

# Strategic Plan 2009-2011



November 2008

Primary Industries Skills Council Inc  
PO Box 2099  
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# Table of Contents

Introduction from the Chairman

Introduction to the Primary Industries Skills Council

One Page Overview

Our Vision

Our Reason for Existence (purpose)

Industry Overview

Objectives 2009-2011

Strategies for achievement

Workforce Development Strategies



## Introduction from the Chairman

The Primary Industries Skills Council was established to make a difference in meeting the workforce development needs of the State's Primary Industries. Given that the Primary Industries Sector is still of huge importance to the State's economy, particularly in regional economies, getting the right labour and skills for the industry is of some significance to the State.

During the first three years of operation, the Council has been extremely active on a number of fronts including research of industry skill needs, formal training needs assessments and developing improved collaborative arrangements in workforce planning, immigration targeting and more flexible delivery arrangements for VET.

The decline in the workforce which has been a continuing trend since the turn of the century has created a situation that threatens the continuation of many industry sectors. Whilst technology and productivity improvements will lessen the labour requirement, the age structure of the industry and the lack of effective engagement of young people has created a situation that requires urgent action if regional areas are to continue to function.

Added to this are the impacts of the drought and the availability of water which is already impacting heavily in some industries.

The Council has charted a course that has a number of significant strategies to deal with the current skills crisis. Some of these involve better preparing the industry for change, some are about improved deployment of labour and some are about improved collaboration to deliver skilled personnel.

The Council has recognized that there are a large number of issues that are systemic and requiring national policy changes to bring about the right support for industry. That is why the relationship with the National Agrifood Industry Skills Council is important in establishing a dialogue that can directly assist our industry. That involves continuous Training Package reviews and a raft of measures in which the Primary Industries Skills Council can participate in and in some cases drive.

The Board has senior representatives who have the capacity to engage at the most senior political levels and this is a major benefit for the industry. However at the end of the day if individual enterprises cannot benefit from our work we will have failed. That is why we are continuing to develop more locally managed systems and solutions and that may well be the most effective way in which we can make a difference.

Critical to being effective is the close partnership we must have with Government and the Training and Skills Commission. We are fortunate that agencies such as DFEST, PIRSA and DTED are working both collaboratively and individually with us. This is the best recipe for success.

As we all know, without a highly skilled and competent workforce we cannot hope to compete in the ever-widening global market. Both Rob Jacobs and I are committed to making sure we make a real difference.

Milan Rapp  
Chairman

# Introduction to the Primary Industries Skills Council

The Primary Industries Skills Council has been established by the peak representative organisations in the Agriculture, Horticulture, Seafood and Racing industries. These bodies represent the key representative industry associations and the two employee organisations servicing the Primary Industry Sector.

The organisations represented on the Skills Council cover all sectors of the primary industry either through direct representation or through other formal linkages.

The Council operates two Sector Standing Committees one in Seafood and one covering Agriculture, Horticulture and Racing. All industry sectors are represented with the Committees comprising senior representatives of the various industry bodies. The eight person Board of Management which is drawn from Committee membership is thus able to provide strategic advice on workforce development matters.

Board Membership comprises representatives of the two key employee associations in the primary industries sector and six representatives of key industry associations, all of whom are strategic leaders in their industries.

The Council has a clear link with the National Agri-food Industry Skills Council through joint membership. That Membership allows the Primary Industries Skills Council SA Inc to directly link with the Food Processing Industry and the Meat Industry on matters of common interest. The Skills Council also has a direct linkage to Transport and Distribution Training SA in regard to maritime training in the Seafood industry sector through representation on the SA Freight Council. This linkage also allows issues such as cold chain management to be more directly communicated to all sectors of the Primary Industries Skill Council.

All primary industry sectors have long established linkages with Regional Development Boards and local training organisations, principally TAFE Institutes. The network of rural institutes and regional associations has also involved peak State Industry bodies in the Primary Industries sector over many decades.

The peak industry organisations in the three Primary Industries sector have also had a long a fruitful association with a number of State Government Departments and agencies. That direct role has allowed the Council to instigate a cross agency action forum for workforce development that brings together DFEEST, DTED and PIRSA and the two Agrifood Skills Boards.

The Council has two principal areas of activity, a research focus which involves gathering data on the industry workforce and reporting on its skill and labour gaps and an action focus which establishes programs and projects to improve industry investment in skills and workforce development and policy responses in support of the industry's needs.



# One Page Overview

## Primary Industries Skills Council



Our Reason for Existence	Our Vision 2009 - 2011
<p>To ensure that information on the workforce requirements of the South Australian Primary Industries sector is effectively communicated to Governments, Industry Bodies and other stakeholders resulting in better planning processes and effective and responsive employment and skills formation strategies in support of industry development requirements.</p>	<p>The Primary Industries Skills Council SA Inc will be a major contributor to the development and sustainability of primary industries in South Australia through the identification of workforce development needs and recommendations and action undertaken in response to those needs.</p> <p>The work of the Primary Industries Skills Council SA Inc will contribute towards a responsive and skilled workforce and be instrumental in the development of a strong culture of continuous skilling and upskilling within the State's Primary Industries.</p>
Our Industry Coverage	
<p>Agrifood Training Package Amenity Horticulture Animal Care and Management Conservation and Land Management Racing Industry Rural Production</p>	<p>Aquaculture Fisheries Compliance Fishing and Fishing Charter Operations Seafood Sales and Distribution Seafood Processing</p>
Our Objectives 2009-2011	
<p><b>Objective 1</b></p> <p>Provide robust and substantiated advice on industry skills and workforce development priorities that enable Government/TaSC to perform their functions under the Training and Skills Development Act 2008</p> <p><b>Objective 2</b></p> <p>To ensure that National Training Packages have relevance to South Australian industries and workforces.</p>	<p><b>Objective 3</b></p> <p>To increase the number of employers investing in high performing workplace practices through: Encouraging employer uptake of high performing workplace practices, Promoting the benefits of education and training and Brokering and implementing workforce development programs with organisations.</p> <p><b>Objective 4</b></p> <p>To ensure South Australian Primary Industries continue to have a skilled workforce in line with projected industry developments and a competitive labour market.</p>
<p><b>Objective 5</b></p> <p>To influence and support State and Federal Plans for the development of South Australia by determining employment strategies to influence the supply of sufficient workers in regional areas of the State.</p>	<p><b>Objective 6</b></p> <p>To continually improve the availability of high quality training products through the development of responsive programs that meet changing market requirements.</p>

