Rural Operations Project Consultation Strategy

This Consultation Strategy for the **Rural Operations Project** includes:

- a project snapshot
- the stakeholder groups to engage, their purpose or reason for being involved
- communications channels and tools required to effectively engage with stakeholders
- details about consultation workshops
- processes for collecting and responding to stakeholder feedback.

Project snapshot

Project type: Routine, 12 months

Timeline:

- Commencement: March 2024
- Public and Government Consultation Draft 1 (Broad Consultation): June – July 2024
- Incorporating Feedback: July - August 2024
- Public and Government Consultation (Consensus Gathering): August - September 2024
- Senior Officials Check: November 2024
- Finalisation and Submission to Assurance Body: 29 November 2024
- Skills Ministers Endorsement: Date subject to submission outcomes

Scope/expected outcomes:

During Skills Impact's *Ag & Horticulture Core Skills Project* undertaken during 2022, technical concerns with the Certificate II in Rural Operations were identified. According to the qualification description, the Certificate II in Rural Operations 'provides an occupational outcome for industries and agencies in rural and regional Australia', and 'Depending on the units selected individuals can be employed not only in rural industries but also other rural and regional sectors, such as local government, tourism, hospitality, transport, construction, community services, information technology and metals'. Consultation is required to identify how the qualification is being used to prepare workers for various industries and whether the necessary skills for each are reflected.

The qualification also contains similar content to the Certificate II in Agriculture, with all of the core units of the Rural Operations qualification appearing in the core of the Certificate II in Agriculture. A review of the electives within the Certificate II in Rural Operations could help determine if the qualification provides enough standalone value as part of the training solution for industry or whether it could be enhanced to better support skills not captured in the Certificate II in Agriculture.

This project will undertake research and in-depth analysis of *AHC21216 Certificate II in Rural Operations* to understand how the qualification is used (particularly in the northern region of

Australia), and to clearly identify the intended job roles attainable upon completion of the qualification. These findings will be used to assess how the unique needs of the learners and workplaces that require these skills can be better met in future.

Thorough consultation with relevant stakeholders will inform whether:

- the qualification should be updated with defined outcomes and pathways
- the qualification outcomes could be met with another option such as one or more skill sets
- the qualification should be deleted or merged with another qualification with similar outcomes
- development of additional supports such as a User Guide which could assist with delivery in rural locations.

Website: A dedicated project webpage on the Skills Insight website has detailed information about the project plan, scope and consultation: https://skillsinsight.com.au/project/rural-operations/

Stakeholder Consultation

A list of key stakeholder organisations has been identified for this project. Skills Insight will ensure contact is made with each of these organisations during the development of this project to seek their involvement and their views on the draft training products. Consultation is not limited to the organisations on this list. This list simply helps us to identify those organisations that, because of their industry role, size or specialty, are likely to have a key interest in the development and outcomes of this project. All and any interested industry participants are encouraged to engage in the consultation of this project, when the draft units are available for feedback via the project webpage and webinars/workshops that take place.

Engagement Strategy

1. Identify Stakeholders: This includes all Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that have *AHC21216 Certificate II in Rural Operations* (the qualification) on their scope of registration, as they are directly impacted by the project. Additionally, it is important to identify and include stakeholders who represent different occupations, sectors and perspectives, ensuring that the subject matter experts (SMEs) in the Technical Committee provide balanced and varied input.

2. Inform and Engage Stakeholders: An initial communication, via email, will be sent to all identified stakeholders. This communication will provide details about the project, the issues to be addressed, and the importance of their participation in consultations.

Targeted RTO participation on the proposed project outcomes and/or changes related to the qualification will also be undertaken so that any implications can be considered.

3. Establish the Technical Committee: The Technical Committee will be established to function as a focused task force. It will provide technical expertise, guide project decisions and serve as a bridge between the broader stakeholder community perspectives. Technical Committee will include representatives of the relevant industry sectors within the *AHC Training Package* that are likely to employ learners/graduates of the qualification.

4. Technical Committee Meetings: Five Technical Committee meetings are planned for this project. In addition to the meetings, Skills Insight and/or Technical Committee members may initiate and hold individual meetings and conversations, as required to gather stakeholder advice and feedback.

5. RTO Questionnaire: Shortly after the project commences, all RTOs that have the qualification on scope of registration will be emailed a questionnaire designed to collect information on how they use the qualification. Depending on the RTO questionnaire responses, telephone calls or online meetings with interested RTOs will be conducted to clarify and explore further how the qualification is being used.

