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AFAM ITAB

**Agriculture, Food
& Animal Management**

March 2024

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If you have any questions relating to skills and training in NSW, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes,
Jess
Executive Officer

Engagement Activities

This month, AFAM's Executive Officer Jess Cleary attended the Central Coast Industry Festival & Expo and the Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology (AIFST) International Women's Day Breakfast. Both events were excellent opportunities to network with industry and connect with food manufacturers on the Central Coast.

The Central Coast Industry Festival & Expo was organised by [Central Coast Industry Connect](#) and showcased the exciting products manufactured on the Central Coast.

Jess met with a diverse range of stakeholders from large well-established food manufacturers like Mars and Sanitarium to [Bara Barang Corporation](#), a Central Coast based organisation, running an Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (ISEP) in manufacturing. ISEP-funded activities reflect regional priorities and are designed to connect First Nations people to jobs, career advancement opportunities, and to new training and job-ready activities.



The theme of this year's International Women's Day was #InspireInclusion and the AIFST breakfast event included two guest speakers. Dr Emma Beckett who is a Food and Nutrition Scientist, spoke about being your authentic self and the changes that women can make in their lives. Dr Courtney Molloy, who most recently worked on developing a Central Coast innovation ecosystem as part of the Greater Cities Commission, spoke about her career as a researcher and the impact that positive role models have had on her career. It was great to hear from these two speakers and network with people working in the food production industry.





Dr Emma Beckett presenting at the ALFST International Women's Day Breakfast

AFAM's Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) for Animal Care and Management (ACM) and Agricultural Production Horticulture (APH) met this month to discuss the current issues impacting their industries. The committees provided valuable and timely information to the NSW government on the skills and training needs of their industry sectors. AFAM looks forward to continuing the discussions with the Amenity, Horticulture, Landscape, Conservation and Land Management (AHLCLM) and Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical (FBP) [ITACs](#) next month.

Part-Time Apprenticeship in Baking Pilot: Seeking Expressions of Interest from Employers

AFAM is seeking expressions of interests from large employers to be involved in a pilot program for a part-time Certificate III in Bread Baking apprenticeship.

Offering part time work opportunities may attract a broader and diverse range of candidates to support the workforce needs of your organisation. Part-time apprenticeships offer employees flexibility to gain recognised training from part-time employment opportunities, provide skills to a diverse cohort of apprentices and equal training opportunities for existing workers and new entrants.

The pilot program is being run by Training Services NSW and requires a minimum number of participants to ensure the successful evaluation of the program. AFAM are interested in hearing from large employers wanting to be involved. The term for a part-time apprenticeship under this pilot will be 54 months, or until the relevant competencies are achieved.

If you are interested in participating, please contact AFAM Executive Officer, Jess Cleary, jcleary@skillsinsight.com.au before **Friday 26 April 2024**.

AgSkilled 3.0 Update

The AgSkilled 3.0 program has received many training requests in the last few weeks. The limited budget for this program is very close to having all funds committed and Training Services NSW have advised all RTOs to provide the expression interest for the priority sectors for the remainder of the financial year.

If there's an urgent training need eligible under the [AgSkilled 3.0 program](#), please get in touch with the Training Services NSW AgSkilled workforce development officers:

Wagga Wagga Office: Sonia Stevenson Sonia.stevenson@det.nsw.edu.au

Tamworth Office: Huw Coleman Huw.Coleman1@det.nsw.edu.au



Smart and Skilled Update

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has extended the transition end date for 35 superseded qualifications on the Skills List which are now reflected in the [latest version 14.2](#).

The qualifications include Certificates II, III and IV and Diplomas in both Agriculture and Horticulture and Certificate III in Rural Operations. These extensions allow RTOs to continue to enrol students.

For more information, please refer to the [Smart and Skilled update](#).

Early Changes to Current Standards for RTOs

On 1 March 2024, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) announced early changes to the current standards for RTOs. These changes, signed off by the Minister for Skills and Training, are designed to address current pressures on the VET workforce and provide more immediate benefits to the sector. The Instrument, which amends the Standards to give effect to the early changes:

- reflects new and updated training products from the updated Training and Education (TAE) Training Package
- enables people who hold an education degree to be engaged as trainers and/or assessors
- enables people actively working towards the Certificate IV or Diploma from the TAE Training Package to deliver training and contribute to assessment under supervision
- enables broader use of industry experts
- aligns with recent changes to the Fit and Proper Person Requirements
- makes minor clarifications and amendments.

[Details of key changes and FAQs](#)

HRNSW Driving the Future with Industry Scholarship Fund

Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) is introducing the HRNSW Industry Scholarship Fund, a significant initiative aimed at attracting and retaining talented individuals to key positions in the harness racing industry within the state.

The scholarship initiatives will offer a range of benefits to recipients, including coverage of tertiary fees, HECS fees, uniform fees, study time and subsidised stable rent at the HRNSW Training Centre.

For further information on the HRNSW Industry Scholarship Fund, including eligibility criteria and application details, please contact HRNSW Education Welfare Manager Maurice Logue at mlogue@hrnsw.com.au or call (02) 9722 6600.



