

Forestry seeks trained field workers

Department of Primary Industries Forestry to help them overcome a shortage of workers in the field.

Due to expansion within the industry, it has been hard to sustain development because contractors are unable to find more willing staff to do the job.

The DPI Forestry has now approached the Kingaroy campus at the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE to set up a course to train people that want work in the field.

After successfully completing the course student's names will be added to a database which will be made available to contractors looking for trained personnel.

Plantation Development Officer, Neil Halpin, said that many people who begin working for contractors do not stay on the job, mostly because they have not had any training or preparation and understanding of the work they are required to do.

Mr Halpin said: "TAFE is considered providing basic hands on training to interested people so they know what the work is all about.

"They'll be taught forestry management tasks like pruning, thinning, spraying and planting.

"(The course) will give them the skills to do the job well when they start, and the opportunity to begin an interesting career which can pay well and lead to a good lifestyle."

The Kingaroy campus of the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE is now looking for people interested in a forestry career to call Workplace Training Officer Tamara Geritz on 41 604419.

DPI Forestry currently has 3 000 hectares of hardwood plantation, 20,000 hectares of Hoop pine and 700 hectares of private hardwood plantation in the South Burnett.

There is in excess of 140,000 hectares of plantation forestry in southeast Queensland and there are plans in place for further expansion.

Mr Halpin said: "The Australian plantation industry is developing quickly to meet the increasing demand for timber products and we have the seeds of a contractor base in the Burnett.

It is timely to build confidence in the industry through a professional training approach and we need more workers skilled in the very basics of forest management, which is why we have approached TAFE in Kingaroy".

Director of the Kingaroy campus of the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, Leeza Boyce said, "We want people who want work to contact us. We will give them the basic hands on training to succeed and ensure the forestry contractors can operate at full capacity".

Contact Carmel Bragg, SQ Institute of TAFE, 07 4694 1802 or Marcus Priaux, 07 4160 442 1.



DPI Forestry Plantation Development Officer, Neil Halpin, said more workers are needed in the industry for demand to be met.