## Our Priorities 2009-2011

Obtain current industry information on the skill needs of the industry and the adequacy of current and emerging supply systems. In particular identify high priority occupations and skills and strategies to address skill and workforce priority needs.	Provide advice to TaSC and DFEEST on high priority occupations and skill requirements for inclusion in the 5 year Skills and Workforce Development Plan and other relevant Government Plans and Programs.
Investigate and advise on key drivers of industry demand for skills and occupations and strategies to address skills and workforce priorities.	Provide advice on appropriate education, training and pathway systems to meet the requirements of the workforce
Develop a range of effective communication channels with all industry sectors, National Industry bodies and key Government agencies to improve information to support the continuous improvement process of National Training Packages. Provide advice which is based on evidence based information on the adequacy of Training Packages, the appropriateness of skill set approaches and supportive funding arrangements, the adequacy of training pathways in delivering skilled workers and integrated delivery and assessment approaches at all education and training levels.	In conjunction with industry sectors develop responsive workforce plans that provide demand driven skill and workforce solutions. Broker and manage workforce development programs at a sector and local level. Such Plans to encompass VET reform approaches and employment and demographic trends.
Develop a responsive marketing Plan for employers and training organisations and encourage the adoption of best practice workplace practices which integrate learning, promote good HR management and access to key Government programs such as Apprenticeships and Productivity Places.	Facilitate the utilization of appropriate qualifications and their utilization in the industry. Specifically gather advice from industry on the appropriateness of existing qualifications and the need for new Traineeship/Apprenticeship approaches and communicate this advice to the TaSC and DFEEST.
Promote and facilitate local management for workforce development through improved industry engagement in VET. Such management to include improved HR practices, enterprise workforce planning and innovative employment strategies.	Improve RTO performance and assist the development of collaborative delivery and assessment, in particular improved recognition processes and industry assessment input.
In conjunction with the Higher Education sector, investigate new models of higher learning that bridge the vocational and higher education sectors.	Influence education and entry level training pathways by the development of improved career information systems and integrated vocational programs, especially school based and preparatory programs.

## Board Membership

Name	Organisations
Milan Rapp (Chair)	Seafood Processors and Exporters Council
Rob Jacobs (Deputy Chair)	Agriculture & Beef Industry
Wayne Cornish	South Australian Farmers Federation
Hagen Stehr AO	Clean Seas Aquaculture Aquaculture Advisory Committee
Nick Thredgold	National Union of Workers
Lance Degenhardt	Australian Workers Union
Bob Pennington	Australian Seafood Industry Council Abalone Industry Association of SA

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## **Our Vision**

The Primary Industries Skills Council SA Inc will be a major contributor to the development and sustainability of primary industries in South Australia through the identification of workforce development needs and recommendations and action undertaken in response to those needs.

The work of the Primary Industries Skills Council SA Inc will contribute towards a responsive and skilled workforce and be instrumental in the development of a strong culture of training within the State's Primary Industries.



## **Our Reason for Existence (Purpose)**

To ensure that information on the workforce requirements of the South Australian Primary Industries sector is effectively communicated to Governments, Industry Bodies and other stakeholders resulting in better planning processes and effective and responsive employment and skills formation strategies in support of industry development requirements.



# Sector Overview – Agriculture and Horticulture

## **Key Characteristics of the Industry**

The industry is a largely rural and regional industry covering almost all the available land in the State. The principal sectors are Agriculture and Horticulture and within those sectors are a very wide variety of rural production and animal management industries including citrus, apple and pear, stone fruits, cherries, nuts, vegetable production, viticulture, cut flowers, herbs, grains, oil seed, wool, pigs, beef, dairy, poultry and a host of minor sectors.

Some sectors display intensive farming methods especially in the pig and poultry and horticulture industries. Such systems are also becoming more commonplace in the beef industry (feedlots). There has been some evidence of vertical integration in particular sectors and the establishment of an array of processing/manufacturing operations within the industry. This is expected to continue over the next decade as value adding is explored across the industry.

## **Role in the Economy**

The industry occupies a dominant position in the State's economy contributing the single largest source of export income for the State. Whilst as a proportion of GDP the industry's direct contribution is relatively small, the multiplier effect in indirect employment is very significant. Generally, lower production from the agriculture and horticulture sector, especially in drought years, has a significant impact on the whole State economy from automotive and transport to building, civil construction and services.

In recent years, the industry has been subject to a range of structural adjustments including farm aggregation, increasing corporatisation and new crops and technologies. This has been in response to both market developments and changes in rural family structures. This coupled with a natural drift to the cities has seen resulted in a population loss in a number of rural communities and the emergence of contracting out of some essential operations. However, the industry still dominates direct employment in all regional areas of the State.

