

APPRENTICE'S ATTRIBUTES SEE HIM SUCCEED FIT INTO THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

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A key message that Phil Williams, Forestry Account Manager with Competenz, would like to get out about forestry is it's a safe industry.

"The true test is, 'Would you let your son or daughter do it?' And the answer is yes," he says. "There are always a few cowboys out there, but most good crews are safe. There are very few crews left who take shortcuts these days – with health and safety the number one priority in the industry."

Phil is responsible for overseeing the forestry apprenticeships for Competenz in the lower South Island, matching apprentices with employers and checking in on them regularly during their apprenticeship.

One of his apprentices he is particularly proud of is Jordy Muru, who won the Southern Wood Council's 2020 Apprentice of the Year award for the lower South Island. Jordy works for MJ Logging, a four-man mechanised ground-based crew, based in the Geraldine area in South Canterbury.

"Jordy's main role in the crew is managing the skid site, including fleeting, sorting, stacking and loading trucks," says Barry Wells, Operations Manager – Harvesting at Port Blakely.

"This can be a high-pressure situation at times, but Jordy is good at his job. He's able to work calmly and doesn't lose his cool under pressure."

Barry says Jordy has a number of attributes that help him succeed in the industry.

"He has a good work ethic, he's cautious and he's safe. He asks questions, follows instructions and picks up new tasks quickly. He also fits in with the crew really well, which is important."

While enrolled in the Primary Industries Academy (Gateway) at Geraldine High School, Jordy visited Port Blakely's forestry operations and liked what he saw. Through the school programme, he started work experience visits, one day a week, with harvesting crews and after a few months he was offered a fulltime job with MJ Logging.

As part of his Competenz apprenticeship, Jordy also enrolled in the block courses at Mike Hurring's training facility at Balclutha. Five times a year for one-week blocks, he and seven other apprentices would fast-track their learning on big machines and harvesting machine simulators.

"The Primary Industries Academy has given me the chance to pursue a career that I enjoy," says Jordy. "My boss and everyone that has been involved with my training has helped to get me to be the best I can be in my job."

If you are safety conscious, practical, work well in teams, have reasonable strength and fitness, good work habits and a 'can do' attitude, a career in forestry might be for you.

Harvesting contractors fell mature trees, extract them to a processing area and cut the trees into log lengths ready to be shipped to market. Workers must have good mechanical skills and be able to operate equipment proficiently and safely – from chainsaws through to state-of-the-art advanced mechanised felling and processing machines.

There are a variety of jobs to do from preparing the ground, planting, pruning, measuring tree growth, selecting and cutting down trees through to using harvesting machinery, operating loaders, cutting and grading logs and maintaining equipment. Forest management and research are other opportunities in the industry.

Helpful experience includes making or fixing things and working with machinery. You will need good NCEA Level 1 passes in Maths and English and there are Gateway programmes available, which is the path Jordy has taken.



KEY FACTS



- **JORDY MURU** IS COMPLETING HIS **FORESTRY APPRENTICESHIP** THROUGH **COMPETENZ** AND IS WORKING FOR **MJ LOGGING**.
- HIS **MAIN ROLE** IN THE CREW IS **MANAGING THE SKID SITE**. HE IS PART OF A **MECHANISED GROUND-BASED CREW** BASED IN THE **GERALDINE AREA**.
- **JORDY** IS THE **SOUTHERN WOOD COUNCIL'S 2020 APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER** FOR THE LOWER SOUTH ISLAND.



For more information on careers in the forestry industry, visit www.forestrycareers.nz

For more information on apprenticeships in forestry through Competenz, visit www.competenz.org.nz