



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**INQUIRY INTO RURAL SKILLS TRAINING AND RESEARCH**

**SUBMISSION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY**

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## ***Introduction***

Agriculture represents a vital part of the Australian economy. In 2001-02 there were around 120,000 commercial farms in Australia and the sector employed an estimated 386,000 people. While agriculture's proportion of national GDP is relatively small at around 3%, it accounted for around a quarter of Australia's merchandise exports in 2003-04 valued at \$26.1 billion.

The processed food and beverage industry, which is a major user of Australian agricultural output, was Australia's largest manufacturing industry in 2002-03 with a turnover of \$65.9 billion. This industry comprises approximately 3400 firms and employs more than 187,000 people. The food industry relies to a large extent on high quality and competitively priced input from Australian primary producers.

A recent paper prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF) – *Australian Agriculture and Food Sector Stocktake* – highlights the economic importance of the agriculture and food industries is more pronounced in rural and regional Australia given the employment and income they generate in local and regional communities. The dependence on agriculture for jobs is significantly higher in inland and remote Australia than for the nation as a whole, while the food processing sector is also a substantial employer of labour in regional Australia.

There has been a steady rise in the average size of farming operations and the amount of capital invested in those operations over time. This increase in the size and complexity of business enterprises has been accompanied by a decline in the overall number of farm establishments. For example, in 2001-02 there were some 31% fewer commercial farms than in 1983-84. Despite these changes, the majority of primary production enterprises remain family owned and operated.

Like all other industries, the agriculture and food sectors are operating in a dynamic business environment characterised by the globalisation of markets, vertically integrated companies, rapid technological developments, changing consumer preferences, regulatory changes and concerns over the impact of their operations on the natural resource base. Producers require new and comprehensive skill sets to effectively operate in this new environment.

## ***The importance of education and training to Australia's rural industries***

The agriculture sector makes a very significant contribution to Australia's economic prosperity and it is important to maintain high quality education, training and career development to support a skilled agricultural workforce. There is a growing perception that the availability of skilled labour has become a constraint in many regional areas, particularly in relation to the food processing industry.

Increasingly, modern managers in the agriculture and food sectors will need high level business management skills, an enhanced capacity to adopt and benefit from innovation and ready access to skilled workers if they are to compete successfully in the domestic and global economy.

To a significant degree, available evidence suggests that better performing primary producers are more self-reliant and adept at investigating market opportunities, at researching customer requirements, at business planning and financial management, at managing risk and at adopting the latest farming techniques.

Risk management skills in particular are an important element of modern farm management and self-reliance. Primary producers manage a number of different risks, including those relating to climate

variability, finance, commodity prices and the environment. However adoption of risk management practices by Australian farmers is highly variable.

An education and training system that is responsive to the specific learning needs of our rural industries is critical to their ongoing productivity and competitiveness. Similarly, fostering a culture of self-reliance and continuous learning is also important to meeting the challenges of the new domestic and global economy.

Australian agriculture has traditionally been characterised by relatively low levels of formal education together with negative cultural attitudes to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge through formal learning activities. The uptake of formal education and training has also been influenced by the relatively older age profile of the sector, with the majority of owner/operators being over 45 years of age.

Training and development has also emerged as a critical component of Australia's biosecurity risk management framework. Maintaining and enhancing the specialist skills base in animal and plant health disciplines is seen as vitally important in underpinning Australian agriculture's highly favourable pest and diseases status.

### ***The role of Government***

Under the Australian constitution, State and Territory Governments have primary responsibility for education and training. However, the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) contributes approximately one third of the total government funding for training undertaken through the vocational education and training (VET) sector. Traditionally, the focus of the VET sector has been on delivery of accredited competency based training for new entrants and apprenticeships, including the rural sector, and basic technical/operational skills development.

The vocational and educational training system, including TAFEs and universities, industry and private sector providers, has a central role in delivering accredited rural training courses. The Australian Government is currently reviewing the operation and effectiveness of the national VET training system with a view to enhancing its flexibility and capacity to meet the changing needs of industry and the delivery of new forms of training.

DEST has released a discussion paper *Skilling Australia: New Directions for Vocational Education and Training* setting out possible models for a new national training system. DEST is consulting with key stakeholders including business, industry, training providers and other government departments on the directions outlined in this paper. Following the consultation process, a model for the new national training system will be finalised, and the Australian Government will begin a separate process with the States to finalise a new Commonwealth-State Training Funding Agreement. The outcome of this discussion paper will be important in the future development and delivery of education and training initiatives by Australian Government departments, including the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The Australian Government, through DAFF, also provides funding for a range of programs in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food industries. These include programs for the rural sector designed to promote skills development, research and development (R&D), adoption of innovation and industry capacity building.

### ***The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's involvement in education and training***

The Department's corporate mission is to increase the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of Australian agricultural, food, fisheries and forestry industries and enhance the natural resource base to achieve greater national wealth and stronger rural and regional communities.

There are a number of key programs delivered by DAFF that are focused on improving the self-reliance and competitiveness of the rural sector through:

- increased uptake of education and training by primary producers;
- increased involvement of rural industry organisations and producer groups in raising the profile of education and training;
- encouraging collaborative partnerships between industry, government agencies, research and development corporations (RDC's) and training providers in the development and delivery of education and training;
- improved capacity of rural industries to identify opportunities and threats and develop strategies to address them including gaps in skills and knowledge;
- improved adoption of innovation through the commissioning and dissemination of R&D;
- increased participation of women and young people in rural industry decision making through training, mentoring and enhancing opportunities; and
- improved adoption of sustainable natural resource management (NRM) practices through education and training;
- enhanced training in biosecurity (animal and plant health) preparedness and response procedures for dealing with pest and disease outbreaks.

In recognition of the diversity and complexity of providing assistance and the differing education and training needs of the rural sector, DAFF has consistently taken a number of key issues into consideration, including:

- Impact of a dynamic operating environment on rural skills needs;
- Industry engagement in education and training;
- The relevance of current education and training pathways;
- NRM education; and

- Research and Development and innovation.

### *Impact of a dynamic operating environment on rural skills needs*

The steady rise in the average size and complexity of primary production and food processing operations, including the increasing amount of capital invested and application of technology, means that the mix of skills required by industry is changing. Whereas in the past, education and training for producers in the rural sector was focused on technical and operational skills, the dynamic nature of the new domestic and global economy requires a new and more comprehensive set of business management skills.

This dynamic environment also requires a fundamental change in producer attitudes to continuous learning and an increasing capacity to adopt and benefit from innovation and best management practices. This not only includes the application of technology but a changed mindset and confidence that embraces innovative approaches to all aspects of a producer's business operation.

### *Industry engagement in education and training*

Feedback through surveys conducted by DAFF programs suggests that the commitment of industry organisations and producer groups to education and training is variable across agricultural sectors.

This is illustrated by the recent Aquaculture Industry Action Agenda report which revealed that the industry had relatively little understanding of current training pathways and that as a result was generally disengaged from training issues. (Key recommendations from that report are provided in the Fisheries and Aquaculture input to this submission found in the appendices).

There is therefore a need for increased collaboration between producers, representative organisations, the training industry and other key stakeholders to identify education and training needs and to design and deliver appropriate learning activities.

