

Connecting RTOs & Employers Consultation Report

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1. Executive Summary

Employer and registered training provider (RTO) partnerships are expected to become increasingly important to skilling Australia's workforce. Supervised practice in the workplace combined with structured RTO learning offers improved competency outcomes. Collaborative approaches with employers also have the potential to improve the viability of training delivery for RTOs.

Employer and RTO relationships are especially important in thin markets where the workforce is located in regional, rural and remote locations with students spread over a broad geographic range, and where the cost to deliver the training requires access to expensive materials or machinery. These factors are a challenge for many of the industries Skills Insight supports.

This project explored existing employer-RTO relationships in the racing and breeding industry. The aim was to identify the success factors to collaboration and training delivery in thin markets. The need to sustain a dynamically skilled workforce is a central concern to Australian governments (Waugh, 2024). By uncovering best practices that enhance workforce outcomes and support the commercial viability of skilling initiatives from RTO-employer partnerships, the findings could have broader applications across the racing and breeding industry and in many other sectors across Australia.

Stakeholder representatives consulted for this Consultation Report include employers, RTOs (public and private), apprenticeship centres, high schools, unions, government representatives, and industry advisors. These stakeholders advised that both learners and employers have experienced difficulty accessing formal training through an RTO. Equally RTOs cited challenges in delivery that needed genuine collaboration and the removal of barriers to address gaps in training availability.

Partnerships between employers and RTOs have been underexplored to date, but financial and delivery viability of a course is a key consideration for RTOs when deciding whether to develop and deliver a course. This is a particular challenge where small but high value cohorts of learners are spread across large geographical areas. RTOs may not have access to sufficient data or insight to make judgements about the level of specific training demand yet have to commit significant investment to the development of training resources, teaching teams and practical skill-based assessments. These factors are often experienced in the racing and breeding industry where geographic constraints and high costs hinder traditional RTO course delivery methods.

Two exemplar RTO-employer relationships within the racing and breeding industry sector were explored to build a detailed understanding of strategies used and barriers experienced in fostering positive and sustained RTO-employer relationships. These relationships were centred around the Fast Track Program in the Hunter Valley and the Silverdale Farm Academy in the Southern Highlands in NSW. Both of these exemplar relationships successfully addressed skills shortages and improved the provision of in-demand accredited training to enable new workforce entrants to the racing and breeding sector.

The consultation process identified six key success factors for RTO-employer relationships:

1. Industry Stewardship: Sector leadership from industry peak bodies and active industry engagement from RTOs enables the development of opportunities to initiate connection.

2. **Place-Based Training:** RTO-employer connections leverage a place-based focus, which draw on local industry networks and facilitate local training accessibility to improve delivery viability.
3. **Person-Dependent Initiation:** Passionate individuals within the industry are frequently critical to the championing and the ongoing maintenance of RTO-employer relationships.
4. **Custom Funding Models:** Tailored funding arrangements offset the challenges resulting from thin markets, high cost and low enrolment environments to ensure financial viability for an RTO.
5. **Aspire to Genuine Partnership:** RTO-employer connections focussed on the long-term collaboration enable continuous improvement to the value realised from the partnership.
6. **Build Over Time:** A capacity to start small, and gradually scale and enhance training programs has underpinned sustained growth in both training supply and impact.

Subsequent consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken to test the applicability of the six success factors engaged by the exemplars elsewhere within the racing and breeding industry. This consultation activity included site visits, workshops and interviews across Western Australia (WA) and Queensland (QLD). Key insights were captured regarding the applicability of the six success factors to the potential development of additional racing and breeding industry RTO-employer connections.

Recommended Next Steps

Given the need to increase the supply of training in thin markets, high cost and low enrolment environments, the recommended next steps detailed below could build upon the insights generated through this project.

- **Trial and Evaluate:** Pilot the application of the six success factors in other thin markets in one or more specific regions or industry sectors to enable the further development and evaluation of these success factors.
- **Better Practices Communication:** Develop a communications product to share and promote the successful strategies engaged by industry peers to build high-functioning RTO-employer relationships.
- **Knowledge Building Presentation:** Create a detailed presentation that encapsulates the findings from this project to educate and engage stakeholders across the VET sector.
- **Advocacy and Recognition:** Job Skills Councils (JSCs) consider advocating for and supporting VET sector awards which recognise and celebrate RTO-employer partnerships and their shared achievements.

By trialling, communicating, educating, and recognising these practices, the potential exists to support the VET sector to improve the accessibility of vocational education and training through the development RTO-employer connections, ultimately benefiting both learners and employers.

2. Project Aim

The project investigated existing successful RTO and Employer partnerships in NSW as a basis for discussion about the formation and implementation of successful partnerships within the broader Racing and Breeding Industry. It sought to identify the starting point for these partnerships, explain the necessary conditions for their viability, explore currently available options for accredited training in the horse breeding sector, and assess potential for wider application.

