options. Industry is exploring further expansion in this area, with a push for even more re-use and recycling in the production process through methods including bio-manufacturing and recovered paper. Through such innovations, the pulp and paper industry has an important role to play in mitigating climate change, growing regional communities and stimulating economic activity.

The national skills standards and qualifications for Australia's pulp and paper manufacturing industry are overseen by the Pulp and Paper Industry Reference Committee (IRC).

<sup>57</sup> IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

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<sup>61</sup> AISC (2022); *Industries / Pulp and Paper Manufacturing*;

<https://nationalindustryinsights.aisc.net.au/industries/pulp-and-paper-manufacturing>; visited: 31/08/2022



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## Industry Skills Report

This year, Skills Impact prepared a Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Skills Report, at the request of the Industry Reference Committee (IRC), to provide in-depth information about industry-specific issues impacting skills and training.

Australia's pulp and paper manufacturing industry is committed to sustainability and innovation, with key growth areas in food, retail and e-commerce packaging, and converted paper product manufacturing. While digitisation and remote working have contributed to the steady decline of newsprint and general paper consumption, there are opportunities for industry to expand into other areas such as bioenergy and biomass.

Industry continues to be at the forefront of the push for a circular economy where the cycle of 'make, use, dispose' is replaced by the philosophy of reusing and recycling, so that maximum value can be extracted from resources while minimising waste. Updated skills will be needed as industry moves towards these kinds of practices.

The pulp and paper manufacturing industry supports thousands of jobs in regional areas, including transport, logistics and supply chain operations in addition to those directly employed in mills. The industry is characterised by a very stable workforce with low attrition rates. However, new entrants will be needed in the next decade to replace the aging workforce.

The industry remains committed to and works hard to stimulate engagement and connection with the VET system. At the time of writing, there is no Registered Training Organisation (RTO) with any pulp and paper manufacturing (PPM) qualifications on scope. The Industry Reference Committee (IRC) continues to maintain that the VET system needs to support a more flexible and innovative delivery model that allows for workplace-based and workforce-based training and assessment under the supervision of an RTO. Long-term investment in the capabilities and skills of the pulp and paper workforce is crucial.

The 2021 complete review of the *Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry (PPM) Training Package* was an important milestone in the IRC's goal to have the qualifications accurately reflect the current innovative technology and operations of the businesses operating in the industry.

The IRC considers the training package to sufficiently reflect the functions of the industry and that priority work to support the industry will be in other parts of the skills system. There is a critical need to secure training pathways leading to VET enrolments in the new qualifications, skill sets and units.

With respect to future work to support engagement with the VET sector, the IRC has identified priorities that they recommend for future consideration, including:

- development of action plans to implement industry identified solutions to identify and address low enrolments and thin markets
- development of industry-shared resources to support the implementation and delivery of the PPM Training Package
- furthering the industry strategy to develop and maintain a sustainable RTO delivery model.



## Projects

### Project work between 2021-22

The following project was completed by Skills Impact, with support from ForestWorks, between July 2020 and June 2021.

The Pulp and Paper Manufacturing IRC oversaw the project development, as part of their responsibility to support engagement with their industry and to ensure the projects meet stakeholder needs.

The skills standards and qualifications updated as part of the following project were endorsed by the AISC and State and Territory Ministers in late 2021 and published on the national training register ([training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au)) within the PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package on 11 February 2022.

Research and consultation showed no further gaps in the skills standards and therefore no more projects were identified for the 2021-22 period.

Visit [skillsimpact.com.au/completed-projects](http://skillsimpact.com.au/completed-projects) for further details.

## Completed Project (started in the previous year)

### Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Review Project

Thanks to the input of everyone involved in this project, the entire PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package was updated and restructured to reflect current technology, terminology and processes. Qualifications, skill sets and units were merged where possible, to streamline learning and

better reflect job roles. Qualifications were reviewed so that skills in problem solving, workplace health and safety, and quality assurance skills were included as core skills. Units were updated to include skills for operating emerging technologies where applicable. Consultation with registered training organisations (RTOs) also took place, to improve the viability of training delivery.