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December 2023

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As 2023 comes to end, AFAM would like to say a huge thank you to the stakeholders who volunteered their valuable time, energy and expertise to contribute to AFAM's Industry Training Advisory Committees.

The committees come together from a diverse range of sectors to provide industry updates on the skills and training needs of their workforce. It has been a pleasure working with committee members who bring a passion and enthusiasm for their industry and a genuine interest in ensuring improvements to skills and training.

A big thank you also to individuals who provided AFAM with information and feedback throughout the year. Your information has been valuable in identifying the current, emerging and future workforce challenges and opportunities, including gaps, shortages and strategies to address these workforce issues.

AFAM would like to wish everyone a safe and Merry Christmas, and a wonderful new year. Jess will be taking a short break from 22 December until 4 January.

We look forward to all that 2024 brings.

Best wishes,
Jess

Smart and Skilled Update

National Survey on the Draft Revised RTO Standards

As part of national work to improve quality training delivery, the Commonwealth Government is starting a pilot phase on the draft revised RTO Standards, intended to ensure:

- RTOs of different types, sizes and focus can demonstrate compliance in different ways;
- there is flexibility to enable excellence and innovation;
- regulators can regulate effectively against the revised draft Standards.

This will involve focus groups and simulated performance and monitoring activities with a sample of RTOs identified by states and territories, RTO peak bodies and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

The pilot outcomes will be published on the Commonwealth Government website: <https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/quality-reforms>.

The Commonwealth Government will further refine the draft revised Standards based on the pilots and the finalised Standards will go to Skills Ministers for agreement in early 2024. The Commonwealth will also develop guidance materials, regulatory policies, practices and tools to support the sector, informed by the pilot outcomes.

The finalised Standards are expected to be released in early to mid-2024 and to take effect from January 2025.

NSW Vocational Education and Training (VET) Review

The NSW VET Review is a comprehensive examination of the vocational education and training sector. Led by an expert panel and supported by the NSW Department of Education, it is focused on identifying the strengths, gaps and opportunities for improvement in skills development and training, to support our students and workforce.

The Final VET Review Report will be presented to the NSW Government in 2024.

To learn more about the review, visit the [NSW Department of Education and Training](#).

Stakeholder Survey - Jobs and Skills Australia: 2024 Skills Priority List

To better understand the skills profile in Australia, the Jobs and Skills Australia [2024 Skills Priority List \(SPL\) stakeholder survey](#) is now open until 5pm (AEDT) Friday 23 February 2024.

The on-the-ground knowledge and experience you can provide as part of this survey will give Jobs and Skills Australia insights into the recruitment challenges and occupations that might be in shortage across the Australian labour market. The SPL informs analysis and advice on potential policy responses to shortages in the Australian labour market which may affect your industry and we encourage your input to help make sure the 2024 SPL is based on comprehensive evidence.

You are also able to provide additional evidence and information such as member surveys that you have run, relevant industry reports commissioned, and other data you may have to further paint an accurate picture.

Read about Jobs and Skills Australia's [SPL Methodology](#) and [take the survey](#).

Innovations in Trade Pathways Grant Winners

The [Trade Pathways Innovation Fund](#) enabled industry-led projects to trial and test new approaches to obtaining trade qualifications. Establishing and enhancing these pathways will lead to an increase in qualified workers in trade occupations facing skills shortages. In September, we highlighted the Nursery & Garden Industry Association. This month, AFAM spoke to other fund recipients, the Baking Association of Australia about their Trade Pathways project and attended the MINTRAC meat industry trade pathways event in Wollongong.

Baking Association of Australia's Program Recognising the Skills of Bakers

The Baking Association of Australia and TAFE NSW have partnered together on a program to provide a simple and easier way for candidates to get their skills recognised.

The '[Rising to the Trade](#)' program is designed for people who have or had a career in the baking industry but not had their skills formally recognised. Industry experts assess the skills of experienced workers, enabling them to attain Certificate III in Bread Baking or Certificate III in Cake and Pastry. There are 22 candidates currently enrolled in the program.

The 5-step process includes a baking industry expert team conducting workplace visits or arranging to meet candidates at their local TAFE Campus. After the site visit, the industry expert team assess whether candidates can go directly to the Rising to the Trade Baking Skills Assessment Day or need some extra training. Any required gap training will be conducted either at the candidate's workplace or TAFE and will be free of charge.

The Rising to the Trade Skills Assessment Day and Graduation will be held in June 2024. For more information and to apply, please visit [Baking Association of Australia](#).