6. Meetings Scheduling: Research consultations focussed on gathering information on workplace outcomes related to the qualification are planned with representatives of industries most likely to employ learners/graduates of the qualification. Face to face meetings are planned the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. The main focus of these meetings is to gather industry/employer views on the workforce outcomes they consider relevant to the qualification. An online meeting is also planned to target key stakeholders that could not participate in the face-to-face meetings, for example from South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. In addition to industry/ employer representatives, other key stakeholders may be invited to these meetings, including members of the Technical Committee.

Other individual stakeholder meetings and/or phone calls with key industry stakeholders will be held throughout the project as required.

7. Feedback Loop: Create a robust feedback system to incorporate the insights and suggestions generated during these meetings. This system would help in continually adjusting the project plan as per stakeholder inputs and ensuring their concerns are addressed in a timely manner. (See Feedback section below.)

8. Regular Updates: Document and incorporate the key insights and suggestions generated during Technical Committee meetings, Public Consultation workshops, other consultation and research activities. Keep all stakeholders updated about the project's progress regularly. Use various methods like email, newsletters, and the project website to share information.

9. Evaluation and Review: Periodically evaluate and review the stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure its effectiveness. Make necessary changes based on the feedback received and the project's evolving needs.

Identified Key Stakeholder Groups

- Representatives from key sectors within the *AHC - Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package* that make may use Certificate II in Rural Operations or other related AHC qualifications that may be impacted by this project, noting that some stakeholders may be suitable to respond for multiple sectors. These sectors may include:
    - livestock production
    - agriculture
    - horticulture
    - land management

- industry associations and employers
- unions
- RTOs that have the qualification on their scope of registration
- State/Territory Training Authorities
- ITABs (or equivalent) with relevant sector coverage
- other Jobs and Skills Councils who may be impacted by the project.

Organisations for Targeted Consultations

The following organisations have been identified for targeted consultation in initial project stages. Targeted Consultations are not limited to the following organisations.

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type	Sector area
AgForce Queensland	QLD	Peak body and RTO	Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, dairy, broadacre
Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC)	National	Peak body	Animal care and management
Australian Livestock and Rural Transport Association	National	Peak body	Livestock and general haulage
Australian Council of Trade Unions (The ACTU have been invited to be added to the Consultation List – Skills Insight is awaiting their reply)	National	Union	
United Workers Union	National	Union	Farm workers in Production Horticulture
Australian Workers Union	National	Union	Agriculture industries workers in QLD, WA, NSW and SA
Australian Association of Bush Regenerators Inc AABR	National	Peak body	Conservation Ecosystems management
Central Land Council	NT	Peak body	Conservation, Ecosystems management

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type	Sector area
CentreFarm Horticulture	NT	Employer	Horticulture
Centre for Appropriate Technology	NT	RTO	Rural operations
Charles Dawin University (TAFE)	NT	RTO	Agriculture, rural operations
Cotton Australia	National	Peak body	Broadacre cropping
Dairy Australia (Research and Development Corporation)	National	Peak body	Dairy cattle, fodder and forage
Dalby State High School	QLD	Educational expert	Agriculture, Rural Operations
Department for Education, Children and Young People	TAS	Educational expert	Vocational Education and Training
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (WA)	WA	Government	Conservation, Ecosystems management
Ecological Society of Australia	National	Peak body	Conservation, Ecosystems management
Edmund Rice Education Australia Colleges	National	Educational expert	Rural Operations
FarmSafe Australia	National	Peak body	Farm safety

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type	Sector area
Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation	National	Employer	Right way burning, Conservation, Ecosystems management
Greenlife Industry Australia	National	Peak body	Nursery, Horticulture
Hay Inc. Agricultural Training	NSW	Employer and educational expert	Agriculture, Rural Operations
Indigenous Desert Alliance	National	Community organisation	Conservation, Ecosystems management
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation	National	Employer	Conservation, Ecosystems management
Industry Skills Advisory Council Northern Territory	NT	ITAB/ITAC Council	Training Package development, workforce development, and solutions
Kimberly Land Council	WA	Peak body	Conservation, Ecosystems management
Kimberley Pilbara Cattleman's Association	WA	Peak body	Cattle
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory	NT	Government	Environmental management
New South Wales Association of Agriculture Educators	NSW	Educational expert	Education and careers
New South Wales Department of Education	NSW	Government and RTO	Agriculture, Rural operations. AgSkilled 3.0 program