Existing RTO-employer partnerships include two programs with TAFE NSW delivering nationally accredited training in the horse breeding sector. These programs involve delivery of Certificate III in Horse Breeding offered through the Fast Track Program in the Hunter Valley, and the 'internship and secondary schools' programs at Silverdale Farm Academy in the Southern Highlands.

By examining these training programs and engaging with employers, RTOs, and other stakeholders across additional states and territories, the project aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the barriers hindering access to RTOs for vocational training within the horse breeding industry. Insights garnered from these engagement activities will inform potential methods to address these barriers, thereby supporting the continued growth and success of the sectors and other sectors with similar dynamics.

This project highlights recommendations and strategies that may be used for other industries experiencing the same challenges as the horse breeding sector.

¹ *Internship program' is the name given to a program at Silverdale Farm Academy which involves the delivery of four units of competency*

3. Method

The consultation approach is to gather insights and perspectives from key stakeholders involved in RTO-Employer partnerships within the racing and breeding industry with a focus on the horse breeding sector. The methods included:

- **Conducting interviews** with representatives from TAFE NSW, Thoroughbred Breeders Australia, and stakeholders associated with the Fast Track program and Silverdale Farm. Questions focused on the setup, success factors, benefits, challenges, risks, completion rates, future employment prospects, and expansion plans of the programs.
- **Seeking input from relevant union representatives** at the Australian Workers Union.
- **Site visits** to a stud farm in Bunbury, WA, to observe firsthand the operations and challenges faced by industry participants.
- **Desktop research** on RTO-Employer partnerships to gather insights and best practices from existing literature and reports.
- **Online meetings** with employers and training providers involved in developing and implementing workplace-based training programs.
- **Workshops** in identified horse breeding regions in QLD and WA to promote discussion and collate expert stakeholder views.

See Appendix Two for Workshop Agenda Topics and Categories of Attendees

4. Background – Racing and Breeding Industry Sector

4.1 Industry Overview

The racing and breeding industry in Australia spans vast geographical areas, presenting significant challenges in accessing local employees and formal training opportunities.

Racing and breeding is a regulated and licensed industry in Australia. Almost all roles in racing require licensing, including trainers, jockeys (including international, interstate, apprentice, picnic and jumps jockeys), stable employees, float drivers, farriers, syndicate promoters and rider agents, while breeding also requires registration for a number of roles.

According to [AgriFutures Australia](#): ‘The thoroughbred breeding industry in Australia is responsible for generating more than \$1.16 billion to the Australian economy and is the second largest in the world.’

The Australian thoroughbred breeding industry operates in every state and territory, with many of the larger commercial farms situated in NSW’s Hunter Valley. The industry is spread out, mostly across regional areas, supporting a large and varied number of job roles such as feed merchants, bloodstock agents, stable hands, young horse handlers, foaling attendants, stallion handlers, stud hand and stud managers.

4.2 RTO Partnerships

RTO-employer partnerships play a crucial role in addressing industry skill needs by providing relevant training and enhancing the capacity of both providers and employers (NCVER, 2023). Nevertheless, qualifications with high industry need and difficult to deliver skill requirements often experience low or negligible enrolments, indicating a disconnect between industry need and training provision.

Examples such as the Fast Track Program and training delivery initiatives at Silverdale Farm in NSW demonstrate instances where RTOs and employers have effectively collaborated to deliver accredited training tailored to meet the skill needs of the racing and breeding industry.

Despite these positive examples, the overall uptake of nationally accredited training remains relatively low in the racing and breeding industry. This is particularly concerning as employers frequently report critical shortages of skilled workers and a pressing demand for upskilling existing employees to sustain operational effectiveness.

A number of barriers hinder access to formal training within the racing and breeding sectors. These barriers include a lack of awareness and information about the sort of training

**‘There may be a perception that the racing industry is a ‘closed shop’, but this isn’t the case.’
– Employer**

that could be made available if pursued by industry, hesitancy among RTOs to invest in training delivery infrastructure when demand is unclear including the cost of making applications for scope and investing in complex and time-consuming processes for state funding approval, as well as other difficulties in navigating the VET system.

For the purpose of this project, the focus has been narrowed down to the Horse Breeding Sector in Western Australia (WA) and Queensland (QLD), two states where there is a significant racing and breeding industry, but no delivery of relevant qualifications.

Insights gathered from the horse breeding sector in New South Wales (NSW) highlight the importance of robust relationships between employers and RTOs in establishing and nurturing skills pathways for employees and students. However, these successful partnerships are not replicated across other states.

In its 2022 report, the Racing and Breeding Industry Reference Committee noted high levels of informal work within the sector, such as volunteers. The report also highlighted the increasing reliance of enterprises on informal training that have shifted potential demand away from the VET sector contributing to a thinning VET market. In some cases, employees access specialist horse breeding training provided in countries outside Australia. Skills Insight is currently undertaking a research project to examine how barriers to formal training delivery may be addressed in the industry (See: Skills Insight's 2024 [Workforce Plan](#))

5. RTO-Employer Connections in the Horse Breeding Industry Sector

As part of this project, RTO-employer partnerships delivering nationally accredited training programs in two regions of NSW (Hunter Valley and Southern Highlands) have been studied to determine how these partnerships were formed initially, their ongoing viability and expansion, benefits for participants, funding sources and roles played by employers, employer associations and RTOs.