MINTRAC's Wollongong Event Promoting Pathways into Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher)

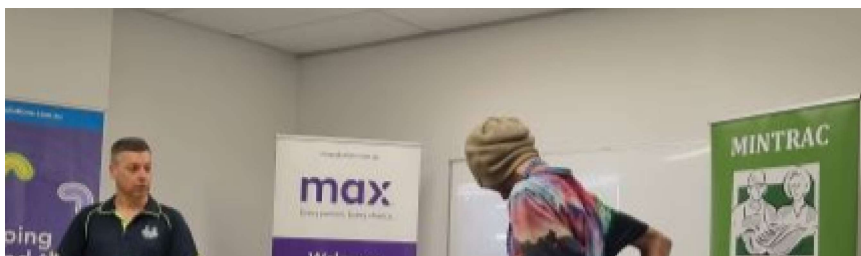
MINTRAC (National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council) has partnered with MAX Employment Wollongong to deliver a retail butcher program for local job seekers in the Illawarra region. The pre-employment program held in late November, included unaccredited training and site tours, and set job seekers on their journey towards employment and future training.

MAX Wollongong screened over 40 participants to select the top ten candidates who were the best fit for the requirements of retail butchery. During the three-day program, participants were given introductory training on topics such as hygiene, food handling and preparation, quality assurance, knife sharpening, manual handling skills, and workplace equipment including personal protective equipment (PPE).

On the third and final day, participants visited five different butchers in Wollongong and surrounding areas. A diverse range of butchers participated in the program including Albion Park Village Meats, Superior Meats on Addison, Shellharbour Meats and Smallgoods, Bush's Meats and Keiraville Butchery. Each employer described the career opportunities and what it was like to work in their stores. They also provided demonstrations to participants on how to break down a carcass, make a sausage, handle knives and use the bandsaw.

The program has been a huge success with 50% of participants already in discussions with employers about potential opportunities which include casual vacancies through to Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher) apprenticeships. MINTRAC plans to continue the success of the program by running a similar program in other regions.

To find out more about the program, contact Mark Wadsworth at mwadsworth@mintrac.com.au





Mark Wadsworth from MINTRAC with program participant trying on PPE for retail butchery.

Cultivating the Next Generation Report

AgriFutures has released its, *Cultivating the Next Generation* report, which aims to understand the perceptions, knowledge and awareness of NSW teachers and careers advisors of agricultural careers. It explores the support and resources needed to provide high quality and accurate advice to secondary school students. The project funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry included extensive research involving focus groups with ten schools and a survey of 195 educators in New South Wales.

The main findings of the report include:

- 46.3% of educators surveyed disagreed with the statement that the agricultural industry in Australia is not a diverse employer in contrast to other industries.
- 2.7% of respondents thought having a career in agriculture meant becoming a farmer.
- 98.4% perceived agriculture to be important for Australia's future.
- 48.1% of secondary school-based educators say they lack confidence in their ability to teach about careers in agriculture.

[Learn more about the project](#) and [download the Cultivating the Next Generation report](#).





Jobs and Skills Councils Project Updates:

Ag Trade Apprenticeships

Research is underway into the dynamics of a trade apprenticeship in agriculture to help attract new entrants and promote career pathways.

In person and online workshops were held across the country during November to discuss various options for an apprenticeship model. Stakeholders with experience as trainers, employers or employees in the industry provided input into how an agricultural apprenticeship could work, and issues that would need to be addressed to support success.

For more information, [visit the project webpage](#).

AHC Improvements Project

Some of the core skills for work across the agriculture, horticulture, conservation and ecosystem management (AHC) sector have been revised as part of recent projects, bringing them in line with changes in technology, systems and regulations, as well as updated skills in biosecurity, environmental sustainability, quality assurance and work health and safety.

For more information, [visit the project webpage](#).

Tree Felling Project

A project is underway to review three forest and wood products units which describe the skills for felling trees with a chainsaw at a basic, intermediate and advanced level. These units are used in a range of environments in which manual tree felling skills are required, including in arboriculture and agricultural settings.

In consultation with subject matter experts, the units have been revised to reduce the barrier to training while still supporting the safety and competency of learners.

For more information, [visit the project webpage](#).



NSW Grants, Opportunities and Scholarships

The following grants, opportunities and scholarships are available 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](#): 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.

[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.

[OCHRE Opportunity Hubs](#): aim to provide First Nations young people with the confidence and knowledge to follow a supported pathway between school and further education and/or employment through partnerships with schools, coordination of local opportunities, mentoring, support and more.

[On Farm Connectivity Program](#): to enable primary producers in agriculture, forestry and/or fisheries to take advantage of digital agribusiness solutions to boost productivity and improve safety. **Applications close 30 June 2024 or when funding is exhausted, whichever occurs first.**

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

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.

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

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