Strategic Review of the Australian

Apprenticeship Incentive System

The Australian Government is undertaking a review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System (Incentive System) to investigate the support available to help more people start and complete apprenticeships and traineeships.

The Incentive System provides financial support to apprentices, trainees and employers working in priority industries. It is intended to encourage people to start an apprenticeship or traineeship and see it through to completion. This is to ensure Australia has workers with the trade and technical skills needed by industry, providing secure, well-paid work and career advancement.

The review is looking into how support can best be placed to increase the completion rate and will be informed by targeted research and underpinned by broad consultation with stakeholders.

Written submissions on matters raised in the Terms of Reference are due before Wednesday 15 May 2024. Additional input will be invited throughout the review process via the [Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' Consultation Hub](#) and a range of virtual and in-person consultation methods.

For more information about the Strategic Review and to subscribe to receive updates on the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System, [visit the Department website](#).

Jobs and Skills Australia's Food Supply Chain Capacity Study

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) is undertaking a study on the workforce needs of Australia's food supply chain.

The Food Supply Chain Capacity Study will provide critical evidence, insights and recommendations to support workforce planning, policy development and program design for the core components of the food supply chain workforce.

More information about the study can be found on the [JSA website](#).



NSW Training Awards 2024: Nominations Closing Soon

There is still time to nominate an organisation in the following categories:

- Industry Collaboration
- Large Employer of the Year
- Small Employer of the Year
- Large Training Provider of the Year
- Small Training Provider of the Year

Entries close **Sunday, 31 March 2024**.

The [NSW Department of Education website](#) contains all the information you will need including the [award categories](#) for organisations, [how to enter](#), [eligibility and selection criteria](#) and [frequently asked questions](#).



Jobs and Skills Councils (JSC) Project Updates:

The [Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance \(MISA\) JSC](#) is currently drafting their 2024 Workforce Plan. [Download the Initial Workforce Plan 2023 excerpt.](#)

[Skills Insight JSC](#) currently have projects underway each in various stages. To learn more and provide input please follow the links below.

Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring Projects

[AgTrade Apprenticeship](#) Skills Insight is in the process of producing a report, outlining the insights provided by stakeholders and presenting advice for how an agricultural trade apprenticeship could be implemented.

[Connecting RTOs & Employers Research Project](#) Skills Insight is undertaking a research project to examine how barriers to training are being experienced and addressed in the racing and breeding industry. They will engage with relevant organisations to uncover insights into existing solutions and what makes them successful.

Stakeholder feedback is welcomed throughout the project.

[Meat Safety Induction Pilot](#) This project managed by MINTRAC as part of their collaborative partnership with Skills Insight, was initiated by the Agriculture Workforce Working Group (AWWG) and aims to improve workplace safety by establishing a nationally consistent, voluntary induction training program to be piloted in the meat industry.

[Training and Support Materials for Meat Safety Qualifications](#) The training and assessment materials used to deliver the Certificates III and IV in Meat Safety Inspection require updating to reflect recent changes to the qualifications and relevant National Standards. Consultation will take place throughout this project to update the training support materials available through [MINTRAC](#), so they reflect the latest advances in technology and QA practices as described in the National Standards and qualifications.

Training Package Projects

[AHC Improvements](#) Submitted to the Training Package Assurance Body.

[Essential Meat Processing Skills](#) This project managed by MINTRAC as part of their collaborative partnership with Skills Insight, is a continuation of the [project work in 2022](#) to update the AMP Training Package so that it is reflective of current industry skills requirements, compliant to training standards and ready for any future qualifications reform. Stage 2 will focus on three Certificate II meat processing qualifications in Food Services, Abattoirs and Meat Retailing.

[Livestock Operations](#) Over the past few years, the entire agriculture, horticulture, conservation and land management (AHC) training package has been undergoing significant revision using a 'Unit Sector' approach. This project continues the review of the training package with a focus on updating units relating to livestock operations. Input from employees, employers and trainers with relevant experience is encouraged so that updates reflect how work is performed in the industry currently.

[Rural Operations](#) The Certificate II in Rural Operations is being reviewed to see if it accurately reflects the evolving skills needs of industry and learners. RTOs are being asked to complete a short questionnaire and industry consultation workshops will take place in Patterson, NSW on Friday 19 April.

[Shearing and Wool Classing](#) Six qualifications and 33 units of competency will be reviewed to better reflect the skill level of the tasks described and the skills required by industry.

[Tree Felling Project](#)

In the finalisation stage.



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.

[Medium Business Support Grant](#): available to business and non-profit organisations with more than 20 and less than 200 full-time equivalent employees who were directly impacted by storms and floods from August to September 2022. **Closes 11.59pm 29 March 2024.**

[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.**

[Premier's Vocational Education in Schools Scholarship](#): for a study to research current issues in vocational education that impact students in schools. The scholarship is open to teachers in NSW secondary schools, specifically Vocational Education and Training accredited teachers, or teachers undertaking a VET co-ordination role at their school. **Applications close 11.59pm (AEST), Friday, 3 May 2024.**

[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.

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