### *The relevance of current education and training pathways*

There is a range of education and training providers, both government and non-government, offering training opportunities relevant to primary producers. They include accredited and non-accredited introductory courses, through to advanced courses in general and specialist areas of farm business management.

The VET system, including TAFEs, has a central role in delivering accredited rural training courses. There has been criticism from various quarters including the food industry that the current VET system does not provide relevant training (including in key emerging areas which fall outside traditional curricula or in new skills areas) and that delivery arrangements are not flexible or easily accessible, particularly for businesses in rural and regional areas.

Given the size and importance of the food manufacturing sector to rural and regional Australia this is an issue that needs to be addressed. The National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS) highlights that the

future competitiveness of the Australian Food Industry depends on an appropriate education and training system targeted at building a highly skilled workforce with new and more extensive skill sets.

Similar issues were also raised in the findings of the McColl report in 1997 - *Rural Adjustment: Managing Change* - that resulted in the establishment of the FarmBis program which is driven by producer demand and has been widely supported by primary producers around the country.

Concerns have also been raised about the consistency of training outcomes and the need to improve supporting infrastructure for VET providers. Other issues for the food industry are the lack of articulation and clear progression paths from VET qualifications to tertiary course qualifications and the lack of national portability of qualifications at the tertiary level.

For the agriculture sector, more flexible and clear pathways need to be explored that facilitate the transition from the informal to formal (VET) education sectors. There should be higher recognition and ease of access provided for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC) processes, that acknowledge that skills and knowledge can be developed either through formal or informal learning activities or through work or life experiences. There also needs to be greater flexibility in current qualification and accreditation frameworks to recognise these various forms of learning and in facilitating credit accumulation and transfer.

An issue which is common across the agriculture and food sectors is that the VET system primarily focuses on curricula based courses for new entrants and on basic technical skills development. There is little funding for training and upgrading existing workers, especially those in the older age brackets. This is a particular issue for the agriculture sector, where the age profile is older than most industries.

DAFF is supporting training and education for primary producers through the implementation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for a broad range of industries as well as through specific support for the certification and accreditation through the Sustainable Industry Initiatives (SII) Programme.

To date, peak industry bodies have been best placed to raise awareness and develop tools which are most appropriate for the widest uptake amongst growers as well as providing appropriately targeted training programs. As growers are required to respond to changing market demands from increased or changed regulation, consumer preferences, community pressure and perceived productivity gains, there may be more demand on the behalf of growers to access formal training and accreditation schemes to improve their NRM practices. Such future demands would need to be met with the cooperation of the education sector.

The SII Program, funded through the National Landcare Program (NLP), seeks to improve Landcare and NRM practices through partnerships between industry bodies and the Australian government. There are currently 12 projects being funded under the SII covering a diverse range of industries. Two of these projects are delivering accredited training and accreditation programs to improve practices in the irrigation and fertilizer industries. Further information on these projects is included in Appendix 1.

## *Research and Development Innovation*

The *Australian Agriculture and Food Sector Stocktake* paper identified a number of issues for consideration in the field of research and development including:

- a more consistent national strategic agenda for agricultural research and development;
- more active involvement of research investors in collaboration with research providers developing programs of work;
- greater coordination of research activities across industries, research organisations and issues; and
- investment in human capital to ensure a skilled pool of research personnel in the future.

Effective dissemination of research and development outcomes to facilitate adoption of innovations by industry is important in maintaining productivity. Governments and industry have a vital role in promoting the adoption of the new research findings with the greatest potential benefits at regional and local levels. It will be important to the future development of agriculture that the reasons for differences in productivity growth between the agricultural industries be investigated, with a view to identifying the areas where the returns to future research – including factors in technology adoption – are likely to be the greatest.

### ***Agriculture – Advancing Australia (AAA): FarmBis program***

Through the AAA FarmBis program, the Australian Government has committed around \$150 million to improving education, skills development and industry capacity amongst Australian primary producers, including fishers, and rural land managers since 1998. This is in addition to the Australian Government's funding for a range of other initiatives designed to improve the skills base of industry. A comprehensive list of all DAFF programs of relevance to this inquiry is provided at Appendix 1.

The AAA FarmBis program is an Australian Government initiative jointly funded on a matching cash basis with the States. The program is designed to:

- provide financial assistance (via subsidies) to primary producers to undertake business and natural resource management training and education activities;
- forge collaborative partnerships between industry groups and other key stakeholders in the design and delivery of learning activities through seed funding of targeted industry education and training initiatives; and
- encourage the development of a quality, competitive and diverse rural industry training sector.

FarmBis was established following the 1997 McColl report which highlighted the need for Australia's farmers to improve their business and strategic management skills as distinct from technical/operational skills.

The program aims to foster a culture of “continuous learning” in the primary production sector, with producers encouraged to plan for their future training needs as part of their forward planning for their



business as a whole. Education and training activities funded by FarmBis include general business management (including strategic planning), financial management, marketing, human resource management (including leadership), natural resource management and production management.

The first FarmBis program operated for three years from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2001. It was regarded as highly successful, with around 82,000 primary producers across the country participating in excess of 115,000 training activities. The second program operated for three years from 2001-02 to 2003-04, with around 72,000 new participants and 22,000 repeat participants attending around 145,000 training activities. The third iteration will run for four years from 2004-05 to 2007-08.

In total, around 150,000 primary producers have now benefited from education and training activities supported by the program, with the most recent surveys of FarmBis participants indicating that 92% were able to incorporate their learning into the operation of their business enterprise.

A significant achievement of the program has been its impact on the way education and training is provided to primary producers. The rural training market has progressively responded to the demand driven FarmBis model by delivering activities that better suit the needs of producers both in terms of content and availability. The program's emphasis on short to medium courses delivered on a group training basis has proven to be very successful, with a growing number of producers participating in repeat learning activities after their initial experience.

The high recognition and wide support of the FarmBis program by primary producers across rural and regional Australia suggests that the Australian Government's investment in this program has been justified.

## *Conclusion*

FarmBis was established in 1998 to address what was identified as a gap in the current institutional arrangements for delivering education and training relevant to the rural sector. What was needed by the agricultural sector at the time was access to learning opportunities that accommodated the sector's special circumstances, including a mature age profile and issues of remoteness and time constraints.

In addition, to achieve improved self-reliance of the agricultural sector, the focus of education and training needed to shift from the traditional production oriented skills to higher order business management skills including risk management.

The demand-driven nature of the FarmBis model, which provides the opportunity for primary producers to determine their learning needs rather than be driven by a "top-down" supply driven approach appears to have been well received. Similarly, the emphasis of the program on short to medium term learning activities delivered on a group rather than individual basis has met producer needs.

The Australian Government, through DEST, is currently reviewing the Vocational Education and Training Sector with the aim of improving its flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of industry. DAFF will be taking a keen interest in the proposals for the development of a new model for the national training system to assess whether it better accommodates the needs of the rural sector.

The promotion of agribusiness and agricultural occupations as a worthwhile and rewarding career path for students and graduates has significant implications for the continued development and competitiveness of agricultural industries in Australia. It will become increasingly important for industries and employers to promote agricultural careers in a positive light to attract and retain good people to the various vocations.

Appendix 1.