## **Employee and Employer Issues**

The industry is still largely dominated by self employment with family units still the most common model. In such productivity based models employer and employee distinctions are less obvious.

In recent years a lack of rural labour has impacted on farming methods and forced farmers to pursue greater operational efficiencies. This has come at a time when farm management practices have improved very significantly and resulted in a much higher skilled management pool. The implications in a marketplace where environmental management, residue testing, quality assurance and competitive pricing are becoming critical market access issues, now point to a new type of rural worker who is generally familiar with quality management practices and can fit into a broader skill band.

The reliance on casual or seasonal employees in some sectors has also been tested in recent years as patterns of work and labour availability change. This is particularly so for the citrus industry which has traditionally relied on itinerant workers or students during harvest.

Over the next few years, there is likely to be a further contraction of the workforce and the possibility of further growth in contracting. Planned regional migration may be an option but the arrangements for new industry participants would have to provide for better access to training.



## Sector Overview – Agriculture and Horticulture cont.

Issues such as literacy and numeracy will become much more important as the industry adopts further quality approaches and up-skilling programs will need to be able to respond accordingly

Within the next five years, almost the entire workforce will need to be familiar with quality management systems both in operating procedures and interpreting the information for effective management. This trend has been evident for some years and has gathered momentum recently as global markets demand more stringent product requirements which will require a focus on a broader range of skills than has been the case traditionally.

### **Location of Industry and Regional Spread**

The industry is almost entirely regional with the exception of some outer metropolitan horticulture regions and some metropolitan storage and distribution centers. The industry is often located in extremely isolated areas with a lack of access to many services and technologies which are commonplace in urban areas.

The industry extends between the coast and all inland State borders and provides the principal use of land in South Australia. Distance from townships and cities and access to training/learning resources are significant factors in the industry's workforce being able to meet the new challenges being thrown up by rapid changes in the marketplace.

### **Licensing and Regulatory Factors**

Regulation in regard to environmental issues, particularly water access and native vegetation issues, have placed much of the burden on the farming community. The impact of this environmental regulation coupled with other regulation in such areas as animal health and chemicals has produced cost imposts on the industry which have had some impact on employment. This environment of compliance will have a continuing impact on both competitiveness and employment.

### **Skill Shortages**

- **Immediate**

Skilled Farm Hands (variety of sectors) and viticulturalists, Seasonal Workers, Shearers, Farm Managers, Machinery Operators, Technical and Professional Service occupations in horticulture, viticulture and broad acre.

- **Long-term**

Across the board shortages in nearly all sectors. Need to develop new sector and strategic leaders, skilled and semi-skilled workers and Managers and Service Professionals at all levels.

### **Workforce Development Issues**

1. Availability of labour in regional areas. Continued population loss in regional areas coupled with a low level of industry attractiveness, a lack of retention strategies and poor education programs in urban regions has not

## Sector Overview – Agriculture and Horticulture cont.

fundamentally changed the situation. Poor infrastructure also impacts on retention and attraction as housing and other services are at a premium.

2. Access to training/learning. The remote locations of the majority of the workforce mean that attendance at learning institutions is often not an option. Lack of IT skills can compound the problem.

The lack of adequate housing, transport and other infrastructure issues is one of the key limiting factors in attracting personnel to regional areas. The need for a more formal workforce development plan that encapsulates these issues will be a priority in alerting the State Government to the importance of these issues.

Over the next few years, almost the entire workforce will need to be trained in occupational health and safety and become familiar with quality management systems.

This trend has been evident for some years and has gathered momentum recently as global markets demand more stringent product requirements. Issues such as environmental management, cold chain management, quality assurance and residue management are all impacting on the workforce.

### **Profile of Existing Skill Development and VET Delivery**

The industry is well served with a regional network of TAFE Institutes and some flexible delivery provision. However, the capacity of TAFE provision to meet the skills requirements associated with recent industry developments suggests that new and much more flexible enterprise based approaches, must be developed.

Currently, the major delivery capacity is at the Certificate II and III level with growing interest in higher management level qualifications. Current industry developments suggest that future skill development needs will require more focused market driven skill development approaches. These may require new competencies or new qualifications as part of the further development of the various Industry Training Packages.

Within the school sector, agribusiness careers are not adequately promoted and efforts need to be made to have these careers as careers of choice.

The changing nature of the industry has seen the emergence of contract hire companies and targeting these companies and their workforces is a priority for training organizations.



# Sector Overview - Seafood

## **Key Characteristics of the Industry**

The industry is largely regionally based with three principal sectors, commercial fishing, aquaculture and seafood processing. The largest sector by value is the aquaculture industry.. Nearly all the industry is located in coastal regions with a significant processing presence in metropolitan Adelaide.

## **Role in the Economy**

The value of the industry is some \$600million beach price (farm gate) with some \$400million added value through processing and export. Almost all the industry growth has been in the aquaculture sector which has grown annually by some 20% in the period 1992 – 2002. The seafood industry is the State's seventh largest export industry.

## **Employee and Employer Issues**

The industry is dominated by self employment with family units still the most common model. Sectors such as commercial fishing and commercial diving and to some extent the aquaculture sector also have productivity based arrangements in place. The main industrial award in the industry is the Fish and Crustacea Award which covers the processing sector.

As with the agriculture and horticulture industry, shortages in labour have emerged as a major issue particularly in some of the less populous centers of the State where marine aquaculture has been expanding. The entire industry has been subject to a range of regulatory and market processes which have impacted on the nature of work across the industry. Most modern seafood managers like other rural managers have adopted quality management approaches over the past decade in order to maximize their returns and deal with a complex array of quality and environmental issues.