5.1 Fast Track Program

The Fast Track Program, a national program originating in the Hunter Valley, is an example of a successful RTO-employer partnership managed by Thoroughbred Breeders Association (TBA), TAFE NSW and GoTAFE VIC to deliver Certificate III in Horse Breeding via traineeship programs. It is a 12-month program providing an introduction, training and learning experience for graduates to progress careers in the thoroughbred horse breeding industry.

The program requires the trainees to be employed on a stud farm for a period of one year. During that time, qualified VET trainers based at TAFE NSW Scone campus deliver a training and assessment program (intensive learning block) which includes a 6-week 'bloc release' face-to-face training (initial 4 weeks followed by 2 weeks) and site visits to complete assessment in the workplace. TBA administers the program including the application and selection process, placement of trainees on stud farms, marketing, and accommodation.

What needs to be in place for a program like this to be successful?

- equine facility (Scone NSW campus has simulated farm set up including horses on-site)
- qualified VET trainers and assessors able to deliver training and assessment in the workplace, online and face-to-face
- industry support (placements at stud farms for 20 trainees each year)
- partnership must be flexible (RTO and TBA need to be flexible for the program to work)
- accommodation provided for participants to undertake block release component of training.

Program Start-up and Development

TBA made an initial approach to a number of local RTOs to deliver a training program with the industry identifying a clear need for training in the horse breeding and racing sector. Of those RTOs approached, TAFE NSW was selected as the preferred provider because it could cater for the industry preferred 'block release' model for the delivery of training combined with 12-month work placement.

The program was launched in 2018 with new intakes on a yearly basis. There are now approximately 200 applications a year from all states and territories and up to 20 trainees per year are accepted. The application process involves a formal interview with up to three people with an industry background. TBA liaises with stud farms to place accepted trainees and sets salaries for the 12-month period.

Expansion of Program delivery outside NSW

The Fast Track program has expanded to cater for applicants/trainees from other states and territories. Applicants from outside NSW are placed on stud farms in their home state and participate in 'block training' onsite in NSW with other trainees. In 2022, the delivery of the traineeship to SA applicants was implemented. In 2023, a relationship between TAFE NSW and Go TAFE Victoria was formed to deliver the traineeship to participants in Victoria. In 2024 the traineeship was approved for delivery in Tasmania and Queensland and on funded lists. In WA TBA are currently liaising with the relevant Industry Skills Councils regarding the traineeship approval process and application as a funded course.

Benefits of the program

The Fast Track program has undergone development and expansion since its implementation in 2018, continuing throughout the period of COVID-19 restrictions. The training program has proven to be adaptable to industry needs and has high completion rates. The national completion rate for Fast Track traineeships is approximately 75% compared to the national completion rate of around 50% for traineeships overall. Of the graduate class 90% stay in the industry, going on to develop careers (outcome data for Fast Track program included in [appendices](#)).

As well as contributing to the upskilling of employees and helping to address skills shortages, trainees can undertake the program while employed under the traineeship arrangements in their home state which allows their state-based local areas to gain the benefits of their learned expertise, promoting skill development at a national level.

The program has the potential to draw in applicants that don't necessarily have a horse industry background and also promote new entrants in the industry. In addition, the camaraderie between learners developed during the on-site training component provides for personal growth and learning for participants.

Challenges/hurdles to get over

Working with horses, farm environments in general and the delivery of training in the workplace can contribute to high costs for an RTO. RTOs also need to contend with potential changes in staff, costs associated with updating qualifications and changes in funding arrangements for training delivery overall. For the Fast Track Program, where the qualification is delivered across multiple states, inconsistencies in requirements for traineeships and differences in funding arrangements between states leads to higher planning and administration costs, particularly in the setup phase. Overall, the investment in trainees is considerable and funding sources need to be maintained to meet costs. Please see below.

Nationally consistent training delivery between states is considered important for the racing and breeding industry. The involvement of more than one RTO in the delivery of the Fast Track

Program (TAFE NSW and GoTAFE Victoria) can lead to different learning methods and delivery settings, presenting a challenge for managing training delivery across multiple states.

Participants in the Fast Track program need to commit to 12 months employment on a stud farm and single accommodation during the block release training period (6 weeks in total). The majority of trainees in the Fast Track program are young, generally under 30 with most between the ages of 18 and 25. Reasons participants may leave the program have been recorded as missing home, expectations of the work required, and/or pursuing further education across industry sectors separate to the racing and breeding industry.