Name of Programme	Commonwealth financial contribution	Are there other jurisdictions/agencies involved?	Description of Programme
<b>FarmBis</b>	<p><b>FarmBis III</b> \$60.7 m over four years from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2008.</p> <p><b>FarmBis II</b> \$52.046m 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2004</p> <p><b>FarmBis I</b> \$28.482m 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2001</p>	<p>The Commonwealth financial contribution will be matched with State and the Northern Territory contributions on a dollar for dollar basis.</p>	<p>FarmBis seeks to expand the range of opportunities for primary producers and rural land managers to access quality learning, to forge collaborative partnerships between key stakeholder's in the design and delivery of learning activities and to encourage development of a diverse and competitive rural industry training sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to increase the capacity of primary producers and rural land managers to identify, plan and access quality learning activities</li> <li>- to increase primary producers and rural land managers participation in targeted learning activities</li> <li>- to enhance the capability of primary producers to effectively manage change and risk and benefit from the adoption of innovation and best practice management techniques;</li> <li>- to increase the adoption of management practices that lead to greater resource sustainability, profitability and competitiveness;</li> <li>- to increase the awareness by primary producers and rural land managers of the benefit of life-long or continuous learning and the benefits of a business-orientated approach;</li> <li>- for greater stakeholder contribution with increased commitment from industry organisations to education and training issues; and</li> <li>- to encourage the development of a competitive and diverse rural education and training industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>FarmBis is widely recognised and supported by primary producers and rural land managers across rural and regional Australia with some 160,000 participants having attended at least one FarmBis supported learning activity.</b></p>
<b>FarmBis Australia</b>	\$12.247m 1997 to 2003-04	No	<p>FarmBis Australia provided grants to industry associations and companies to develop new learning activities to enhance the business management skills of Australia's primary industry sector. FarmBis Australia focused on the education, training and skills development needs of agricultural industries rather than individual business requirements.</p>

Name of Programme	Commonwealth financial contribution	Are there other jurisdictions/agencies involved?	Description of Programme
<b>Pork Biz</b>	\$832,864 - July 1999 to March 2002.	No	<p>Pork Biz was a national training initiative specifically for pork producers to improve the overall competitiveness of the industry through producer participation in a nationwide training program to improve their business management skills.</p> <p><b>It is estimated that around 250 producers in over 40 regional areas across Australia benefited from Pork Biz training. 348 businesses attended awareness forums. 194 businesses attended training workshops. 105 businesses attended on-farm consultations. 16 businesses attended BizCheck for pork groups.</b></p>
<b>Australian Dairy Industry Collective Bargaining Workshops</b>	\$40,134. – 2002-03 to 2003-04 (from FarmBis National Programme)	The ACCC was involved in the workshops to outline the law that generally applies in collective bargaining situations.	<p>A collective bargaining process was developed by Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd (ADF) for dairy farmers and dairy companies to enhance the way milk supply contracts are negotiated in the industry. The program of workshop meetings was designed to assist dairy producers understand and “de-mystify” the collective bargaining process which was gained for them by ADF. It was designed to overcome a general lack of understanding of what the process involved, the opportunities that it may create and the way in which it may be used by industry.</p> <p><b>Information forums reached a total of 540 individual dairy farmers who attended meetings in each of the major dairying regions.</b></p>
<b>ShowSkills</b>	\$1.8m (plus GST)	No	<p>Show Skills assisted regional and country agricultural show committee members and volunteers improve their business management skills. Under the guidance of the Advisory Committee, the consultants PDF Management Services <b>conducted 114 workshops nationally. 356 show societies participated in ShowSkills workshops by the end of the programme. The training phase of ShowSkills exceeded the target of 1000 participants.</b></p>
<b>Wine Business and Marketing Skills Improvement Program (WineSkills)</b>	\$500,000 - 2003/04 (Funded by FarmBis Australia)	No	<p>Improves the business and marketing skills and awareness of small to medium size (who crush under 1000 tonnes of grapes) wine businesses. <b>Twenty seven WineSkills workshops were held between August 2003 and June 2004. 550 participants from 426 businesses attended. Approximately 25% of eligible wine businesses sent one or more participants to the workshops.</b></p>

Name of Programme	Commonwealth financial contribution	Are there other jurisdictions/agencies involved?	Description of Programme
<b>WineSkills2 (Industry Partnership Programme)</b>	\$278,000 - 2004-05.	No	<p>- Provides an increased level of understanding of the process involved in making decisions about appropriate marketing strategies amongst small to medium size wine businesses.</p> <p>- An increased level of awareness by of the value of continually updating their business and marketing skills.</p> <p>- An increase in the ability of industry to take advantage of the extra funds available to businesses as a result of the WET rebate.</p> <p><b>A total of 16 workshops will be held. 138 people participated in seven workshops to date and the remaining nine workshops are estimated to attract at least a further 180 participants.</b></p>
<b>Australian Government rural research and development corporations and companies (rural RDCs)</b>	<p>From 1998-99 to 2003-04, the Australian Government has contributed some \$1.26 billion in matching contributions as part of the overall support for R&amp;D of 2.33 billion.</p> <p>In 2003-04, the Australian Government providing matching of 203 million as part of the overall support for R&amp;D of over \$460 million. The commitment is ongoing.</p>	No	<p>The programme was established by passage into law of the <i>Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act, 1989</i> (the PIERD ACT). Each RDC was brought into being by a regulation made under the Act. More recently, the RDC Model has evolved to include private industry-owned companies established by legislation that –in essence - mirrors the PIERD Act.</p> <p>The 12 rural-industry based RDCs are generally funded on the basis of the Government matching, dollar-for-dollar, industry R&amp;D levies up to a maximum of 0.5% of the industry's gross value of production (GVP). Two other RDCs, the Land and Water Resources RDC, and Rural Industries RDC receive substantial Government funding in recognition of the broad public interest in energy and environmental issues, and the need to pursue generic rural R&amp;D and support new and emerging rural industries.</p> <p>The Government's dollar-for-dollar matching contribution is designed to provide an incentive for the primary sector to increase its R&amp;D funding and to become more involved in R&amp;D priority setting and the adoption of outcomes, and also recognises that activities funded by the RDC generate a mix of public and private benefits. RDCs invest in training and extension activities particularly to facilitate adoption of R&amp;D outputs.</p>

Name of Programme	Commonwealth financial contribution	Are there other jurisdictions/agencies involved?	Description of Programme
			<p>Target Industries The RDCs cover cotton, dairy, eggs, fisheries, forest and wood products, grains, grape and wine, horticulture, meat, pork, sugar and wool. There are two umbrella RDCs: RIRDC and Land and Water Australia.</p> <p>The legislated objectives for the RDC Model focus on expanding Australia's rural R&amp;D effort, improving its efficiency and effectiveness by investing in high priority areas, and enhancing industry's international competitiveness through more effective uptake of research results. Industry and Government work in partnership to pursue R&amp;D to advance the interests of industry as well as those of the wider public. As a part of these broad objectives, the RDCs invest a portion of their funds in training and extension activities for levy-payers, where the RDC board decides that such activities are appropriate, in order to foster adoption and utilisation of R&amp;D outputs. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Australian Pork Limited developed and delivered the <i>Pro-Hand</i> training course to improve the confidence, attitudes and behaviours of new stockpersons, improving pig welfare and herd profitability;</b></li> <li>- <b>In 2003, 55% of growers in Australian Wool Innovation's <i>Bestwool 2010</i> program made major changes to their business as a result of the program;</b></li> <li>- <b>Fifty percent of the cotton production area is now audited against the industry's own best management practices program – developed by cotton RDC, Land and Water Australia and the MDBC - with a target of 80% by 2007;</b></li> <li>- <b>New production, financial and environmental practices presented in Meat and Livestock Australia's sustainable grazing systems workshops have been adopted by over 8,000 producers;</b></li> <li>- <b>Adoption of the Sugar RDC canegrub integrated pest management strategy by canegrowers in the Burdekin area has reduced pest damage and yielded cost savings of \$4 million.</b></li> </ul>