## **Location of Industry and Regional Spread**

The industry is spread between the Victorian border and Ceduna. Nearly all the industry is regional with approximately 70% of the total value coming from the Eyre region. Significant centres are Port Lincoln, the largest fishing port in Australia, the South East ports from Port MacDonnell through to Kingston and Port Adelaide. In addition, numerous small regional centers such as Cowell and Coffin Bay have benefited from significant oyster industry development.

## **Licensing and Regulatory Factors**

The Commercial Fishing industry is a licensed sector with mandatory maritime certificates of competency related to the class of vessel and level of competency. All industry sectors are licensed through PIRSA and a number of licence conditions specify the nature of work activities to be performed including such areas as environmental monitoring. Food safety legislation is an important regulatory factor on skill formation.

# Sector Overview - Seafood cont.

## Skill Shortages

- **Immediate**

The areas of most need are in the marine engineering sector (marine engine drivers), commercial divers, seafood process workers, especially filleters and oyster shuckers and skilled aquaculture farm hands

- **Long-term**

Significant additional growth in the aquaculture industry will result in employment pressures at all levels and flow on impact in the processing sector. Major shortages will emerge in seafood processing and in maritime occupations, particularly deck hands, threatening the current \$2billion industry production target.

## Workforce Development Issues

Coupled with a significant regional labour shortage, there is a major age profile problem in some sectors, particularly in seafood processing. There is significant scope for upskilling within some sectors to provide for higher skill requirements and the need for more effective pre-vocational pathways as well as mature age re-training are all areas requiring more detailed investigation.

An investigation of more integrated higher education/VET programs to provide for integrated lower VET Certificate work experiences will provide a much higher skilled workforce in some sectors such as marine aquaculture.

Infrastructure issues are also important in support of high growth sectors such as aquaculture. Lack of water and accommodation will potentially retard industry growth and result in a lack of attraction and retention of personnel.

## Profile of Existing Skill Development and VET Delivery

The bulk of personnel in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries undertake maritime training as this represents the most significant component of their work. A smaller number of personnel have aquaculture specific qualifications and most have some skills in environmental management systems, food safety (HACCP) or quality assurance systems. The number of personnel with marine science qualifications is increasing but the workforce profile will largely depend on maritime qualifications (deck hands/coxswains/skippers and farm hands).

The bulk of VET delivery is focused on Certificate II and III in both the Fishing Operations and Aquaculture Streams of the Seafood Industry Training Package. This will continue to be the case with further industry expansion.

There is a lack of skills in cold chain management, some environmental management areas and food safety as well as in the marine engine driver sector.

Current VET delivery is largely managed by two RTO's and the remote locations that much of the industry works in places a number of difficulties for RTO's in attempting to service what is often quite limited demand. This has placed pressure on some sectors as personnel have experienced difficulty accessing training and assessment.



# Sector Overview - Racing

## **Key Characteristics of the Industry**

The industry comprises the breeding, thoroughbred racing, harness racing and greyhound racing sectors. The bulk of the industry is located in regional or outer metropolitan areas although the major racing meets are metropolitan. Much of the industry operates on a national level with leading trainers participating in race meets across the country. There is a significant employment impact in the betting and gaming industry particularly through the TAB network.

## **Role in the Economy**

The breeding sector has been a very important revenue earner for South Australia with some of the leading national stables and training establishments located in the State. The income derived from all forms of racing provides a substantial input into the State's revenue. Approximately 20,000 people are directly or indirectly employed in the industry in South Australia contributing some \$550million to the State's economy.

## **Employee and Employer Issues**

The industry has a complex set of industrial arrangements which include performance based remuneration.

## **Location of Industry and Regional Spread**

The racing industry is principally a regional industry with operations across the State and often in remote areas of the State. The pool of potential workers in such areas is limited and recruitment has always to a degree depended on interest from metropolitan applicants.

## **Licensing and Regulatory Factors**

The horse racing and dog racing sectors are subject to a set of industry and State regulations which prescribe many occupational activities and performance standards. These licensing arrangements are not tied to training.

## **Skill Shortages**

- **Immediate**

Apprentice jockeys and jockey trainers, track riders, farriers, stable hands, racing administrators and stewards, harness racing drivers, greyhound racing handlers.

- **Long-term**

Immediate skills shortages are expected to be a long term problem due to the lack of personnel in many regional areas.

# Sector Overview – Racing Cont.

## **Workforce Development Issues**

Labour availability is a key issue which is affecting much of the industry's further development. Entry level training programs (New Apprenticeships) are paramount in meeting current skill requirements. Issues requiring further work include occupational health and safety and career path development for personnel.

Infrastructure needs are a key limiting factor in attracting and retaining personnel to rural areas. An integrated strategy will need to be developed to ensure adequate accommodation and other infrastructure in support of growth sector needs.

## **Profile of Existing Skill Development and VET Delivery**

Skill development is currently through formal and informal approaches. There is a need to ensure that more industry personnel undertake formal training to national competency standards. The revised National Training Package has a flexible skill set based approach to support career pathways. Existing training programs for the thoroughbred horse racing sector are run mostly through TAFE SA.