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type	Sector area
New South Wales Farmers	NSW	Peak body	Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry
Northern Australian Coordination Network	Northern Australia	Government	Biosecurity in NT, QLD and WA
Northern Land Council	NT	Employer	Education, training and employment pathways for first nation communities
Northern Territory Department of Education	NT	Government	Rural operations
Northern Territory Cattleman's Association	NT	Peak body	Cattle
Local Govt Association in QLD (To be followed up and confirmed by Skills Insight)	QLD		
Northern Territory Farmers	NT	Peak body	Production horticulture and broadacre
Primary Producers SA	SA	Peak body	Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, dairy, broadacre
Queensland Farmer's Federation	QLD	Peak body	Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, dairy, broadacre
Roper Gulf Regional Council	NT	Government and employer	Environmental management
ShoreTrack Ltd	NSW	Community organisation and educational expert	Skills development and employment pathways for marginalised young people, including skills for entry level work in agriculture, livestock production, metal

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type	Sector area
			fabrication, construction, automotive, and hospitality.
TAFE New South Wales	NSW	RTO	Rural operations
TAFE Queensland	QLD	RTO	Horticulture
TAFE South Australia (Barrosa)	SA	RTO	Rural operations
TAFE Western Australia (Central Regional)	WA	RTO	Agriculture, Rural operations
TAFE Western Australia (North Regional)	WA	RTO	Agriculture, Rural operations
TasFarmers	TAS	Peak Body	Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, dairy, broadacre
Tocal College	NSW	RTO	Agriculture, Rural operations
Victorian Farmers Federation	VIC	Peak Body	Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, dairy, broadacre
Western Australian Farmers Federation	WA	Peak Body	Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, dairy, broadacre
North Australian Indigenous Land & Sea Management Alliance Ltd NAILSMA	Northern Australia	Peak Body	Conservation, Ecosystems management

Note – in addition to the stakeholders in the table above, the following stakeholders will also be targeted for consultation:

- State Training Authority / Territory Training Authority (STA/TTA)
- Industry Training Advisory Boady / Industry Training Advisory Council (ITAB/ITAC)
- Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that have that have *AHC21216 Certificate II in Rural Operations* on their scope of registration.

Distribution of key stakeholders

Stakeholder Type	National	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
RTOs/Educational experts	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Industry employer	✓		✓	✓	✓				
Industry association /Peak industry body	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Union			✓		✓	✓			✓
ITAB		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
STA/TTA		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Communications channels, tools and purpose

Skills Insight Website

- The [Skills Insight website](#) will be the key information tool, where industry can find all the information they need about the project and activities. This dedicated webpage will exist for the duration of the project which will also include mechanisms for registering interest and feedback, such as registration details for workshops, and surveys for collecting feedback.

Skills Insight newsletter and news alerts

- The Skills Insight general newsletter (usually published monthly) will provide an update to all subscribers on project activities and opportunities to be involved.
- Timely news alerts will also be distributed to project and sector-specific subscribers whenever there is a project update.

Social media

- A useful and timely tool for sharing updates about project development and consultation activities.
- May include sharing images from workshops we can update stakeholders on engagement activities and encourage interest and input into the project.
- Larger project updates will incorporate a link to the Skills Insight website for further information.
- Interested stakeholders to share the posts on their own accounts and networks.
- Social media platforms:
    - [LinkedIn](#)
    - [X](#) (formerly Twitter)

Industry media

- A range of key stakeholder organisations with influential newsletters will be encouraged to share news of the project activities and consultation opportunities with their networks.

Email/mail merge

- To engage in topics related to specific stakeholder groups, i.e. RTOs, government departments of key industry associations around matters related to delivery, funding or employment considerations.

Workshops and meetings

- To provide further information about:
    - updates to the training package products
    - to ask questions about the project
    - how to provide feedback.

Regular updates to STAs/ITABs/CMM:

- direct monthly emails to inform of project updates
- one-on-one phone calls to discuss the project and seek feedback (during Draft 1)
- State/Territory based virtual meetings
- invitations to provide support for final drafts.

Consultations

If training package products are revised or created as part of this project, these will be drafted in consultation with subject matter experts and their networks. At the broad public consultation stage, Skills Insight then presents and discusses the draft training package products, collecting feedback from a wide range of stakeholders across the country. Whilst specific public consultation dates are identified, feedback is welcomed at any time, and will help Skills Insight in drafting the training package products. Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the project team via the Skills Insight website.