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<b>Cooperative Venture for Capacity Building</b>	\$750,000 over three years	Managed by RIRDC in conjunction with a number of R&D Corporations	<p>The Cooperative Venture for Capacity Building in Rural Industries Project (Cooperative Venture) was established in 2001 by R&amp;D Corporations in consultation with the department to enhance capacity building in rural industries in Australia.</p> <p>The goal of the Cooperative Venture is to instigate and support learning by farmer and rural communities in order to position rural communities to prosper and grow as Australian agricultural industries adapt to global change. The Cooperative Venture aims to provide primary producers the opportunity and skills to obtain the information and education needed to embrace innovation.</p> <p>The Cooperative Venture has commissioned research to better understand the issues impacting on capacity building in rural industries and identify effective and innovative approaches to improve the uptake of research outcomes at the farm level.</p>
<b>Dried Vine Fruits Industry Partnership (Industry Partnership Programme)</b>	\$556,500 - 1 November 2004 - 30 June 2005.	No	<p>The Industry Partnerships programme improves the Australian dried grape industry's profitability, sustainability and competitiveness through the completion of five separate but related projects (<u>Producer training and skills development</u>; Benchmarking and business management; Future industry planning; Provision of valuable technical information resources; and Researching domestic market requirements)</p> <p><u>Pilot Grower Training Programme</u> - The project will implement a pilot training programme to revise the existing dried grape industry training programmes. Development of this pilot training programme was supported by DAFF funding (FarmBis) in 2003-04. The resulting revised training programme will be available for industry-wide uptake in 2005-06. <b>There are 5 workshops with 20-25 participants per workshop.</b></p>

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<b>Women in Rural Industries Program (Industry Partnership Programme)</b>	Approved funding of \$889, 000 from 1997-1998 to 2005-2006.	One initiative has been delivered in partnership with the Rural and Research and Development Corporations	<p>Initiatives seek to increase the profile and contribution of women working in rural industries through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mentoring and advice to facilitate the development of a pathways and encouragement to pursue pathways to increased participation in rural industries;</li> <li>- partnerships with industry to deliver skills courses;</li> <li>- encouragement of industry to actively seek the contribution of women; and</li> <li>- building knowledge among women of the opportunities for involvement in industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Program has provided individual skill development opportunities and support for national rural women’s non-government organisations. These opportunities have enhanced rural women’s ability to contribute to and participate in rural industries.</b></p>
<b>Young People in Rural Industries Programme (Industry Partnership Programme)</b>	Approved funding of \$3.590m from 1999-2000 to 2005-2006.	One initiative has been delivered in partnership with Austrade and another with the Departments of Family and Community Services, Health and Ageing, Education, Science and Training and Transport and Regional Services	<p>Initiatives seek to increase the profile and contribution of young people working in rural industries through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mentoring and advice to facilitate the development of a pathways and encouragement to pursue pathways to increased participation in rural industries;</li> <li>- partnerships with industry to deliver skills courses;</li> <li>- encouragement of industry to actively seek the contribution of women; and</li> <li>- building knowledge among young people of the opportunities for involvement in industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Program has provided individual skill development opportunities and support for national young people’s non-government organisations. These opportunities have enhanced young people’s ability to contribute to and participate in rural industries.</b></p>



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<b>AAA Farm Help – Supporting Families Through Change. Advice and Training Grant</b>	\$17.205m - 1997-98 to 2005-06.	The AAA Farm Help – Supporting Families Through Change Programme (Farm Family Restart Scheme 1997 – 2000) is administered by Centrelink.	The ‘Advice and Training’ grant helps farmers in severe financial difficulties to access information and training to help them improve their financial situation either on or off the farm. The grant of up to \$5,500 (including GST) covers professional advice and training costs and is available to anyone on the Farm Help programme. Activities can also include related reasonable travel, childcare, accommodation costs and up to \$500 for computer software. <b>1997 to year to date 12,674 Advice and Training Sessions have been undertaken.</b>
<b>Agricultural Development Partnership Programme (ADP)</b>	\$1.426m. - 2001-02 - 30 June 2005.	Each ADP project is delivered in conjunction with the State and relevant community group. They are governed by a Commonwealth/ State agreement.	The ADP assists regional communities and their agricultural and other primary industries, facing commercial pressures, to achieve the adjustment necessary for international competitiveness and long term economic, social and environmental sustainability. It is a catalyst program to both stimulate and position regional areas and their industries for change, and to establish an on-going culture of risk management, continuous learning and market orientation. The 'Developing Sustainable Rangelands' ADP project aims to achieve improvements in business management skills throughout the region; promote innovation and diversification in the pastoral industry; and further develop community capacity. Specifically in relation to the business planning, training and workshop activities, this project was developed in response to an identified need for pastoralists to develop business plans to ensure the ongoing sustainability of pastoral businesses within the region. A survey of pastoralists in the region identified a need for skilling in: financial planning, managing employees, sheep nutrition, lamb reproduction/weaning, and feed lotting.  Due to the geographical isolation of many producers, Outback SA, a regional community management committee, has set up a website which provides an information base, gateway and linkages, for Rangeland pastoralists to access information and skilling.  Programmes include Northern Adelaide Plains, Kangaroo Island, South

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			<p>East Dairy, Developing Sustainable Rangelands and North East Agricultural Region.</p> <p><b>Both the Northern Adelaide Plains and Kangaroo Island (SA) projects contain training measures which have been identified by the local community as being required. In the NAP, this includes EMS and natural resource management training and awareness; on Kangaroo Island, EMS as well as quarantine and biosecurity training and awareness have been identified as key elements. The South East Dairy project has established a training program for South Australian small cheese makers through an agreement with the Gilbert Chandler Campus of the University of Melbourne. The training package involves block training in South Australian processing facilities managed by TAFE at Regency Park, Adelaide</b></p>
<p>- <b>Rural Partnership Programme (RPP)</b>  - <b>Central North East Farm Assistance Programme (CNEFAP) - West 2000 Plus</b></p>	<p><b>RPP</b> - \$46.17m commenced 1994, currently winding down.</p> <p><b>CNEFAP</b> - \$2.0m (programme completed)</p> <p><b>WEST 2000 Plus</b> \$5.91m - July 02 to Dec 08.</p>	<p>Each regional programme is delivered in conjunction with the State and relevant community groups. They are governed by Commonwealth/ State agreements.</p>	<p>The Programmes are regionally rather than industry focussed however the key industry in the region is often the centre point of the strategy. For instance, the WEST 2000 Plus programme targets principally wool/sheep and beef growers while the Riverland RPP focuses on horticulture (principally grape/dried fruit) and the primary target of the MIA PowerPACT RPP was citrus growers.</p> <p>The programmes provide funding at a regional and enterprise level to meet the costs of activities that promote and encourage industry adjustment, including training and advice. Regional communities identify the specific adjustment needs of farmers in the region, and in most regional programs this has included some form of training, reskilling and/or business planning. In the MIA PowerPACT RPP lack of business planning was identified as a key issue in the region. In order to meet the perceived demand and ensure consistency in the planning process, a dedicated business planning service was contracted into the region for the duration of the RPP.</p>