## Objectives 2009 - 2011

The Objectives for the Council are framed around the broader State Objectives in State Planning processes and specific objectives that deal with industry priorities. The South Australian Government has identified three Objectives for the development of the workforce in which Industry Skills Boards have a key role. These are:

**Objective 1.** Provide robust and substantiated advice on industry skills and workforce development priorities that enable Government/TaSC to perform their functions under the Training and Skills Development Act 2008

**Objective 2.** To ensure that National Training Packages have relevance to South Australian industries and workforces.

**Objective 3.** To increase the number of employers investing in high performing workplace practices through: (A) Encouraging employer uptake of high performing workplace practices and (B) Promoting the benefits of education and training and; (C) Brokering and implementing workforce development programs with organisations.

In addition, the very significant challenges that the Primary Industry sector is facing, particularly in regional areas, has resulted in the Council identifying three key objectives that deal directly with labour supply issues, labour deployment, skill matching and skill development. They are:

**Objective 4.** To ensure South Australian Primary Industries continue to have a skilled workforce in line with projected industry developments and a competitive labour market

**Objective 5.** To influence and support State and Federal Plans for the development of South Australia by determining employment and deployment strategies to influence the supply of sufficient workers to regional areas of the State.

**Objective 6.** To continually improve the availability of high quality training products through the development of responsive and targeted programs that meet changing market requirements.

The context for these objectives is the South Australian Strategic Plan, the Keating Report and the role of the Training and Skills Commission in meeting the State's skill and workforce development needs.

The Primary Industry sector has by far the oldest workforce of any South Australian industry and with long term drought, water allocation and a significant labour force contraction, the agenda for the Council includes objectives that deal with integrated regional management models to provide for labour attraction and re-engagement, especially in remote areas. The regional and remote location of most of the labour force presents a special challenge as the this workforce has been in substantial decline since the early part of the century.

There are few strategies to re-engage workers within regional areas and a particular focus will be given to both migrant labour and attraction strategies which focus on a wider Agri-food industry approach. This is consistent with the goal of the Inter Agency Action Team.

The high productivity growth of the primary sector, in fact the highest of any industry, will see further efficiency gains as the industry adopts more new technologies that obviate the need for high levels of labour. In addition, the rationalisation of the agriculture sector and increasing corporatisation will see not only a smaller workforce but a more highly skilled workforce. That in itself will require actions that influence the nature of future learning and training and require highly responsive solutions that lead the change agenda.

# Strategies for Achievement

## Objective 1.

### **Provide robust and substantiated advice on industry skills and workforce development priorities that enable Government/TaSC to perform their functions under the Training and Skills Development Act 2008**

This objective will be principally met through regular industry research and ongoing dialogue with all industry sectors. The research will identify key skills and occupations in each sector and track labour and skill demand over the three year planning cycle.

The accelerating labour force losses especially within a period of drought, will require a combination of formal and informal research to quantify and qualify the actual skill demand. Half yearly reports of changes in the labour force, issues underpinning demand for occupations and skills and strategies to address these demands will be produced as a key informing document for the TaSC and DFEEST. These reports will include formal research findings from a comprehensive annual cross sector survey of skill and occupational demand the first report of which will be published in December 2008.

Growing labour shortages in regional areas continue to threaten further growth in primary industries. The Council will advocate for more detailed and regular studies to understand regional demographics, occupational destinations, population movement and infrastructure support for regional and remote areas, especially in advance of the projected mining growth. Key to these wider regional studies will be support for new structures that engage industry in more formal regional population and skills planning.

The inter agency Action Team which involves the Skills Council as well as DFEEST, PIRSA and DTED, has commenced the process of regional stakeholder research on the workforce and actions needed to maintain and grow the regional workforce. The findings, together with the Council's own industry survey, will result in an array of policy adjustments and actions to ensure that current programs more directly support the workforce needs of regional areas. The results will be directly communicated to all relevant agencies and the TaSC.

Actions are underway to re-model skilled migration policy to meet skills shortages in a new skill profile system. The Council will complete this work in early 2009 and seek to cover the entire South Australian Primary Industry sector.

Research will also be undertaken with new skill sets, flexible retraining programs, accommodation and infrastructure support for new or proposed industry developments as well in support of industry attraction efforts.

Long term developments which will require action during the three year period will also be researched and all findings will be communicated to the relevant agencies of the South Australian Government and any other relevant stakeholders such as the National Agrifood Skills Council. Some of these developments will be related to industry growth, some to the drought, some to water allocations/availability and some to technology, all of which will have a direct impact on skill and labour demand.

Some of the strategies that the Council will pursue will include a promotional effort with the New SACE to attract more young people into the industry, stronger links between science studies and higher education qualifications, a longer term profile matching system for regional areas to meet skill demand and a targeted immigration program in conjunction with DIAC and Immigration SA.

The Council will work with the network of Regional Development Boards to more effectively promote regional areas as places to work and raise families. The conduct of a major Regional Mobility Project has been testing how unemployed and under-employed people will be able to access regional employment opportunities. The pilot project is expected to become a more permanent feature of the regions over the next three years but will require a much more dedicated approach to labour engagement in the regions.

The need for improved career information as well as pre-vocational programs and pathway programs is paramount in attracting more young people. Initial efforts to engage the trade Schools have been positive but will require much more sustained efforts by regions and school co-ordinators. The Council will seek to cement these partnerships to source young people for primary industry careers from the metropolitan regions. Part of this effort will involve new career materials for early secondary years focusing on wider Agrifood career opportunities.

## **Objective 2.**

### **To ensure that National Training Packages have relevance to South Australian industries and workforces.**

The various National Industry Training Packages governing accredited training in the primary industries sector are still being reviewed in advance of the establishment of a continuous review process.

The Council is represented on National Standing Committees of AFISC and is directly contributing to these reviews. This work involves developing risk management tools for compliance, third party assessment development, re-development of the TAA program, the design of a national survey based on the SA industry model and the identification of enterprise skill sets.