Funding Sources and Contributions

Funding/Payment for RTO

RTOs receive a government-funded contribution for delivering qualifications that varies from state to state and depending on the qualification. For example, the Certificate III in Horse breeding is funded under 'Smart and Skilled' in NSW. Under Smart and Skilled, the RTO will receive \$9000 for each trainee undertaking the qualification. Without Smart and Skilled funding, this program would not be viable. Traineeships are free in NSW for trainees (if the trainee is eligible).

Role/contribution of Employer

Employers make a contribution by releasing employees from work for six weeks whilst still paying normal salaries of the program, plus meeting administrative costs. Employers also commit to continuing the trainees wage while they are in Scone for the intensive learning block, alongside accommodation on farm for the twelve months. They also understand that they are not getting a readymade staff member, but rather a trainee that will require support and guidance.

Payment received by Employer

Employers receive the benefit of a tax incentive along with the commencement and completion fees (as allocated for traineeships). The total amount of commencement and completion fees is \$3500, received in two six monthly payments.

Role/Contribution from Thoroughbred Breeders Association:

- administration of the program including application and selection process, liaison and placement of trainees on stud farms
- all fees for interstate learners (including VIC)
- flights/travel for interstate learners to get to Scone (Agri-Futures fund sponsoring interstate learners)
- delivery of qualification plus training in first aid, defensive driving and mental health (optional extras covered by TBA).

Contribution of Agri-Futures Fund

For the past two years, the Agri Futures Australia Capacity Building Program has sponsored a number of interstate learners, helping cover their tuition and travel costs. Agri Futures manages the thoroughbred research levy on behalf of the industry.

5.2 Silverdale Farm Programs

A successful RTO-employer partnership between TAFE NSW and Silverdale Farm, under the operations of Silverdale Academy, operates to deliver school-based programs and a non-school-based internship program which are described below.

School-based programs – Industry Day Tour and Schools Equine Internship Program

There are two aspects of the schools' program.

Schools Industry Day Tour - Silverdale runs a program for secondary schools to participate in a one-day excursion to their site. The program is designed for students from year 9 to 12 and now has approximately 200 students per year.

During the visit students learn basics about the industry, are given a tour of tracks, or other horse industry associated facilities, hear from guest speakers, and meet with horse trainers and other industry employers and employees. Students also learn about study pathways from a TAFE NSW teacher, which links them further with industry career options. Silverdale Farm provides the venue, facilities and access to their staff. The Australian Turf Club (ATC) are also instrumental in these tours by providing additional sites including Warwick Farm Racecourse and associated facilities.

Transport for students via bus is funded by Regional Industry Education Program Funding (RIEP) and Silverdale Farm.

Schools Equine Internship Program - A selection of students from the various day tours are provided with the opportunity to participate in a one-week schools equine internship program. The week is based at Silverdale Farm where the interns learn about daily stud farm activities and visit breeding farms, racing stables, racecourses and other industry sites. They also gain an overview of a range of professions in the industry including veterinary, farriering, stable and stud hand, foaling attendant, equine dentist, chiropractor, equine nutritionist, trainer, strapper and bloodstock agent.

Non-school based (open) 'Equine Internship' Program

Silverdale's Internship program is a six-week program, with five weeks online learning and one week of practical onsite at stud farm or Warwick Farm Racecourse. Sites will vary between program intakes and the practical week may involve attendance at yearling sales, attending William Inglis Riverside sales complex, professional racehorse trainers' stables, equine specific veterinary hospitals, other breeding farms, horse education and training centres. Interns meet with leaders across many aspects of industry and are able to discuss their study and career pathways.

Four units of competency are delivered to learners via combined workplace assessment and online delivery and assessment:

ACMEQU212 Handle horses safely

ACMEQU217 Load and unload horses

AHCWHS301 Contribute to work health and safety processes

ACMGAS202 Participate in workplace communications.

What needs to be in place for a program like this to be successful?

- The venue for the one-week practical component – in this instance supplied by Silverdale Farm or the Australian Turf Club in collaboration with Silverdale Academy which also has a classroom set-up and includes attendance at yearling sales and/or Warrick Farm Racecourse
- Industry people volunteering their time
- Delivery and assessment by TAFE NSW
- TAFE NSW/industry collaboration to put a program together based on industry need
- Government funding in order to facilitate ongoing programs
- Ongoing training services funding provided by the government
- Industry contributions towards funding the training and facilities
- Available safe suitable horses for practical skills work
- Participants being willing and able to fund their own accommodation and travel costs
- The owner of Silverdale Farm meeting costs for marketing and promotion across all three programs and other funding shortfalls.

Program start-up and development

Programs at Silverdale were initiated due to industry concerns about skill shortages and a lack of access to racing and breeding training programs for local learners in the Southern Highland area of NSW.

Initial contact was between the Silverdale Farm owner and the TAFE NSW Services Coordinator at Moss Vale campus, NSW (in the Southern Highlands). The subject of the original contact was a discussion about a starting school-based careers program. Over time, discussions also led to setting up the 'internship program' with access to VET funding for the delivery of four nationally accredited units.