Consultation type	When/where	Details
RTO questionnaire	March – via email	The questionnaire will be designed to gather information on how the qualification is being used, including learner/cohort characteristics, why people enrol in it, delivery context, and typical skills and knowledge being delivered.
Workforce Research Consultations (including Workforce Functional Analysis)	April – Up to five face to face workshops are planned: NT (Katherine), WA (Broome), QLD (Toowoomba and Brisbane), and NSW (TBA) An online meeting is also planned to target key stakeholders that could not participate in the face-to-face meetings, for example from SA, VIC and Tas.	Key industry/employer stakeholders will be invited to participate in the face-to-face workshops to identify/confirm the job roles and work functions/tasks performed by entry level workers in agriculture sectors that operate in rural and remote areas. Industry sectors being considered include livestock production, broadacre cropping horticulture, ecosystem management and others that may emerge via the initial research. Representatives from key stakeholder organisations such as ITABs and RTOs will also be invited.

Technical Committee meetings	Five Technical Committee meetings are planned for this project between March and September. These will be conducted online. Additional online meetings with the Technical Committee – as a whole or in part – may take place as required to seek expertise and/or to address any conflicting feedback. If new units of competency are created as part of this project, additional expertise may be provided by Technical Committee and/or other subject matter experts. In addition to the meetings, Skills Insight and/or Technical Committee members may initiate and hold individual meetings and conversations, as required to gather stakeholder advice and feedback.	Meeting 1 – Initiate the project and sign off on project documents. Meeting 2 – Review research and feedback received and evaluate suitable solutions which may include removing or updating the current qualification, and/or creating new training products if required. Meeting 3 – Review of draft report (if qualification is to be removed) or first draft updated qualification (and any new training products) prior to release for broader consultation. Meeting 4 – Seek advice on any issues that arise from the broader consultation feedback to inform the second drafts that will be released for broader consultation. Meeting 5 – Seek advice on any issues that arise from the second draft broader consultation feedback to inform the final drafts. Review the final drafts in this meeting or shortly afterwards in preparation for submission for endorsement. *Note – The Technical Committee are required to convene at the start of the project to sign off on project documents and at the end of the project to view and acknowledge the final Training Product drafts before submission for endorsement.*
Broad consultation: Public and Government consultation phase – draft 1	Proposed 4 public consultation webinars	Depending on the project outcomes, the focus of this consultation phase will be on getting feedback and support for the proposed draft materials. People from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the webinars and provide feedback/contribute. Additional documentation will be provided to explain any changes so that stakeholders have a greater understanding of the reasoning behind the changes and their impact. Skills Insight Feedback Hub may be used to be used to capture feedback. Targeted invitations to STAs/ITABS/CMM to attend consultation workshops or individual phone calls/meetings to discuss the project.

| Consensus Gathering | Proposed 2 public webinars to gather consensus on final drafts | To provide support of any proposed solutions, final draft materials and further recommendations prior to final steps to submit for endorsement.

People from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the webinars and provide feedback/contribute.

Additional documentation will be provided to explain any changes so that stakeholders have a greater understanding of the reasoning behind the changes and their impact.

Skills Insight Feedback Hub may be used to be used to capture feedback.

Targeted invitations to STAs/ITABS/CMM to attend consultation workshops or individual phone calls/meetings to discuss the project. |
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Feedback

Receiving feedback from a broad range of stakeholders is essential to the training package product development process.

How to provide feedback

- During consultation workshops (virtual and face-to-face)
- Email – tvassallo@skillsinsight.com.au
- Feedback surveys - available during development, broad consultation and consensus gathering phases on the project's webpage at https://skillsinsight.com.au/project/rural-operations/
- Website contact form
- Phone - 03 9321 3526.

What happens to the feedback?

All feedback received is recorded in a Consultation Log for the project. This log will be updated after each phase of the project and will be publicly available on the project's webpage at https://skillsinsight.com.au/project/rural-operations/

This log will include:

- generic stakeholder information (stakeholder type and location).
- method feedback was received.

- feedback received.
- consideration and proposed resolution, including justification of why feedback may not have been incorporated.
- general summary of all feedback received and how it has been addressed in the draft training package products.

Conflicting feedback

When feedback received is varied and a broad consensus is not able to be achieved from the feedback alone, Skills Insight will engage with subject matter experts in the Technical Committee or other targeted specialists (such as regulators or relevant government departments) for their expertise to work towards an agreeable solution. In some cases, an additional review phase may need to take place followed by another round of public consultation in order to address the draft training package products in question.

After all methods to address conflicting feedback have been undertake and consensus is unable to be reached, a formal dispute resolution process may be undertaken according to the processes outlined in the Training Package Product Development and Endorsement Process Policy.

As with all other feedback, this process and its outcomes will be recorded and made publicly available in the project's Consultation Log.

Technical Committee sign-off

The *Review of Certificate II in Rural Operations Project Technical Committee* has reviewed and contributed to this Consultation Strategy as required, and gave their support on 5 March 2024.