Much of this work will continue over the next three years as the Training Package Review process commences. The Council will report on progress with these issues to the TaSC and DFEEST and ensure that as the process of identifying new training pathways unfolds, new and innovative VET models will be openly discussed prior to formulation.

The Training Package review process will need to produce a more seamless system of qualifications that meet specific “fit for purpose” needs. Initial investigations have shown that existing qualification approaches are designed around standard systems that add on units to fit a model. The Primary Industries sector will investigate a range of models that deliver new qualifications and skill set pathways that lead to qualifications in a more flexible system. This work is expected to follow the first review of National Training Packages in 2009 and 2010.

An example of work currently underway and increasingly under consideration, are more flexible seasonal Apprenticeship models and new shared cross sector Agrifood qualifications for

seasonal workers. These investigations have implications for the national system of Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

With the emergence of new technician level occupations across a number of industry sectors, the Primary Industries Skills Council will move towards the design of a new open learning bridging program for people with VET qualifications wanting Higher Education qualifications. This is an important part of a higher skilled workforce that the primary industry sector is progressively having to secure.

Current recognition systems are still not mainstream in the primary industries sector and the Council will produce a new Skills Passport model for industry wide trialling in 2009. The model will be an important skills recognition tool for workers moving between industries especially between primary industries and mineral resource industry sectors.

### **Objective 3.**

**To increase the number of employers investing in high performing workplace practices through: (A) Encouraging employer uptake of high performing workplace practices and (B) Promoting the benefits of education and training and; (C) Brokering and implementing workforce development programs with organisations.**

The Council will develop a new Marketing Plan that focuses on more direct enterprise support in a period of significant change for the industry. This Plan will seek to meet individual sector needs for particular strategies such as improved entry level linkages as well as more cross sectoral issues such as flexible recruitment and improved HR management systems. The Plan will establish benchmarks that will evaluate annual performance and support improved strategies to develop the workforce.

The progressive development of quality management systems in primary industry sectors has forced many enterprises to confront a variety of risk based management approaches and the adoption of quality systems. The Primary Industries Skills Council will actively promote skill development as a key component of quality management and profitability. This linkage is important as most sectors have a greater recognition of quality in a market that is progressively demanding more integrated value chain approaches based around quality management systems.

A draft workforce plan template for micro to medium enterprises will be produced to assist enterprises develop improved HR tools.

The main tool for building capacity at an enterprise level will be an HR tool which provides short practical steps and systems for managing recruitment and retention and emphasizing the need to change. Research undertaken in 2008 showed that this approach would result in a greater take up of improved management practices. A draft tool has already been distributed and will be refined for sectors and regions in 2009.

As enterprises grapple with new environmental standards and continue to improve their performance in food safety, occupational health and safety and quality assurance, the Skills Council will need to demonstrate leadership through an active dialogue with industry bodies and provide skill development solutions consistent with modern management practices. Much of this will need to involve RTO's in more direct and flexible enterprise delivery models.

The current delivery effort in support of upskilling and retention is quite poor. The Council will use the established RTO Community of Practice Forum to drive further reforms in delivery and assessment in line with actual and projected industry developments. As the largest regional RTO, TAFE SA will be the most significant regional training organisation that will be involved in new industry delivery and assessment models.

The Productivity Places Program which is a key upskilling and entry level support program for enterprises will be actively promoted to all sectors to improve upskilling especially to technician levels. The Council will look at opportunities to engage indigenous and long term unemployed people through the IPP for defined regional skills shortages.

This Council has been contributing to a number of enterprise development models to see what systems support the interest of learners. The Council is looking at improved templates for key issues that support learning in conjunction with RTO's and Regional Development Boards.

The Council has evaluated leadership program results and concluded that the sectors respond better to best practice models of business in a local setting. The initial local management team approach will be expanded over the next three years to formalize these arrangements.

The Council has been investigating best practice VET models in a number of industries nationally and will look at developing a primary industry business mentoring program which offers a VET qualification and a flexible pathway to implementing good Workforce Practices. This project will commence in 2009 and run until 2011 as a pilot program in all sectors.

#### **Objective 4.**

##### **To ensure South Australian Primary Industries continue to have a skilled workforce in line with projected industry developments and a competitive labour market**

The need for improved intelligence on growth sectors is paramount in providing an adequate level of support for additional labour and especially skilled labour.

Some sectors such as marine aquaculture and intensive livestock industries have been growing substantially over the past five years and the need to contribute to a "whole package" solution to meet skill and labour demand is vital to local and often regional industry development.

The Council has forged close links with a number of Regional Development Boards and intends to share industry intelligence with these Boards in devising growth solutions for new and expanding enterprises.

The growth of competing industries is an issue that the Council has already been working with. The labour shortages across primary industries have affected 70 occupational groups already and this figure is expected to go higher. With the expected growth in the mineral resources sector and direct recruitment from primary industries already affecting employment levels, the Council has been working with SACOME to ameliorate the impact on primary sectors. Ultimately though there will need to be a mix of solutions including

improved targeting of labour for regional skill shortage areas. This may well involve improved immigration solutions for specific occupations and especially where there is scope for gap fill training.

### **Objective 5.**

#### **To influence and support State and Federal Plans for the development of South Australia by determining employment and deployment strategies to influence the supply of sufficient workers to regional areas of the State.**

The lack of strategies to supply labour to primary industry sectors has been a major growth inhibitor. With some 12% of primary industry businesses reporting that they may not be in business in two years time, putting in place effective strategies to deploy labour to areas of need is critical. Unfortunately, the prolonged drought has had a significant impact which has worked against the orderly growth of the industry.