Benefits of the Silverdale Farm Programs

- The Silverdale Farm programs provide an opportunity for participants to find out about the racing and breeding industry and understand the range of job roles in the horse industry.
- The onsite week at Silverdale Farm and Warrick Farm Racecourse are well set up for program delivery and provide an opportunity to develop skills and learn more about job roles in the racing and breeding industry.
- The delivery of four units rather than a full qualification is a less costly investment, particularly for participants who may decide they don't want to continue with a career in the industry for various reasons.

- The non schools internship program provides for the accreditation of four units which can potentially be used as credit transfers towards Certificate III in Horse breeding and other qualifications.
- Some students that were initially disengaged from school are now employed after being provided with exposure to jobs in the industry.
- As part of the school and careers program, students are provided the opportunity to be selected for industry-based work experience programs. Students have gained jobs in various roles as a result of this program, which has been described as a ‘lifechanging’ experience for some. (Program outcome data included in [appendices](#))

**‘Recently three students gained jobs in the industry as a result of the school-based internship program which can be a lifechanging experience for some.’
– RTO**

Challenges/hurdles to get over

- Requirements to apply for funding for each intake reduce flexibility for program delivery and the ability to plan further ahead. For example, an applicant wasn’t able to complete the internship program due to scheduling constraints. This was because attendance of the practical component was fixed and unable to be scheduled for another time later in the year due to funding constraints.
- Participants need to have left school and be over 15 for the RTO to receive the training funding provided against the delivery of the four units. In a small number of cases participants have paid full fees to participate in the internship program while still at school.
- There may be a lack of trainers for programs to keep expanding. Preferred trainers have a background in horse breeding and the racing industry and more specific to job and career outcomes than a general background in horse care and working with horses.
- If key industry figures were unable to continue their involvement in the setting up and implementation of programs at Silverdale Farm, it is unlikely the program would remain viable.
- Participants involved in the internship program are required to organise accommodation, as well as their own transport to the onsite venues covering the practical component of the training. This can be difficult to organise and finance for some participants and further assistance in this area may need to be provided in the future. Additional funding of accommodation would allow programs to reach a wider range of participants across regional NSW. At the moment, the owner of Silverdale Farm is meeting costs for marketing and promotion across all three programs and other funding shortfalls which are not covered by either the government funding received by TAFE NSW for delivering the open internship program or the RIEP funding for the school-based programs.

‘Not enough trainers if programs keep expanding. Trainers should have proper industry background.’ – RTO

6. Workshop Discussion

‘For me, the workshop was about adding value and career pathways for the horse breeding industry. We know we need to build relationships but also need to know how to build relationships.’ – Employer

During February and March, the project team conducted round table consultations to collect the views of expert stakeholders. Discussions were held in Queensland and Western Australia, two states where there is a significant racing and breeding industry, but no delivery of certain qualifications.

Discussion during workshops centred around the following themes:

- 6.1 Shortage of Workers
- 6.2 Navigating the Training System
- 6.3 Training Viability
- 6.4 Trainers and Assessors
- 6.5 School and Pre-employment Programs
- 6.6 Traineeships
- 6.7 Nationally Consistent Training Delivery
- 6.8 Career Pathways, Retention and Succession

The discussion varied between each of the three workshops depending on the interests and background of the attendees and specific local issues. At each workshop, it was noted that connections were formed between participants as a result of bringing them together.

Presentations About Successful Employer-RTO Collaboration:

At each workshop two examples of successful programs were given. There was a presentation by Maddy Tims about the Fast Track Program in the Hunter Valley NSW, in which Thoroughbred Breeders Australia and TAFE NSW have partnered to deliver a Certificate III in Horse Breeding Traineeship.

There was also a video presentation about the Silverdale Farm Internship Program and Schools Program, partnership between TAFE NSW and Silverdale Academy in the Southern Highlands NSW, which offers an immersive Horse Industry short course including a five-day on-site Internship.

6.1 Shortage of Workers

During workshop discussions, employers in attendance emphasised that there is a high demand for skilled workers across the racing and breeding industry sector. Employers are 'always looking' for both experienced and new staff. A recent article in [The Thoroughbred Report](#) stated that, 'At the moment the general skill shortage within our industry is its single biggest threat.' Related workforce challenges are listed below.

High demand for skilled workers

Employer participants emphasised a persistent demand for skilled workers across various roles across the racing and breeding industry as a whole for positions such as stud hands, yearling preparation, foal watch, care attendants, farriers, jockeys, vet assistants, feed merchants, veterinarians, stable hands, track riders and various others.

Reported impacts and challenges due to shortage of workers

- stud farms in QLD and WA scaling down activities, leading to potential business closures
- reliance on transient workers, such as backpackers on 88-day visas and university students, particularly in WA, with no long-term commitment to the industry
- cancelled country and regional races due to a lack of jockeys.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

- difficulty attracting young people to pursue careers in the industry, compounded by competition from higher-paying sectors such as mining
- limited career pathway accreditation and career progression opportunities, making it challenging to retain talent
- travel and accommodation issues in regional areas, affecting workforce attraction.
- the physically demanding nature of the job, with long hours and low wages for entry-level positions, leading to recruitment challenges and high turnover rates
- perception issues regarding the industry's 'glamorised' image versus the day-to-day reality.

