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AFAM ITAB

Agriculture, Food
& Animal Management

September 2022

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AFAM attended a number of national Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) for the Agriculture, Food and Animal Management industries this month, which are likely to be the final meetings in the national AISC and SSO program. Supported by Skills Impact, IRCs have been instrumental in the work of developing and reviewing training packages over the past six (6) years. The 67 Industry Reference Committees and six Skills Service Organisations under the current industry engagement system will be replaced by an industry cluster program in January 2023.

Over the last 18 months of AFAM operation, we have been able to provide IRCs with updates on industry conditions in NSW. This has been particularly important given the impacts of floods and mouse plagues in NSW during this time, on top of the pandemic and bushfire situations.

AFAM looks forward to working with the industry cluster program and would like to extend its thanks to IRC members and Skills Impact for their contributions and their role in ensuring that training packages meet the needs and concerns of employers, employees, training providers and people seeking qualifications.

Best wishes,

Ben and Jess

Engagement Activities

The Amenity Horticulture, Landscaping, Conservation & Land Management (AHLCLM) Industry Training Advisory Committee Meeting was held by AFAM ITAB at the end of August. The Committee members play a vital role in providing AFAM with information on skill needs, issues and priorities for their industry sectors in NSW.

The AHLCLM Committee discussed a range of topics including biosecurity, workforce shortages, attracting new entrants, skill needs, technology and the training delivery opportunities and challenges in NSW. An update on the Varroa Mite situation and impacts to the beekeeping industry and horticultural sectors was also provided to the Committee.



AFAM attended the [FarmLink](#) Open Day which was held at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre, Friday 9 September. The Open Day was a big success with over a hundred farmers coming from all around Southern NSW for a day of presentations, displays and workshops by researchers, scientists, consultants and industry leaders.

The event enabled attendees to find out more about the current projects and trials such as the Crop Projection Trial, [Cool Soil Initiative](#), [Future Soils](#) and [Pasture trial](#) being run by FarmLink and its partners. There were also presentations on biosecurity, specifically foot and mouth disease and lumpy skin disease, off-farm investment, office efficiency and a live spray drone demonstration.

Smart and Skilled Update

The Smart and Skilled application process **opens 1 November 2022** and will determine which registered training organisations (RTOs) are suitable for a Smart and Skilled contract and allocations for the 2023-24 financial year. RTOs seeking to enter the government-subsidised vocational education and training market in NSW are also being invited to apply.

[Further information](#) about the Smart and Skilled application process, including eligibility criteria, how applications will be assessed and a summary of application questions is now available.

NSW Skills Shortage Survey

The NSW Department of Education is conducting a survey to learn more about the extent and underlying causes of skills shortages in NSW, especially in regional areas. Industry representatives, particularly those working in training, regional development, investment and employment are invited to complete this survey to contribute to the project and share your insights and knowledge about skills shortages.

The **survey closes today - Tuesday 20 September** and may take up to 20 minutes to complete, depending on the number of regions and industries you work with.

[Click here to complete the skills shortage survey.](#)

*The **NSW Skills Shortage Project** is a joint initiative of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation and Skills Policy, NSW Department of Education.*

National Safe Work Month

Next month is [National Safe Work Month](#). This is a great time to commit to building or maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

This year, you're invited to host a SafeTea event at your workplace. Grab a cuppa, gather your team and start an important conversation about health and safety at work. [The SafeTea tea room poster](#) is available as a free resource to get you started.



One of the ways AFAM ITAB showed its commitment to safety this month was by attending the biennial Farmsafe Australia 2022 National Conference. We connected with committee members to find out more about the safety practices in their industries and how AFAM can support them in this area.



From left: Ben Norton-Smith AFAM, Wayne Jones Skills Impact, Jess Cleary AFAM

Jobs and Skills Summit Outcomes



The Federal Government has released the [Jobs and Skills Summit outcomes](#) from the recent Jobs and Skills Summit, which saw Australians coming together to work constructively on the challenges and opportunities facing the Australian labour market and economy.

As a result of the consensus reached at the Summit, immediate actions will be taken to support building a bigger, better trained, and more productive workforce – with the aim of delivering more secure jobs with growing wages, boosting incomes and living standards and creating more opportunities for more Australians. The outcomes document addresses immediate actions, areas for further work and complimentary existing commitments in the following areas:

- a better skilled, better trained workforce
- addressing skills shortages and strengthening the migration system
- boosting job security and wages, and creating safe, fair and productive workplaces
- promoting equal opportunities and reducing barriers to employment
- maximising jobs and opportunities in our industries and communities.