The migration reforms that the Council is pursuing at a National and State level are expected to provide vastly improved profiling and deployment outcomes for the industry. The role that AFISC as the National Skills Council can play is important in securing any pilot program arrangements for the industry in the long term.

National bodies such as the NFF have been working with the Federal Government to put in place stronger regional support programs and at a State level, the Council has supported the concept of a Regional Council that can better integrate programs to support regional industries, labour exchange and infrastructure support. This issue is also being looked at by the Agrifood Inter Agency group.

### **Objective 6.**

#### **To continually improve the availability of high quality training products through the development of responsive and targeted programs that meet changing market requirements.**

Although there are significant reforms to National Training Packages taking place within AFISC which will improve the delivery and relevance of qualifications and skills sets, there are still large gaps in the provision of support tools for industry. The Council is working towards the development of generic tools to support professional development in RTO's and also looking at existing assessment resources with a view to developing new third party templates for both enterprises and RTO's.

The dissatisfaction with the TAA Package and the lack of industry engagement in formal training and assessment roles is an urgent matter that is tied to improved HR systems. However, as many industry systems are still experiencing substantial change, it is becoming increasingly evident that there needs to be some additional tools developed to help supervisors and managers participate more fully in the VET system. The Council intends to develop resources that can assist managers and supervisors to develop confidence in training and assessment in a VET system. This work will complement the existing national Package.

# Workforce Development Strategies 2009-2011

Objectives 2009-2011	Actions 2009-2011	Outcomes
<p>1. <b>Provide robust and substantiated advice on industry skills and workforce development priorities that enable Government/TaSC to perform their functions under the Training and Skills Development Act 2008.</b></p>	<p>Role 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research with all industry sectors to identify skill and workforce needs and trends. This research to include a program of regular industry visits, contact with sector and peak body organisations and sector and industry wide research.</li> <li>• Investigate measures to support the development of the industry workforce</li> <li>• Identify adequacy of current supply systems and recommend improvements</li> <li>• Conduct of an annual formal industry survey to obtain clear trends in labour and skill demand and currency of industry data.</li> <li>• Continued input into and support for the Inter-agency Action team which is conducting research into the agrifood industry workforce and its development needs.</li> <li>• Influence and develop partnerships with key Governmental agencies and other Stakeholder bodies by participation in meetings to formulate joint strategies and actions</li> <li>• Report regularly to the TaSC and DFEEST on research outcomes, industry trends, and workforce development priorities and especially high priority skills and occupations within the sector.</li> <li>• Report on drivers of change especially related to drought, demographic change and population drift</li> <li>• Advocate for improved regional research on regional economies, population dynamics, workforce change and infrastructure support with relevant agencies.</li> <li>• Research relevant skills sets, flexible retraining programs and required infrastructure support for new industry developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantiated research to support a range of strategies for skills and workforce development including data on priority and high demand skills and occupations</li> <li>• A sectoral approach will be developed which focuses on individual sector or regional needs</li> <li>• Skill and labour demands matched with delivery. Strategies identified to fill gaps, improve delivery and focus on skills and qualifications rather than just qualifications.</li> <li>• Cross Agency actions in support of the wider Agrifood industry</li> <li>• Improved planning, policy and actions between Government and industry</li> <li>• More direct impact on State planning and improved outcomes in major Government initiatives</li> <li>• Actual data related to major structural changes communicated to TaSC and influencing the planning process</li> <li>• Supportive current regional data available to provide additional support measures for skills deployment</li> <li>• New developments requiring innovative skilling approaches and the most appropriate delivery methods will be identified</li> </ul>

2. **To ensure that National Training packages have relevance to South Australian industries and workforces.**

- Work with the Agrifood Industry Skills Council (AFISC) to devise local solutions to national workforce development and re-structuring issues especially related to drought, water allocation, technology and population drift.

**Role 2**

- Provide industry information to the DECS team designing the New SACE Industry Pathways Programs for the Primary Industry sector
- Provide data in support of entry level places under the Productivity Places Program and for innovative entry level programs such as IPP involving both school based and pre-vocational programs

**Role 3**

- Contribute to the AFISC review process of Training Packages by direct participation on AFISC Standing Committees and by providing feedback to AFISC on required changes/improvements to draft proposals
- Through direct industry and enterprise consultation, identify new skill sets in line with actual enterprise/industry skill demands and ensure National Training Packages accommodate skill set needs.
- Promote both skill sets and qualifications to all industry sectors through sector and peak bodies and through active promotional efforts across all industry sectors and through the secondary school system
- Work with AFISC on new survey tools for the industry to ensure the continuous improvement process picks up industry skill priorities
- Develop third party assessment systems for trialling in South Australia which identify risk profiles for assessment and new assessment tools
- Re-convene the VET/Higher Education Group to

- Stronger national program support available for State re-structuring issues

- Ongoing improvements identified and implemented by the DECS IPP group
- New materials to be developed for a range of jobseekers and students.
- PPP places identified and communicated to DFEEST. Pre-vocational demand identified and used in the design of new more flexible pre-voc programs

- Training Packages and pathways reflect State Primary Industry skill needs and accommodate progressive and flexible learning pathways
- Skills sets identified for all sectors and State VET funding available for enterprise skill set demand
- National Industry competencies and options for skill sets and qualifications better understood by all sectors
- Develop new risk management approaches for the industry based on local demand
- Greater and more efficient input from enterprises in formal VET assessments

