

# WORK IN THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY HARD WORK DRIVES SUCCESS

writer **PETER WHITE** // photographer **IVAN TURDEICH**

**BLAKE ROIGARD** loves his job working in the Kinleith Forest for one of the largest forestry contractors in New Zealand.

The 23-year-old has been working for Thomassen Logging Ltd based in Taupō since he left school nearly six years ago.

“I’ve climbed the ladder quite quickly there. I was always quite keen to progress, to get better, and started learning how to operate the machines while I was still doing manual falling,” says Blake.

“I guess showing initiative has helped me. You can start learning new skills as soon as you are confident really, which is quite good. You learn not just how to drive the machines but how to maintain and fix them.”

Blake quickly progressed from manual falling, to driving the skidder and operating the processor, to his current job in charge of a falling machine. He also stands in for the crew foreman when he is away.

His goal is to move up to be a crew foreman and then hopefully one day to own his own crew.

“The falling machine is the last machine you learn. It is like a digger and it has a grapple on it that grabs the tree. It has a mechanical saw which cuts the tree and then the trees are laid down into bunches which are picked up by the skidder.”

It is precision work with a high degree of teamwork involved. Working in the Kinleith Forest is challenging – as it has quite steep terrain in places – but Blake says it is great to work outdoors in amazing scenery.

Blake went to Tauhara College in Taupō. He enjoyed the outdoor subjects most in Year 13, particularly Sports Science, Outdoor Education and Land Based Studies. He started working in the forestry industry during the school holidays in his last two years at school before he took up a fulltime role after he left.

“In the Land Based Studies class you have to choose a subject like farming or forestry or horticulture,” Blake says. “One of my mates was doing forestry so I thought I would do it too.

“To finish the NCEA course assessment, we had to go out and spend time with a forestry crew so I spent a week working with them and really enjoyed it. They then asked me back the next holidays and it all went from there.”



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His advice to school leavers wanting a career in forestry – logging generally has good working hours and is more practical work than theory based work.

“The industry is full of good people. Try and find a connection with someone in the industry and push for a job or call contractors and keep trying until someone gives you a shot.”

Other benefits of working in forestry include – you get to move around different locations, work in a team with guys who are good to work with and keen to help, get picked up from your house and dropped off after work every day – plus it is

good to work in a sustainable forest as the trees grow and capture carbon and are replanted after harvesting.

There are great opportunities, and the ability to advance quickly, and you can make good money if you want to learn.



## KEY FACTS



- **BLAKE ROIGARD** HAS WORKED FOR **THOMASSEN LOGGING LTD** BASED IN **TAUPŌ** SINCE HE LEFT SCHOOL SIX YEARS AGO.
- **HIS GOAL** IS TO BE A **CREW FOREMAN** AND ONE DAY TO OWN HIS OWN CREW.
- **BLAKE** SAYS THERE ARE GOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS IN FORESTRY AND GOOD MONEY TO BE MADE.

## ONLINE



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