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			<p><b>Uptake differs for each project. Under WEST 2000 Plus, training and skills development was aimed at improving business, management and technical skills of landholders in the Western Division. Funds were also allocated to facilitate the entry and retention of young farmers (under 35 years) through awareness raising and capacity building activities broad cross section of training and skills development grants have been taken up by 1662 participants at a cost of \$1,220,000. This included an innovative men of the outback health programme attended by 135 men which was a direct result of feedback from community members. Also 100 delegates attended a two day Young Farmer Forum and subsequently 30 delegates have attended rotating farm tours in the Western Division.</b></p> <p><b>Under the MIA PowerPACT, 335 farmers applied to participate in business planning workshops, with 242 going on to complete a business plan. Under the Riverland (South Australia) RPP over 2,300 applications were received for measures including business planning and re-skilling.</b></p>
<p><b>Peri-urban dwellers and biosecurity: a scoping study</b>  <b>Peri-urban dwellers: biosecurity risk identification</b></p>	<p>Internal DAFF projects  - PIAPH funding provided to Bureau of Rural Sciences  \$35,000 - 2003-04,  \$99,500 - 2004-05.</p>	<p>Yes – information has been sought from other jurisdictions. State agency staff have advisory roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examines existing DAFF databases and other information sources to help identify groups posing biosecurity risks and select appropriate case study locations</li> <li>- Selects and conduct case study research in identified locations</li> <li>- Reports case study findings to follow-up workshop of key stakeholders to seek comment and finalise the resulting report.</li> </ul>

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<b>Centre of Excellence for Training in New Technologies</b>	Nil. ANU, DEST, DAFF and industry working group first met Nov 2004 to identify funding options.	Yes. Peak industry organisations, national and state universities (ANU, Melbourne University, Southern Cross) and the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation	Forest and wood products industries develop training facilities focussing on new technologies to provide skill enhancement and support uptake of new technologies in the forest and wood products industries.  <b>A high level industry/government working party has been formed to progress this initiative</b>
<b>Industry Data Collection Survey Report by the Forest and Forest Products Employment Skills Company and commissioned by the Forest and Wood Products Council through the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC)</b>	\$0.89m late 2003 – June 07	The FWPRDC is 50% funded by Australian Government and 50% by industry	Identifies the level of employment in the Forest and wood products industries, the skills of those employed and future needs of the industry. The database will be used to better identify priority areas and gaps for training and skills <b>Performance indicator contract is being run by the RDC.</b>
<b>National Indigenous Forestry Strategy</b>	To be launched in the near future, after two year development and consultation phase DEWR and Indigenous Business Australia are providing the funding to implement strategy	National strategy, seeking collaboration with States/Territories	Capacity building to improve the knowledge and skills base is a key factor in achieving higher levels of involvement by Indigenous Australians in the forest and wood products industries
<b>NRM Facilitator Network</b>	\$36m over three years	States/Territories,	The focus of the network is to deliver key information and communicate

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	03-04 to June 06 from the Natural Heritage Trust.	regional bodies and local government associations are network partners. Land Councils / Aboriginal corporations.	<p>the intent of NRM policies and programs as well as to engage key stakeholders in the regional delivery of NRM. The NRM Facilitator network is working towards four key objectives, that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved understanding by key stakeholders of Government NRM policies and programs;</li> <li>- Improved capacity of key stakeholders to influence development of Government NRM policies and programs;</li> <li>- Improved engagement and participation by key stakeholders in regional NRM processes;</li> <li>- All achieved through an effectively functioning national network of NRM facilitators.</li> </ul> <p>Extension and advisory services to the agricultural industries: The network of facilitators throughout Australia are available to assist land managers and industry groups across a range of NRM issues, including access to expert advice and information. In addition, the Australian Government jointly funds, with state, territory and local governments, regional organisations, industry and community groups, over 650 local and regional level facilitators and coordinators to support the move to improved NRM practices.</p> <p>The NRM Facilitator network comprises: <b>30 Australian Government NRM Facilitators based in the states and territories; 65 regional NRM facilitators based in the regional bodies around the country; 8 local government facilitators based in the local government associations; 13 indigenous land management facilitators based within a range of organisations.</b></p>
<b>National Landcare Program (NLP)</b>	The first full financial year of the NLP was 1993-94. Expenditure until 2005-06 has been over \$880 million	For the Community Support component of the NLP, funding is directed to on-ground activities	The focus of the Program is on sustainable agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) in rural and regional community landcare groups and Australia through strategic investments and industry engagement. The principal goal from the NLP is increased sustainability, profitability and competitiveness of Australian primary industries. Training for primary

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	(including \$211 million through the Natural Heritage Trust from 1996-97 to 2001-02). Funding for the Program is in place until 30 June 2008.	undertaken by landcare, industry and other volunteer groups, as well as, where appropriate, local government. Matching funding, cash and/or in-kind is required.	industries is an eligible activity for NLP funding where this significantly increases the uptake of sustainable agricultural and NRM practices.  <b>The Australian Government, through the NLP, currently also funds 68 coordinators throughout Australia who are available to assist land managers and industry groups across a range of NRM issues. This consists of seven State Landcare coordinators (one for each state and the Northern Territory) and 61 community level coordinators.</b>
<b>The Sustainable Industry Initiatives Program</b> <i>National Irrigation Industry Certification and Training Framework and FERTCARE</i>	Irrigation: \$510,000 Fertilizer: \$385,000	Funding is directed toward peak industry bodies, and there are in-kind contributions from the peak bodies. All funded bodies are encouraged to engage with regional and state organisations in the delivery of their projects.	<p>The Irrigation Association of Australia is delivering the National Irrigation Industry Certification and Training Framework which sets to reward the skills and knowledge of its practitioners through a national certification framework for best irrigation management and installation. This project aims to develop a learning package for use by training providers such as TAFE colleges. There are currently 20 registered training organisations which have indicated their interest to be partners for the delivery of competencies for certification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Australian Fertiliser Services Association and the Fertilizer Industry Federation of Australia are delivering the FERTCARE project. FERTCARE is a national training and accreditation program which aims to effectively manage the environmental risks associated with fertilizer use and contributes to water quality improvement and soil health through increased effectiveness of fertilizer application. Training is provided for people involved with logistics, sales staff and advisers, and training is specifically tailored for each group.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>The National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS)</b></p>	<p>Refer to funding indicated in the description of programme.</p>	<p>State government and industry involvement and support.</p>	<p>The National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS), a government-industry partnership to develop the processed food industry which commenced in 2002, recognized the critical linkages between industry competitiveness and high skills levels. The NFIS highlights that the future competitiveness of the Australian food industry depends on an appropriate education and training system targeted at building a highly skilled workforce with new and more extensive skill sets. This in turn will support and drive innovation and increased productivity.</p> <p>The extent to which opportunities and growth can be realized for the food industry will also be dependent on the capabilities and skills of food industry managers. These issues also apply to the rural sector and are significant for the food industry because it relies to a large extent on high quality and competitively priced input from Australian producers.</p> <p>A number of NFIS initiatives, while not specifically aimed at rural skills training, do contribute to building skills in food industry sectors directly related to rural industries and to skills development along the food supply chain from on-farm activities through to food manufacturing. Key NFIS skills initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The food industry management education program being delivered by Monash University developed with an NFIS grant of \$345,000;</li> <li>- A total of \$10 million funding provided for two Centres of Excellence in Food Safety and in Functional Foods including for skills and expertise development and research in these two areas;</li> <li>- Activities to build supply chain management capabilities including to improve and increase the adoption of food chain management practices under the Food Chain Program; and</li> </ul> <p>Activities to enhance food safety auditor training and certification, including \$117,000 to develop four core units of food safety auditor competency and guideline standards with the Australian National Training Authority and the National Food Industry Training Council.</p>