Perception and Awareness

'People outside the industry are less likely to actively pursue a career in the horse industry without knowing what it's about.' – Employer

- lack of understanding among potential candidates about career opportunities and career pathways within the industry
- perception of the racing and breeding industry as exclusive, referred to as a 'closed shop,' discouraging individuals from pursuing careers without sufficient knowledge about the industry's dynamics and opportunities

- talent draining to larger companies: smaller studs losing employees to larger, perceived more lucrative studs in regions like the Hunter Valley.

6.2 Navigating the Training System

Navigating the VET system can be complex for employers as well as RTOs. Awareness of training options, funding arrangements and compliance requirements as well as challenges exacerbated by geographical constraints all form part of the picture and are outlined below.

Awareness of Training Options

‘Employers may not know much about how traineeships work until someone comes out to sign someone up.’ – Employer

- Employers and RTOs face challenges in navigating the training system, with some employers unaware of relevant qualifications or the potential for training opportunities available in their industry. While some employers may have a general understanding of apprenticeships (e.g. jockey apprenticeship), they may be less familiar with traineeships.
- Employers and the employer associations often resort to developing their own non-accredited training programs, such as TBA's online modules for new staff and individuals interested in horse breeding.

Funding Arrangements and Compliance

‘Can plan better if funding arrangements are predicted to remain consistent and stable in future years.’ – RTO

- RTOs need to navigate complex funding arrangements and compliance requirements to ensure the financial viability of training programs. For example, in WA, qualifications on the 'Priority List' receive additional financial incentives to encourage training delivery in specific areas. Not all skills required by industry make it onto the priority list with RTOs and Industry being uncertain about criteria being used to determine priority. Similar priority lists and criteria confusion exist in other states and territories.
- Compliance requirements, such as ensuring the latest versions of qualifications are delivered, incur costs for RTOs. Replacing superseded qualifications and units with more recently updated versions requires extra administrative tasks as well as updates to training resources and confirmation of trainer and assessor accreditation requirements for their delivery.

Challenges in Regional Areas

‘Thin markets not addressed properly in the funding model. TAFE has no incentive to operate in thin markets.’ – Racing Industry Training Consultant

Training providers encounter challenges in delivering training in regional areas due to lower population density and dispersed demographics. Concentration of numbers is less likely in regional areas, posing logistical and financial hurdles for training delivery.

Implications for Training Providers

Navigating the training system requires both awareness of available funding opportunities and compliance with regulatory requirements. This entails significant administrative and financial commitments for training providers, particularly in regional areas with lower population densities.

6.3 Training Viability

Workshop discussions highlighted that the development of viable training programs within the racing and breeding industry requires strategic planning, industry collaboration, and long-term investment to overcome initial challenges and ensure program success. Issues related to viability of training are listed below.

Financial Viability and Program Development

‘Cost of keeping two horses on-site and ongoing maintenance is significant – covering feed, fencing, shelter, daily monitoring, grooming, animal health services.’ – Industry RTO

For RTOs, initiating new training programs entails upfront costs for teachers, facilities, and resources. Business cases for new programs often require complete cost recovery within the first year, posing a challenge by not allowing for longer-term investments. Programs may struggle initially due to low enrolments, despite industry need. RTO-employer partnerships play a crucial role in building the capacity and resilience of both providers and employers (Timboli, et al., 2023), and as evidenced by programs such as the Fast Track. However, this resilience is built over time, requiring an initial starting point and gradual development process over a number of years.

Foundations of Successful Programs

Examination of the two examples of successful programs through Fast Track (Hunter Valley area NSW) Certificate III in Horse Breeding and Silverdale (Southern Highlands) have the following foundations:

- industry engagement and collaboration
- streamlined application processes
- access to suitable facilities - Scone TAFE and stud farms on-site training facilities
- diverse funding sources – TAFE subsidies, Agri-futures, RIEP, TBA, state traineeship funding.

Development Process of Training Programs

‘A business case is needed for new projects and often over a one-year cycle, whereas the business case may need to be a three-five-year plan to

do the work required. May have to start off small and look for ways of funding/supporting building effective partnerships over time.’ – RTO

Building successful training programs often involves long-term investment and gradual expansion over several years, characterised by the following key steps:

- Cultivating relationships with employers and industry associations. These connections can play a crucial role in facilitating the growth and success of the program.
- Identifying available resources. This involves researching and establishing relationships to discover resources that could be utilised in the program, such as on-site horses.
- Establishment of traineeships. Creating the demand for such programs in the industry and identifying potential candidates who are seeking career opportunities in the field.