Regional Youth Investment Program: Our Region, Our Voice



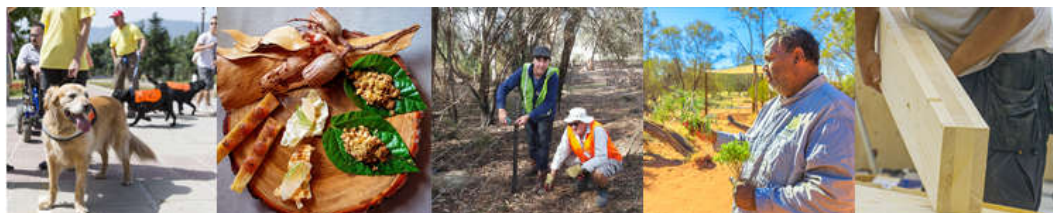
Applications are now open for the \$40 million [‘Our Region, Our Voice’ - Regional Youth Investment Program](#). The program provides grants from \$150,000 to \$3 million for projects that aim to address the unique challenges encountered by regional youth and maximise local opportunities. The objective of the Investment Program is to genuinely reflect the needs and aspirations of regional young people in NSW to:

1. learn, work and achieve in regional NSW
2. be mentally and physically healthy, safe and thrive in their communities
3. explore their creativity, collaborate with other teams, develop a sense of achievement and feel socially and culturally connected to their communities
4. have transport and digital connectivity solutions to access training, work services and recreational activities
5. be place based and reflect the diversity of young people’s needs across regional NSW.

The Office for Regional Youth conducted a significant youth research project consulting with almost 2,000 young people across regional NSW ([Regional Youth Insights report \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)) and will ensure that funding is directed towards initiatives that young people want and need to live their best lives.

Applications close 4 October 2022 at 10am. [Application guidelines are available here.](#)

National Training Package Updates



Validation complete:

- [Respect for Country Job Skills Project](#)

Drafts approved by AISC and being considered by Skills Ministers:

- [Responding and Assisting in Bushfires Project](#)
- [Sawmilling and Timber Processing Project](#)

Drafts being finalised:

- [Ag & Horticulture Core Skills Project](#)
- [Pig & Poultry Farming Project](#)
- [Permaculture, Organic Production & Composting Projects](#)

Endorsed by ministers (to be published when Respect for Country Job Skills is endorsed):

Drafts submitted to State and Territory Training Authorities:

- [Meat Processing, General, Quality and Safety Skills Project](#)

- [Australian Native and Bush Food Project](#)

NSW Grants, Opportunities and Scholarships

Training Services NSW is offering the following grants, opportunities and scholarships to employers and vocational learners. Follow the links for more information.

[Aboriginal Business Advisory Initiative](#): support for existing Aboriginal owned and operated businesses to grow and diversify their business.

[Barranggirra - Skilling for Employment Initiative](#): to provide end-to-end support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners through culturally appropriate mentoring to ensure successful retention and completion of training and improved post-training employment outcomes.

[Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant](#): the grant adopts a number of strategies to develop and support Aboriginal people through the creation of training and employment opportunities.

[Resources to Assist in Supervising Your Apprentice or Trainee](#): a series of videos and resources are available.

[Free Training for Veterans](#): to broaden their career opportunities and help transition to civilian life after service, veterans and their partners will have access to free training.

Other Grants and opportunities:

[Free Support to Help Create Mentally Healthy Workplaces](#): SafeWork NSW has a range of programs, tools and resources available to help on the journey to create mentally healthy workplaces.

COVID-19 Support

Services NSW is working with federal, state and local government and the private sector to bring together all the COVID-19 support and services for businesses on the [Services NSW website](#).

TAFE NSW has developed [a website](#) that collates information and programs to assist small businesses in the recovery period from COVID-19.

The pandemic has brought about new challenges and mental wellbeing is important. If you are feeling stressed, anxious or negatively impacted by COVID-19, there are resources and services available to help on the [NSW government website](#).

COVID-19 Updates:

Find COVID-19 related guides and stay up to date on the latest COVID-19 VET updates on the [Training Services NSW website](#).

Please feel welcome to share this newsletter with anyone you think might be interested.

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