New Harvesting Technologies Project

Briefing paper on the changes proposed to the tree felling and harvesting units of competency

March 2020

Purpose

To brief participants on the outcomes of discussions regarding changes to the draft tree felling and harvesting units of competency.

Background

Five key issues emerged during the consultations on this set of draft units. These were:

1. The use of prerequisites
2. The use of tree size limits in the definition of basic, intermediate and advanced trees
3. The addition of dead trees characteristics in the definition of intermediate trees
4. The level of specification in Performance Evidence
5. The use of second level bullet points in the Knowledge Evidence
6. The use of ropes in the units on falling intermediate and advanced trees

Response to issues raised in the consultation

1. The use of prerequisites

Action taken

No prerequisites will be applied to these units.

Reason

This decision was based on:

- Analysis of feedback – most individuals who provided feedback on the units did not support the use of prerequisites as this was seen to disadvantage experienced operators. Only two respondents supported the use of prerequisites, one for safety reasons and the other argued that prerequisites set an entry benchmark for individuals undertaking the unit.

- Analysis of the Training Package Products Policy - the policy states that:

    2.2.2 Pre-requisite units must only be used where essential to achieving the subsequent competency. They must not be used for the purpose of driving delivery order or sequencing.

    The word "essential" was interpreted as follows:

a) when competency cannot be achieved without first gaining particularly knowledge and skills from another unit[s].

b) when competencies from other units are considered necessary to ensure personal safety.

It was generally agreed that the use of prerequisites in this case would not comply with the definition of essential.

2. Tree size limitations

Action taken

No measurements are to be used in the definition of basic, intermediate and advanced trees. The following terms are to be used in the definitions in all fall trees and harvest trees units.

- Basic - small or medium size diameter trees that can be safely felled using standard and basic falling techniques
- Intermediate - small or medium size diameter trees that can be safely felled with intermediate falling techniques
- Advanced - large diameter trees, but not exclusively, that can be safely felled with complex falling techniques

Reason

This decision was based on feedback indicating that diameter and height limits (or ranges) may exclude trees that meet all the other criteria for basic, intermediate or complex trees.

3. The addition of dead trees characteristics in the definition of intermediate trees

Action taken

Dead trees will be added in the definition of intermediate trees as follows:

- Dead trees with minimal visible damage or defects that do not add significant complexity to the cutting technique.

Reason

This decision was based on feedback indicating that some dead trees have characteristics that would class them as intermediate trees irrespective of other features of the tree.

4. The level of specification in Performance Evidence

Action taken

The specifications in the Performance Evidence for the fall basic and intermediate tree units will be retained with the following amendments:

- Margins of error are to be removed

- Intermediate tree requirements will be redrafted to include a demonstration of four different techniques (standard cut, split back cut and forward-leaning and side leaning techniques) on 6 trees, by performing the Standard scarf and Humboldt scarf at the agreed specifications on 2 of the 6 trees. This considers that these cuts and specifications are not appropriate for every situation and showing on 2 of the 6 trees allows for flexibility.

Reason

The issue of prescriptive cutting requirements in the Performance Evidence for these units was discussed at length. The main reason for introducing the specifications was to provide a clear assessment benchmark. This was generally agreed to be useful, but it was felt the original text tended to be overly prescriptive and that a form of words which more closely reflected the Australian Standard was required.

5. The use of second level bullet points in the Knowledge Evidence

Action taken

*K*nowledge items with second-level bullet points are to be consolidated to remove duplication and improve assessment efficiency without downgrading the level of knowledge required for the task.

Reason

This decision was based on feedback indicating that the use of second level bullets led to repetition, the generation of unnecessary or excessive knowledge requirements, and the introduction of knowledge requirements that may not be relevant to all workplace contexts.

6. The use of ropes in the units on falling intermediate and advanced trees

Action taken

Explicit requirements about the use of ropes in the fall intermediate and advanced trees units are to be removed and be replaced with the following Performance Criteria:

> PC 3.8 Assess need, safety and suitability of an industry approved technique and associated equipment to control tree fall

> PC 4.2 Apply an industry approved technique and equipment to ensure that the tree falls in the direction of the scarf cut

Where industry requires the use of ropes in falling operations, RTOs must ensure that learners complete relevant supporting units of competency such as:

- AHCARB317 Dismantle trees
- FWPHAR3213 Conduct mechanically assisted tree falling operations

If these units are deemed to be unsuitable, the IRC should be advised of the need for a new unit.

Reason

The use of ropes in the fall intermediate and advanced trees units was seen to introduce new skill and knowledge requirements that broaden the scope of the unit and may not be relevant to some users of the unit.