



**NATIONAL
INDUSTRY
SKILLS INITIATIVE**

A Commonwealth Government Initiative

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

This Statement of Agreement and accompanying Industry Skills Action Plan documents at a broad level the agreed actions for Industry and Government emerging from the Industry Skills Initiative. The attached Industry Skills Action Plan outlines in more detail the initiatives to address identified barriers to skills development for which industry, supported by government has taken responsibility. There may be further actions which will emerge as this Plan evolves and as elements are progressively implemented.

The Rural Industry Task Force agrees to undertake action against the attached action plan in five key areas:

- Marketing and promotion – leading to enhanced awareness among rural communities of career and training opportunities, and a bridging of the gap between unrecognised and recognised training programs;**
- Developing young people for careers in the rural industry – by increasing industry-school linkages that support more effective pathways to skills; and a focus on enhanced career information and advice, especially in respect of New Apprenticeship opportunities;**
- Making New Apprenticeships work for the industry – by enhancing and promoting cross-industry New Apprenticeships; strengthening the role of Group Training Companies; and continued marketing of opportunities in rural and regional Australia;**
- Attuning the VET system to the training needs of the industry – through the linking of FarmBis and other private sector training initiatives to Training Package competencies; providing opportunities for seasonal jobs to become year round career jobs; increased adoption of skills recognition procedures; and**
- Addressing skills gaps and shortages – through improved career models and skills pathways; the delivery of increased upskilling opportunities; development of training programs and strategies to address skill needs and gaps identified by the industry;**

and to report on achievements against these Action areas through a progress report by June 2002 and a final report to Government by June 2003.

The *Commonwealth* undertakes to assist with implementation of the Action Plan through support of the Rural Industry Task Force.

**Mr Wayne Cornish
Vice President
National Farmers' Federation
Chair, Rural Industry Task Force**

**The Hon Dr David Kemp
Minister for Education,
Training, and Youth Affairs**



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RURAL INDUSTRY

ACTION PLAN

Recommended strategies for action

*Suggested implementation time frames

S	short	within 6 months
SM	short-medium	within 12 months
M	medium	within 1 – 2 years
L	long	within 2 – 5 years

** Lead Agency

RSA	Rural Skills Australia
RTCA	Rural Training Council of Australia
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
NFF	National Farmers' Federation
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority

Holistic indicators of success - Nationally consistent training system for the rural industry
 Integrating informal short courses into the AQF
 Increasing awareness of career pathways within the rural industry

Target Area	Recommended Strategy	Priority *	Lead Agency**	Proposed outcomes	Determinants for Success
1. Marketing and promotion	1.1 A coordinated communication and marketing strategy promoting best practice in rural industry vocational education and training and careers is developed and implemented.	SM	RSA	Enhanced awareness amongst rural and metropolitan school students, teachers, parents and the community of career and training opportunities in the rural industry.	Increase in New Apprenticeships in rural related industries. Increase in New Apprenticeships in communities. Increase in VET numbers. TER scores improve in Agriculture.
	1.2 An audit of rural skills training and training providers is undertaken which would lead to a comprehensive directory of rural skills (competencies), training opportunities, training providers and career pathways.	M and ongoing	RTCA	Relevant information is readily available from a reliable source.	Register of VET courses (Ag & Hort) and providers at the State/Territory and National developed and made available on the internet. Includes details of courses accessible at local levels.
	1.3 Informal, unrecognised training programs and activities (including FarmBis) are linked to recognised VET qualifications.	S	RTCA AFFA DETYA	The gaps between unrecognised and recognised training are bridged.	Outcomes from informal programs are directly related to competency.