Initial Starting Point for RTO-employer Connections

The initial starting point for building RTO-Employer connections for viable accredited training programs can vary. Using the Fack Track and Silverdale Farm programs as examples, both were initiated by passionate, determined and persistent employers and have evolved over time, with career pathways and trainee numbers developing concurrently. As momentum builds, training becomes more viable, but the challenge lies in initiating the process and investment of time to build.

6.4 Trainers and Assessors

During workshop discussions barriers related to the availability of qualified trainers and assessors, as well as the financial and resource challenges associated with obtaining necessary trainer experience and qualifications were highlighted. Collaborative approaches between RTOs and employers, use of industry experts under RTO supervision coupled with flexible training delivery methods, could help overcome these barriers and build the capacity of industry personnel to support the delivery of effective training and assessment within the racing and breeding sector.

Availability of Qualified Educators/Supervisors

Availability of suitably qualified educators or trained supervisors, whether based at RTOs or in the workplace, emerged as a potential barrier to setting up and sustaining training delivery. The lack of qualified trainers and assessors impedes the implementation of training programs.

Industry-driven Training and Assessment

Discussions revealed instances where individuals within the industry undertook training and assessment activities in their workplaces ‘out of goodwill’ and a desire to contribute to the development of skilled workers. Their motivation was not financial but driven by a personal investment in fostering skilled workers within their industries.

Costs and Resource Allocation

- Both RTOs and employers highlighted the high costs, in terms of time and resources, associated with industry staff obtaining a full Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) qualification. This qualification serves as the entry-level requirement for teachers, trainers, and assessors in VET settings.
- RTO-Employer partnerships offer opportunities for industry personnel to undertake training and assessment activities and upskill others within their workplaces. However, the costs and resource requirements for obtaining qualifications remain a challenge.

Flexibility in TAE Training Delivery

Stakeholders suggested that providing flexibility and staged delivery of training modules for TAE qualifications could help mitigate the high costs and resource allocation involved. By offering modular training delivery, individuals in the industry could gradually build their capacity to gain qualifications for training and assessment roles, thereby enhancing workforce skills and capabilities. However, they would need to do this progressively whilst carrying out training activities to support viability. The current approach of requiring the qualification upfront creates significant hurdles to getting delivery off the ground.

6.5 School and Pre-employment Programs

‘Taster programs give kids a chance to try before they buy.’ – RTO

Workshop participants viewed building a skills pathway through school-based and pre-employment programs, specialist college initiatives, and industry partnerships as highly important for attracting and retaining talent in the racing and breeding industry. These programs have the potential to serve as pathways for aspiring individuals while providing employers with a pool of skilled and job-ready candidates.

Value of School Programs

- School-based programs are highly regarded by employers as they offer valuable exposure to industry jobs and provide opportunities to explore career options and provide a better understanding of what it is like to work in the horse breeding industry.
- Programs at Silverdale farm were developed over time with the initial RTO-employer connection about starting a school-based careers program. Over time, discussions also led to setting up the ‘internship program’ with access to VET funding for the delivery of four nationally accredited units.
- During site visits learners can be exposed to the many career opportunities within horse breeding leading to other horse-related jobs and careers providing services to the horse industry. See, the Equus Education’s [list of careers in the horse industry](#).

Specialist College Programs

- Specialist colleges such as WA College of Agriculture and Australian Industry Trade College (AITC) in QLD offer equine-related programs that serve as foundational pathways into the racing and breeding industry. For instance, AITC's Equine Academy, operating in partnership with Racing Queensland, provides learners with practical training and pathways to careers in various industry roles.
- Specialist schools can offer the delivery certificate II qualifications with different training structures. For example, WA College of Agriculture offers Certificate II in Horse care as a VET in schools' program. The AITC in Queensland offers Certificate II Racing as either a VET in school program or in the workplace via a School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SBAT).

Pre-Employment Programs

- Employer or industry associations together with RTOs can create pre-employment programs for school leavers, career changers and priority groups by developing a small series of units (skills set) to give potential employees an experience and exposure to a career.
- Training delivery provided during a pre-employment program has the potential to be credited towards completing a full qualification. This begins to create viability for both employers and RTOs, creating potential candidates for employers and potential enrolments for RTOs.

Resource Sharing and Industry Partnerships

Collaboration with industry partners is vital for the ongoing delivery and expansion of training programs. Relationships with industry stakeholders facilitate access to resources such as horses and equipment, ensuring the viability and sustainability of school and pre-employment programs. As demonstrated in the Silverdale Farm training programs, sharing of resources creates a mutually beneficial relationship between training providers and industry stakeholders. This can also identify potential for regional industry training hubs.

Community Perception and Employer Connections

School-based and pre-employment programs can play an important role in dispelling misconceptions about job availability in the industry. These initiatives provide realistic insights into training and job outcomes, enabling local schools to effectively promote industry-related programs to students and candidates.