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<p><b>New Industries Development Program (NIDP)</b></p>	<p>Whole NIDP worth \$34m over 2000-01 to 2010-11 including approximately 15% of budget to skills.</p>	<p>Yes. State governments and industry.</p>	<p><b>Over the last five years, 69 NIDP scholarships have been awarded to agribusinesses. The value of the scholarship was up to \$30,000 (excl. GST) with a three day Business Readiness Workshop included. Due to reduced annual budgets, this dropped to \$12,500 (excl. GST) per scholarship.</b></p> <p>The <b>Business Readiness Workshop</b> aims to help the future business development of NIDP grant and scholarship recipients. The aim is to improve business acumen and develop planning skills with a focus on raising capital, financial management, strategic leadership, risk management and enterprise culture matched to each stage of their business growth cycle.</p> <p>NIDP also has a range of tools and learning material that can help small to medium agribusinesses and managers improve their skills and build their competitive edge. The following are available for free, on request from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry or on the Department's website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Made in Australia</b> publication. This publication is produced using the experiences of NIDP grant recipients to highlight small to medium agribusiness issues. It is designed as a reference and a learning tool.</li> <li>• <b>Agribusiness Marketing- Learning from Others CD.</b> This interactive CD shows how others manage their marketing, and provides practical guidance to develop marketing strategies. It takes clients through a path of planning their approach to markets and provides the basis to align all their marketing activity.</li> <li>• <b>Forming and Managing Supply Chains in Agribusiness- Learning from Others CD.</b> This interactive CD was developed with help from the University of Queensland and National Food Industry Strategy Ltd, focusing on the experiences of agribusinesses that are implementing supply chain management practices.</li> </ul>



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agribusiness Educators Case Study Video.</b> This video contains 10 short case studies of innovative Australian Agribusinesses. It highlights the many issues that agribusinesses need to consider to turn their innovative ideas into a competitive business.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>AQIS Rural Veterinary Scholarship Program</b>	\$2.0m 2002-03 to 2005-06. Twenty scholarships altogether will be awarded over the period from 2003 to 2006.	No	The program increases the number of veterinary surgeons in rural practice. Each Scholarship lasts for two years. The first year offers financial assistance to Veterinary Science students in the final year of their degree. During the second year of the scholarship, recipients are employed by AQIS on a non-ongoing contract for eleven months and seconded to a rural veterinary host practice to gain work experience and undertake four to six weeks of development training. The development program is designed to give recipients an understanding of the vital role AQIS has in protecting the Australian environment and valuable agricultural domestic and export industries. Rural veterinary practices are developing improved awareness of AQIS responsibilities and requirements through this arrangement, and applying this broader knowledge in their day-to-day work.
<b>Rural Training by the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy</b>	Routine AQIS business no specific funding.	No	The Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) – a group within the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service – has a long history of collaborative work with remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across northern Australia. Since its inception over 15 years ago, NAQS has had a policy of employing indigenous quarantine staff in the strategically important quarantine regions of Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area. NAQS now employs indigenous quarantine officers on inhabited islands in Torres Strait and at Bamaga on the northern tip of Cape York Peninsula. Following on from this NAQS has turned its attention to strengthening its links and collaboration with Aboriginal communities across northern Australia and has since implemented a number of initiatives aimed at improving quarantine awareness and

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			<p>developing structural links with communities and ranger groups. In this respect, NAQS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continues to coordinate activities involving training of Aboriginal ranger groups and communities in exotic pest and disease surveillance. Rangers are often provided with equipment to carry out post-mortems and collect blood samples for quarantine purposes;</li> <li>• has been instrumental in the development of several quarantine modules that form part of the curriculum taught by the School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems of the Charles Darwin University. Similar quarantine theory has been included in education provided by Batchelor College (indigenous tertiary training college);</li> <li>• visits are made to remote coastal communities between Broome and Cairns as part of regular program activity to discuss quarantine issues, educate communities of emerging pests and diseases and distribute promotional material. NAQS realises that community support and assistance is vital to reducing quarantine threats and risks.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the NAQS program also accommodates inclusion of veterinary students and recent graduates on remote surveillance activities in a work experience capacity.</p>
<b>Rural Training in General AQIS Issues</b>	Routine AQIS business no specific funding.	No	AQIS, both through our regional and central office, provides informal training to a range of industries involved in import and export activities. This training is conducted on ‘as-needs’ basis on request or when changes have been made to AQIS legislation and /or requirements.
<b>Fisheries and Aquaculture “Making the most of Education, Training and Workplace Opportunities for the Australian Aquaculture Industry.”</b>	-	-	The aim of the Aquaculture Industry Action Agenda is to move the industry to a higher and sustainable growth path by identifying impediments to growth and removing them; by finding opportunities and acting on them; and Industry and Government working together with existing resources.

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			<p>As part of the Aquaculture Industry Action Agenda a consultancy was undertaken to identify the education and training needs to 2010 in the aquaculture industry including the current gaps and future opportunities.</p> <p>The project report is at Attachment A. It documents current provisions for aquaculture education and training in Australia; identifies the adequacy of current provisions to support growth of the aquaculture industry to 2010, and suggests strategies for accessing opportunities and addressing weaknesses.</p> <p>In essence, the project aligned current and future Aquaculture industry needs with capacity and responsiveness of training and education providers.</p> <p>The assessment of current and projected needs revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Australian Aquaculture Industry is expected to double production by 2010. However, a desire to improve efficiency in production will decrease participation by semi-skilled workers and increase the application of technology. This will substantially change the mix of skills in the Industry;</li> <li>• Industry has relatively little understanding of current training pathways (including the Seafood Industry Training Package (SITP)). As a consequence, Industry is generally disengaged in training. Development of information material (from this project) and greater utilization of the National Aquaculture Portal (<a href="http://www.australian-aquacultureportal.com">www.australian-aquacultureportal.com</a>) will assist in developing Industry knowledge of training opportunities;</li> <li>• Current training and education course content and pathways cover most of the needs identified by Industry as supporting planned growth in Aquaculture towards 2010 i.e. human capital development, business management, marketing and promotion, environmental</li> </ul>