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	1.4 Rural industry-related post-secondary study and qualifications, and specific measures to promote farm careers to students on the verge of completing relevant VET and university qualifications, be developed and implemented.	L and ongoing	RSA	Increased uptake of employees entering or returning to rural industry employment following training.	Increased percentage of those completing VET & Higher Education qualifications return to rural related industries.
	1.5 The research findings on the returns from investment in training are promoted to industry.	SM	NFF/RTCA	Increased awareness and acceptance by industry that training is an investment yielding a return rather than a cost.	Increase in numbers who are participating in both formal and informal training.
2 Developing young people for careers in the industry	2.1 Enterprise and Career Education in Schools programs are reviewed to ensure the programs continued implementation and expansion within the rural industry.	SM	RSA	Increased industry-school linkages that support more effective pathways to skills through work placements and training contracts, modified indemnity and insurance arrangements, appropriate teaching skills, consistent assessment procedures, increased mentoring programs (particularly for indigenous students).	Communities adopting Enterprise and Career Education to Industry activities. Increased in linkages between school and industry networks (Rural and Regional). Increase in numbers participating in VET (Rural/Regional related industries).
	2.2 Authoritative and balanced information to both urban and rural young people about careers and occupational prospects in agriculture and horticulture is widely promoted.	M and ongoing	RSA	Increased awareness of career opportunities in the rural industry amongst young people.	Collaborative arrangements in place between industry, educators, careers professionals and young people to develop and maintain specific career information strategies and products
	2.3 Career counsellors (including teachers and advisors) are provided with ongoing professional development specific to career opportunities available within rural industries.	M and ongoing	RSA	Expert advice and information is provided to students and parents.	Quality career information strategies and products available in schools and industry. A quality career information web site operational and used by schools and students.
3 Make New Apprenticeships work for the industry	3.1 Part-time and cross-industry New Apprenticeships for the rural industry are enhanced and widely promoted.	SM	RSA	Rural industry is made aware of and more fully able to participate in New Apprenticeship opportunities.	Increased numbers in New Apprenticeships including School Based New Apprenticeships in rural and regional Australia.

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	3.2 Provisions and incentives are developed that will strengthen the role and responsibilities of Group Training Companies in the ongoing implementation of New Apprenticeships in the rural industry.	S	RSA	Group Training Companies are involved in agriculture and horticulture New Apprenticeships in rural and remote regions.	Increased coverage by Group Training Companies.
	3.3 Industry-identified cross-industry and cross-sectoral training programs are promoted to Group Training Companies and key rural industry labour-hire companies.	SM	RSA	Hiring of skilled seasonal labour streamlined through the development and implementation of appropriate Certificate level training opportunities.	Increase in number of labour hire companies, RTOs and GTCs using cross sectoral, cross industry training. Increase in number of regions using cross sectoral and cross industry New Apprenticeships.
	3.4 Enhanced national consistency to facilitate improved administration of New Apprenticeships, and steps to make the processes work with greater ease for rural industry participation, are made.	S	ANTA	Improved national consistency of administration processes and increased uptake of rural industry employers participating in New Apprenticeships.	Increased numbers of New Apprenticeships in rural industries.
	3.5 Access to Commonwealth and State/Territory employer incentives for New Apprentices holding an AQF III or higher are reviewed.	SM	DETYA	Incentives will be available to employers of qualified New Apprentices who hold a qualification, at AQF III or higher, in an unrelated field of study who are retraining for a rural industry occupation.	Commonwealth undertakes review of incentives regime.
	3.6 Rural and regional incentive schemes currently available are reviewed.	SM	DETYA	Commonwealth funded rural and regional incentive schemes are effective in rural and remote regions.	Commonwealth undertakes review of incentives regime.
	3.7 Rural New Apprenticeships marketing campaign is continued and strengthened.	M	DETYA	Awareness and knowledge regarding New Apprenticeships is increased.	Increased numbers of New Apprenticeships in rural industries.
4 Attuning the VET system to the training needs of rural industry	4.1 Strategies are developed which ensure funding for FarmBis and other private sector training initiatives are used to encourage effective links with the formal VET sector.	S	RTCA AFFA DETYA	FarmBis and other private sector training initiatives formally linked to training package competencies.	Participants in FarmBis and other private sector training initiatives receive formal recognition of competency achievement.