**3. To increase the number of employers investing in high performing workplace practices through (A) Encouraging employer uptake of high performing workplace practices and (B) Promoting the benefits of education and training and: (C) Brokering and implementing workforce development programs with organisations.**

- investigate new pathways that provide for an effective open learning bridging program between Training Packages and existing and new Higher Education qualifications.
- Work with AFISC in the development of the SA Industry Survey tool for national adoption and improvement
  - Investigate more appropriate qualification models and training pathways for South Australian enterprises and secure national funding support through Government and peak industry bodies
  - Communicate to the TaSC and the Government new VET models which the industry supports. Work with the Government to ensure that industry VET reform issues are supported and advocated in national forums such as COAG
  - Develop an improved Traineeship model for seasonal workers in the primary industry sector.
  - Develop and trial a Skills Passport system for the primary industries sector which allows for improved recognition for workers moving between industries and within the Primary Industry sector.

**Roles 4,5,6**

- Develop a new Marketing Plan that is focussed on enterprise actions. Encourage the use of the PISC website as a more direct enterprise information source
- Distribute the HR improvement tool to a wide array of industry enterprises to improve recruitment and workplace practices
- Direct cross sectoral promotions of skill development as a key quality management development. This will further support existing promotional links and focus enterprise interest on skills development through enterprise quality systems
- Work with all relevant Government agencies servicing the primary industries sector to ensure that skill development is integrated into all industry improvement programs. Work with Workforce Development specialists in PIRSA

- Development of meaningful credit transfer arrangements between VET and Higher Education
- Improved survey instrument developed for annual survey
- Improved access and participation in VET
- Reform of the recognition of enterprise engagement in VET and availability of funding for skill sets
- Increase in Traineeship numbers in seasonal occupational areas
- A significant recognition tool for employers and employees, many of whom have no current recognition of skills
- A re-focus of current marketing to enterprises and more direct enterprise support
- Strong educational tool to improve HR practices
- Stronger recognition of the importance of skills within the context of current business management imperatives
- Co-ordinated cross agency focus on skill development in all relevant program areas

4. **To ensure South Australian Primary Industries continue to have a skilled workforce in line with projected industry developments and a competitive labour market.**

- and DTED to ensure support for this initiative.
- Develop an enterprise workforce planning template for micro/small, medium and large enterprises. Distribute the template widely across the industry.
  - Actively promote the Productivity Places Program to all sectors to assist enterprises with their upskilling needs
  - Re-convene the RTO Community of Practice group to extend collaborative and innovative delivery and assessment processes to industry. Set timeframes to meet the agenda of flexible workbased delivery as a mainstream skills development activity of RTO's.
  - Directly assist RTO's who maintain classroom based delivery approaches to develop integrated delivery models through industry led PD programs
  - Investigate good practice in workplaces and provide case studies to industry as part of a more dedicated promotion of the advantages of education and training.
  - Work with Regional Development Boards to promote good employment and skills development practices and distribute both the Good Practice HR template and the Workforce Planning template
  - Expand the local management industry teams to build greater ownership of the skills and labour agendas
  - Develop a Primary Industry Business Mentoring program and pilot in 2009-2011 in all regions in conjunction with Regional Development Boards
  - Develop whole of package labour, skill and infrastructure solutions with Regional Development Boards for growth industry sectors especially intensive livestock industries and marine aquaculture industries
  - Negotiate labour solutions with potentially competing industries such as mineral resources and food processing, such solutions to encompass, seasonal

- A practical tool for enterprises to improve their capacity to participate in workforce planning
- Greater recognition of a major Government initiative and greater input into upskilling places
- A forum that can directly assist RTO's to improve their connectivity with enterprises and build collaboration to deliver in rural and remote areas
- Improved capacity to provide responsive and relevant delivery and assessment through a series of industry led workshops to support Professional Development for CBT delivery and assessment
- Good practice templates produced which highlight measurable advantages of education and training in the primary industry sector
- RDB's provided with practical enterprise improvement tools for industry contact
- Greater local ownership and management of workforce development issues
- Mentoring Programs will strengthen industry sign on to workforce development
- Improved skill deployment to regional areas
- More efficient use of labour and amelioration of labour losses

5. **To influence and support State and Federal Plans for the development of South Australia by determining employment and deployment strategies to influence the supply of sufficient workers to regional areas of the State.**

6. **To continually improve the availability of high quality training products through the development of responsive and targeted programs that meet changing market requirements.**

- rotation, regional group management models and group
- Expand the Regional Mobility Project concept to deliver unemployed and under-employed people to the industry.
- Influence RDB's and other stakeholders to promote regions as locations for employment
  
- Through direct negotiation with DIAC and Immigration SA, re-model migration policy to deliver migrants with skills in demand to industry sectors in regional areas.
- Develop immigration skill profile templates for use by DIAC officers in sourcing skilled labour for primary industry skill shortages
- In conjunction with Peak industry bodies, influence DTED to establish a dedicated regional council structure to provide stronger regional support for the State's Primary Industries and integrate the Inter Agency Action team recommendations
  
- Develop third party assessment templates for both enterprises and RTO's
- Development of a generic enterprise tool for conducting assessments and delivering training in the workplace. Such a tool to be used in the conduct of third party (industry) assessments for VET outcomes

- Mechanisms established to improve connectivity with and management of labour
- Labour attraction issue that supports regional employment
  
- Improved migration outcomes for primary industry sectors
- Improved skill profile tool for State migration
- Stronger advocate body for employment and skill formation outcomes
  
- Direct industry involvement in assessment
  
- Key support tool for enterprise supervisors and managers