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			<p>management. Indeed, new additions to the SITP, including the Leadership elements, provide for flexible workplace training in these key areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although there has been substantial change in Aquaculture programs offered by Australian Universities, they tend to underemphasize the priority discipline areas identified above. In particular, Aquaculture Engineering/technology is poorly represented in Higher Education courses. This finding is significant given the projected increase in application of technology in Aquaculture.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key recommendations are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harness and develop the social capital in the Aquaculture Industry via focus group engagement. Thus, experienced individuals, exposed to Industry development opportunities, will encourage greater participation by the grass roots. Similarly, access to Industry champions by government stakeholders via the focus group model will align government and Industry aspirations;</li> <li>• Extend the National Seafood Industry Advanced Leadership program to allow mentored support for Aquaculture Industry participants. Industry participants can link to the Leadership component of the SITP. Industry participants will be key drivers engaging grass roots participation in training and education.</li> <li>• Support and fund the engagement of Industry (e.g. by the Australian Rural Industry Council, the Human Capital Development program of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and FarmBis (DAFF and individual state programs)) to recognize the opportunity cost of participation away from the workplace.</li> <li>• Develop centres of excellence in Engineering, biotechnology, and aquatic health management to provide the specialist capacity needed rather than diluting capacity across several institutions. Intense bridging courses addressing prerequisites for higher education in Aquaculture is a practical and cost-effective way of providing realistic</li> </ul>

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			<p>training pathways. Intensive short courses in specialist disciplines is also attractive to Industry participants who cannot afford full time study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and support a network of assessors to facilitate workplace training and assessment with key individuals in each state responsible for developing, retaining and applying workplace assessment, Industry knowledge and advances in training practice to subordinate assessors. In this way, a relatively small pool of proactive engaged individuals can link training providers with Industry. The Community of Practice model for trainers provides a successful working example of this model.</li> </ul> <p>Specific fisheries investment through programmes such as the Fisheries Resources Research Fund (FRRF) has been limited on issues related to human capital development. This reflects the major role of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) in sponsoring research/programs that will lead to human capital development in the seafood industry. However the FRRF has over the last 4-5 years has been a regular sponsor of the SA Seafood Industry's "Seafood Leadership" program.</p>
<b>Training for Tasmanian Forest Workers</b>	\$4 million over four years commencing 2005-06	There may be consultative involvement by Tasmania in identifying target skills areas.	To provide training for Tasmanian forest and forest products industries workers in a range of areas in order to ensure the industry and its workers obtain maximum benefit from the industry development provisions of "A Sustainable Future for Tasmania".
<b>Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness Training</b>	\$250,000 per annum	States and Territories; CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory	Courses to increase ability of veterinarians to quickly recognise and diagnose an emergency animal disease
<b>Emergency Disease Response Training</b>	Part of annual Commonwealth	AgriFood Industry Skills Council;	Training packages include competencies mapped to job roles in AUSVETPLAN and PLANTPLAN. Trains government officials and

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	contribution to Animal Health Australia  Up to \$200,000	Animal Health Australia  Industry, Animal Health Australia	industry members in emergency response skills.  Training of up to 1000 Industry Liaison Officers to work in Local Disease Control Centres during a disease outbreak.
<b>Australian Veterinary Reserve</b>	\$1.13 million	Animal Health Australia; AgriFood Industry Skills Council	Training of nominated and accredited private sector veterinarians to undertake emergency animal disease roles as outlined in AUSVETPLAN. At 30 June 2006 100 AVR members have completed their training as field surveillance veterinarians and surveillance/tracing officers. A program for the ongoing maintenance of the AVR is currently being developed.
<b>AQUAPLAN 1998-2003 – Programme 4 Preparedness and Response</b>	Under the Federal Budget Initiative – Building a National Approach to Animal and Plant Health, \$3 million over 4 years was provided for AQUAPLAN 1998-2003. Of this, approximately \$500,000 went to Programme 4 training activities.		Under the auspices of the Federal Budget Initiative entitled <i>Building a National Approach to Animal and Plant Health</i> , the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) within the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry conducted 8 simulation exercises (involving state governments and aquaculture industry) between 1998 and 2003. These simulation exercises were designed to provide individual jurisdictions with training in emergency management and preparedness with respect to aquatic animal disease emergencies.  In 2003, a national simulation exercise (Exercise Tethys) was conducted, involving over 80 staff from eight government jurisdictions and 3 industry bodies. The simulation not only addressed issues of inter-jurisdictional communication and cooperation in response to an emergency disease incident, but also sought to heighten the awareness of these jurisdictions to the potential for incursions of emergency disease in Australia’s aquatic environment
<b>AQUAPLAN 2005-2010 Strategy 2 Harmonisation of approaches to aquatic animal health in Australia</b>	Actual budget to be confirmed.	The Australian, Northern Territory and State Governments and the Australian	Strategy 2 aims to harmonise approaches to aquatic animal health in Australia by providing the basis for an effective management system for emergency and endemic disease, and for international and domestic trade in aquatic animal products.

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		Aquaculture Industry are all contributing (time and money) to the implementation of AQUAPLAN	Under Strategy 2, one state-based simulation exercise will be held each year (from 2005-2010). These simulation exercises will be designed to provide individual jurisdictions (including industry) with training in aspects of aquatic animal health emergency management and preparedness.
<b>AQUAPLAN 2005-2010</b>  <b>Strategy 4 Education and training in the aquatic animal health sector</b>	Actual budget to be confirmed.	The Australian, Northern Territory and State Governments and the Australian Aquaculture Industry are all contributing (time and money) to the implementation of AQUAPLAN	<p>Strategy 4 aims to enhance education and training in aquatic animal health at all levels of teaching and at the field, laboratory-based and specialist levels. The four objectives of the strategy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 – to clearly define the current and future needs for aquatic animal health support among Australia’s aquaculture industries (established and emerging)</li> <li>2 – If required, to modify the current education and training structures to ensure Objective 1 needs are satisfied</li> <li>3 – To develop an accreditation/competency scheme for aquatic animal health service providers.</li> <li>4 – To provide training in the framework and operational aspects of aquatic animal disease emergency management.</li> </ol> <p>There are 7 projects under this strategy to address the education and training needs of the Australian aquaculture industry.</p>
<b>AQUAPLAN 2005-2010</b>  <b>Strategy 6 Appropriate use of therapeutics for aquatic animal health management</b>	Actual budget to be confirmed.	The Australian, Northern Territory and State Governments and the Australian Aquaculture Industry are all contributing (time and money) to the implementation of	Strategy 6 emphasises the need to use therapeutics safely in aquatic animal health and welfare. Under this strategy, sector-specific farm-level training courses will be conducted. These courses will provide training in the safe and appropriate use of chemicals in aquaculture.