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	4.2 Appropriate and more flexible training products are provided and promoted.	SM	RTCA	More farm enterprises and workers can take advantage of available training opportunities, including increased utilization of internet technologies.	Increase in use of new training products. Increase in use of the internet as a training medium.
	4.3 Cross-industry, cross-sectoral and multi-skilling training programs are identified making full use of appropriate Training Packages.	S	RTCA	Seasonal jobs are transformed into year-round career jobs.	Seasonal workers receive formal skills recognition and move into career paths.
	4.4 Workable forms of skill passports (across training modules, industries, employers, and States) are developed for VET students and New Apprentices in rural and related fields.	M	RTCA	Multi-skilling training programs and subsequent employment can be effectively tracked and confirmed by employers.	Skills passports used by Enterprise and Career Education students and New Apprentices.
	4.5 Proactive measures to mainstream and promote the use of recognition (RPL–RCC) procedures for reskilling and upskilling.	S	RTCA	Increased adoption of recognition procedures.	RPL – RCC procedures implemented.
	4.6 FarmBis funding is made available in all States and Territories for skills audits for farmers wishing to access RPL-RCC	S	RTCA	Effective use of FarmBis funding to increase access to recognition of skills and qualifications by farmers.	Skills audit pilot activities completed.
	4.7 VET planning processes make allowance for the under-counting of the rural industry labour force in their industry training funding allocations.	M	RTCA	Realistic and effective planning processes and funding targeted to meet rural industry training needs.	VET plans realistically reflect rural industry labour force and accepted by State Training Authorities
	4.8 Training Packages covering the viticulture industry are streamlined to meet the needs of specialist viticulturists.	M	RTCA	Training Packages reviewed to effectively meet the diverse needs of the viticulture industry, particularly to minimise existing confusion.	Review of Training Packages completed.
5 Addressing skill gaps and shortages	5.1 Mainstream training programs addressing skill gaps in quality assurance, business planning, succession planning and computing are available for experienced farmers.	SM	RTCA	Training programs addressing skill gaps in quality assurance, business planning, succession planning and computing are provided to farmers.	Activities completed and competencies formally recognised.

Target Area	Recommended Strategy	Priority *	Lead Agency	Proposed outcomes	Determinants for Success
	5.2 Training programs and strategies to upgrade existing rural industry skills to best practice and innovative management are developed and implemented.	M	RTCA	Training packages available and implemented.	Skills of existing rural industry employers and employees are upgraded and recognised against national qualifications.
	5.3 Training programs and strategies are developed to address skill needs and gaps identified in the sectors of study.	SM	RTCA	Specific training programs and strategies are developed and provided to address shortages and gaps in the following areas: shearers/shed hands; skilled stock and farm hands; new technologies in wool growing; woolclassers; management training for experienced shearers; orchard, plantation and packing skills in horticulture; middle-level skills (vineyard supervisors and managers) in viticulture; appropriate competencies at Certificate II level; and agronomists in cotton growing.	Activities completed in each commodity sector.
	5.4 Language, literacy and numeracy training programs are expanded and widely available.	M and ongoing	RTCA	Access to language, literacy and numeracy programs is broadened and strengthened to meet the needs of rural industries.	Increase in numbers accessing language, literacy and numeracy programs.
	5.5 Innovative enterprise skill models are developed.	M and ongoing	RTCA	Improved career models and skill pathways to assist with the longer term solution to redressing skill shortages and gaps in the rural industries.	Increase in numbers at various levels of competency . Models and pathways formalized at enterprise level.
	5.6 Links between the rural industry, VET providers and centres of excellence (including universities) are established.	M	NFF	The delivery of increased upskilling opportunities and career pathways to industry, in particular, the provision of opportunities for certificate level viticulturists to upgrade to diploma/degree levels.	Memorandums of Understanding between industry, VET providers and centers of excellence developed and actioned. Viticulturists achieve diploma/degree level.
	5.7 Training infrastructures, and deregulatory measures to extend the usefulness of the migrant and backpacker (with appropriate visas) labour forces, are established.	L	NFF	Seasonal (harvest) labour shortages will be reduced.	Decrease in unfilled seasonal jobs.