



Pulp and Paper Manufacturing

Paper products are in our households, offices, hospitals, food outlets and public buildings – from tissues and toilet paper, medical and sanitary products, to packaging and printing.

These are all produced by the pulp and paper industry. While consumers have moved towards more digital and online habits, many paper products remain in high demand – especially packaging and family care products in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to keep up with ongoing demand in a sustainable way, industry is pushing for more re-use and recycling in the production process, allowing for the maximum value to be made from the materials and resources available. Industry requires support for skills in areas such as bio-manufacturing and recovered paper, so that work can be conducted in a safe, effective, and consistent manner.

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).

Employs over

30,000 people

Over

1,580 businesses

Contributes

\$3.3 billion

to Gross Domestic Product

Revenue of

\$16.7 billion

(Source: IBISWorld Industry Wizard, 2020)

Skills Forecast

Annual update and proposed projects for 2020-2021

This year's Annual Update to the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work (Skills Forecast) proposed two key projects for 2020 – 2021 and identified specific changes to the industry environment.

There have been major impacts on the pulp and paper manufacturing industry this year, from drought, bushfires and COVID-19. There has been unforeseen and record demand for products such as toilet paper, tissues, medical, sanitary and packaging products as well as a recovered materials export ban.

At the same time, the industry has continued with its push for a circular economy and moving towards bioenergy and biomass opportunities. There have been sectoral changes, highlighted by consumers increasingly moving online and digital, Australian grocery stores moving to reduced paper quality and the closure of mill sites.

Without any registered training organisations (RTOs) delivering the PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package, training continues to occur on-the-job. It is provided by in-house subject matter experts, often utilising the training package qualifications and units to design activities. The industry remains strongly committed to engaging with the national VET system. Two projects have been proposed (summarised below), which aim to re-establish formal VET training within the sector.

Projects

Projects for 2020-21

The following project has been approved by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) for 2020-21.

Review Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Training Package

This project will review and rationalise the PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package, identifying any possibilities for the utilisation of cross-sector units and ensuring accredited qualifications exist with core competencies supported by a larger bank of electives. It is believed that such a rationalisation will assist in attracting registered training organisations (RTOs) back to the sector. A range of electives will allow training providers to tailor the qualification to the needs of the learner. This project would be complemented by the project proposed below, which would support the development of standardised resources and materials that could be made available online.

The following project will be considered in the second half of 2020.

Training and Assessment Materials

Without any registered training organisations willing and able to deliver the PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Training Package, this project will develop a suite of nationally consistent training and assessment materials to support technical units of competency. The industry has specialised training needs and is strongly committed to remaining engaged and represented in the national VET system. The inability of an RTO to provide technical expertise on-site is what deters prospective RTOs. The IRC has developed a strategy to re-engage with the VET sector through an industry-led partnership between stakeholders, enterprises and an RTO. Training and assessment materials are an important part of this RTO partnership model.