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<p><b>Emergency Animal Disease Crisis Communication Training</b></p>	<p>\$5,000 per course</p>	<p>AQUAPLAN</p> <p>The Australian Government meets the costs of courses conducted in Canberra to train PR officers to have a public communication role in the National Coordination Centre. The States/Territories meet the costs of those courses held in State capitals for the purposes of training people for a role in a State Disease Control Headquarters of a Local Disease Control Centre.</p>	<p>Following the Foot-And-Mouth Disease emergency simulation in 2002 (also known as Exercise Minotaur), the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) led the development of an Emergency Animal Disease Crisis Communication training module. The development of this training module was seen as a necessary precursor for the establishment of a national pool of accredited public relations officers that could be utilised in the event of a major agricultural pest or disease emergency.</p> <p>To date, 220 government public relations officers across Australia have completed the training module and have been accredited for the purposes of the national pool. Of this number, 110 are from Australian Government Departments. Feedback from course participants has been very positive.</p> <p>In order to maintain the viability of the pool and ensure it is well resourced and capable of immediate deployment in an emergency, every 18 months training will be offered to public relations officers who have not yet had the opportunity to undertake the course.</p> <p>The training module has two components. The first covers basic disease awareness, roles in control centres, response mechanisms and information systems. This component includes information on powers, legal provisions, liability, occupational health and safety issues, the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement and AUSVETPLAN. The second component of the training module covers specific crisis communication issues, including definitions and principles, the role of the media, crisis communication at local, state, national and international levels, the design and implementation of crisis communication strategies, and the AUSVETPLAN Crisis Communication Manual.</p> <p>Following successful completion of the course and assessment tasks,</p>



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			participants are awarded a Statement of Attainment for the unit <i>PSPPA601A Manage Public Affairs</i> , a recognised unit of the Australian Public Service Training Package.
<b>The National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS)</b>	Refer to funding indicated in the description of programme.	State government and industry involvement and support.	<p>The National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS), a government-industry partnership to develop the processed food industry which commenced in 2002, recognized the critical linkages between industry competitiveness and high skills levels. The NFIS highlights that the future competitiveness of the Australian food industry depends on an appropriate education and training system targeted at building a highly skilled workforce with new and more extensive skill sets. This in turn will support and drive innovation and increased productivity.</p> <p>The extent to which opportunities and growth can be realized for the food industry will also be dependent on the capabilities and skills of food industry managers. These issues also apply to the rural sector and are significant for the food industry because it relies to a large extent on high quality and competitively priced input from Australian producers.</p> <p>A number of NFIS initiatives, while not specifically aimed at rural skills training, do contribute to building skills in food industry sectors directly related to rural industries and to skills development along the food supply chain from on-farm activities through to food manufacturing. Key NFIS skills initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The food industry management education program being delivered by Monash University developed with an NFIS grant of \$345,000;</li> <li>- A total of \$10 million funding provided for two Centres of Excellence in Food Safety and in Functional Foods including for skills and expertise development and research in these two areas;</li> <li>- Activities to build supply chain management capabilities including to improve and increase the adoption of food chain management practices under the Food Chain Program; and</li> </ul>

Name of Programme	Commonwealth financial contribution	Are there other jurisdictions/agencies involved?	Description of Programme
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activities to enhance food safety auditor training and certification, including \$117,000 to develop four core units of food safety auditor competency and guideline standards with the Australian National Training Authority and the National Food Industry Training Council.</li> </ul>
<b>National Food Safety Auditor Competency project</b>	\$116,000 contract with the Australian National Training Authority to develop and register core food safety auditor units of competency. Apr 2004 – May 2005	State regulatory agencies have provided comment on the draft units. The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing is providing definitions of high risk food businesses	Training units were specifically developed to improve the competency and consistency of Australian food safety auditors, audit duplication and thereby reduce regulatory costs for the food industry, including food producers, food processors and food service staff.  Further work is expected to start on developing units for high risk food safety auditors later in 2005.
<b>Biosecurity (Pest and Disease) Training</b>			<p>In June 2004, the Department requested Animal Health Australia (AHA) to manage, develop and deliver the initial Australian Veterinary Reserve (AVR) training course, as the first stage of a three year program of training activities. Participants in the training program were rural and regional veterinarians selected by the Department. Pre-requisites were registration with their local State/territory Veterinary Board, successful completion of the Accreditation Program for Australian Veterinarians (APAV) and current APAV accreditation. In 2005, the Department contracted AHA to train all AVR members for two AUSVETPLAN roles. As at 30 June 2006, 100 AVR members had completed their training as field surveillance veterinarians (FSV) and surveillance/tracing officer (STO).</p> <p>A significant risk in responding to a major exotic disease outbreak in Australia such as Foot-And-Mouth Disease (FMD) is managing the communications effort. Through a Departmental training initiative, a national pool of accredited government public relations (PR) staff to</p>

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			<p>undertake a communication role in a major pest or disease emergency has been generated. Currently 220 PR officers from government agencies have been accredited and future training is being offered in coming months including an invitation to industry groups and possibly private PR practitioners.</p> <p>While the course has been designed to assist an emergency animal disease response, the skills are entirely transferable to plant pest and disease emergencies, marine incursions, food safety, and counter terrorism incidents.</p>

## Supplementary Training and Capacity Building Activities

In addition to the information provided for the *Inquiry into Rural Skills Training and Research*, following are supplementary examples of training and capacity building activities undertaken through Dairy Australia; Meat and Livestock Australia; and Australian Wool Innovation.

### Dairy Australia

In August 2005 the Victorian Government (Department of Education and Training) announced the preferred providers of agriculture related vocational education and training in Victoria. It was announced that Goulburn Ovens TAFE is the preferred supplier of dairy related vocational education and training from January 2006. Dairy Australia has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Goulburn Ovens TAFE which provides for Dairy Australia involvement with Goulburn Ovens TAFE in the delivery of approximately 100,000 hours per annum of vocational education and training.

### Meat and Livestock Australia

The table below shows the uptake of a number of face-to-face MLA programmes designed to improve the adoption of R&D initiatives.

Face to face events	Number of activities	Producers engaged
Prime Time for prime lambs forums	17	1,895
Prime Time – Wean more lambs workshops	24	418
Prime Time – Making more from Merinos	2	379
More Beef from Pastures	86	3,200
EDGENetwork	123	1397
<b>Producer trials</b>		
More Beef from Pastures	11	186
Prime Time	7	187
Prime Time – Wean more lambs	14	752
<b>Other</b>		
Producer initiated R&D	90	3,667
Bestprac groups	25	312
Beefplan groups	12	110
Bestwool groups	75	2,400

- The ‘Prime Time’ forums deliver new science and findings to producers, helping them to implement on-farm change. Each series of forums is targeted towards specific production systems within the sheep industry.
- The ‘More Beef from Pastures’ regional expo delivers R&D outcomes to beef producers through a plain English manual, media advertisement and a series of workshops.
- The EDGENetwork is a range of practical workshop sessions and learning opportunities which help producers gain knowledge and develop skills to improve their business skills and livestock enterprises.
- Bestprac, Beefplan and Bestwool groups are self-initiated groups of producers aiming to develop improved and sustainable property management systems in whatever way they see fit, and to disseminate this to the wider industry.

### **Australian Wool Innovation**

In response to woolgrower and industry concern about shortages of appropriately skilled labour in the shearing industry, in 2004 Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) launched a three year national shearer and wool handler training initiative.

The programme aims to:

- support improved training arrangements for the training of shearers and wool handlers;
- facilitate the development of national training resources; and
- support improved national coordination of shearer and wool handler training

AWI is investing \$3.9 million over the three years to 2007 into this programme.