Assessment of Job Readiness

Connections with RTOs and employers contribute to the assessment of participants' job readiness. For example, graduates from Certificate II in Horse Care may not possess the skills required for certain industry roles such as trackwork riding. The Certificate II in Horse Care qualification requires assessment against a certain type of horse (in this case, assessment takes place with calm,

obedient horses). Whether or not training is delivered in the workplace, off-site, or a combination of both, understanding the capabilities of future employees allows employers to provide necessary supervision and mentoring, ensuring successful integration into the workforce.

6.6 Traineeships

‘Readily available training resources are very useful when looking to deliver new qualifications.’ – RTO

While traineeships offer significant benefits for both individuals and employers in the horse breeding industry, challenges related to funding, regulatory differences between states, limited scope of delivery by RTOs, and the availability of workplace-based training resources need to be considered for maximising their effectiveness and accessibility. Benefits, challenges and complexities of traineeships are outlined below:

- For employers to enroll their employees in a traineeship, the involvement of an Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Provider (AASN) field officer is required to facilitate the signing-up process on-site. Additionally, an assessment of the availability of trained supervisors in the workplace is essential, either through their experience, qualifications, or a combination of both.
- During discussions, it became evident that practical, on-the-job training is integral to the horse breeding industry. Employers expressed willingness to train new employees, with many stud farms open to working with trainees onsite.
- Training in the workplace is highly beneficial for racing and breeding qualifications.
- Complexities arise in traineeship facilitation due to differing rules and funding arrangements between states.
- Efforts are underway to expand traineeship opportunities, particularly in regions where they are not currently available.

6.7 Nationally Consistent Training Delivery

Nationally consistent training delivery is an expectation of employers for maintaining industry standards and facilitating workforce mobility. Collaboration between RTOs, employers, and industry bodies, coupled with the availability of standardised training resources, has the potential to assist in overcoming barriers and facilitate training program development across the racing and breeding industry. Issues related to nationally consistent training delivery are outlined below:

RTO Engagement with Employers

RTO standard 1.6 requires RTOs to engage with employers to ensure the relevance of training and assessment strategies, practices and resources, and the currency of industry skills of trainers and assessors. Employers should have confidence in employing trained and qualified individuals from any state, expecting consistent skills and knowledge at a national level. Horse breeding workers often move to other locations within Australia.

Best Practice Approach

The Fast Track program by Thoroughbred Breeders Australia (TBA) upholds nationally consistent training as best practice for participants, accrediting them with a Certificate III in Horse Breeding. While skills standards are standardised in nationally based qualifications, training delivery methods may vary to suit specific environments.

Costs and Resource Development

Developing training programs based on national skill standards incurs significant costs for RTOs. Many RTOs independently develop resources for the same qualifications, often competing rather than collaborating due to commercial pressures. Developing training resources for qualifications with lower enrolments can be challenging and expensive.

Availability of Training Resources

Ready-made training resources available for purchase can alleviate time and cost burdens for RTOs. However, such resources are often lacking for qualifications with fewer enrolments. The lack of readily available resources compounds the financial challenges of program development, especially without additional funding.

Online Education Platforms

Thoroughbred Breeders Australia has developed an online education platform funded by industry contributions, offering modules covering essential aspects of horse care. This initiative aims to provide accessible and standardised non-accredited training resources to individuals entering the industry or seeking to enhance their knowledge. Identifying and coordinating existing resources to map against national training standards can streamline the planning and development of training programs. Aligning existing resources with established standards, can allow RTOs to leverage available materials to meet training requirements more effectively.

6.8 Career Pathways, Retention and Succession

Employers and school advisors emphasised the importance of nurturing workers' careers, particularly young individuals, by recognising their contributions and providing career advancement opportunities. Qualifications acknowledge individuals' commitment to learning new skills, and some employers are willing to finance these qualifications. Encouraging career advancement and creating awareness of career pathways benefit employee retention, as seen in programs like FastTrack and Silverdale Farm. Managing succession planning is crucial due to an aging workforce and a shortage of new entrants. Employers need to focus on retention, education, and career advancement to cultivate a talent pathway and ensure leadership continuity.

7. Summary of Findings

The following six success factors are considered to be critical to the development of high functioning RTO-employer relationships and were derived from the content of the exemplars explored and broader consultation undertaken to inform this project.

1. Industry Stewardship: Sector leadership from industry peak bodies, passionate employers and active industry engagement from RTOs enables the development of opportunities to initiate connection.

Employers across the racing and breeding industry consistently highlighted the challenge of a shortage of skilled workers, leading to operational difficulties. Strong leadership from industry employer representative bodies, passionate employers and RTOs is necessary to address this shortage by promoting careers in the sector and ensuring training programs are well-supported and relevant to industry needs. Successful RTO-Employer relationships working together creates a sustainable skills pathway.

2. RTO-employer connections leverage a place-based focus, which draws on local industry networks and facilitate local training accessibility to improve delivery viability.

High set-up costs for traditional campus delivery can mean that widespread geographical coverage isn't feasible. However, establishing strong relationships and utilising industry facilities as training areas can effectively create geographical training hubs, improving training access and relevance.

The availability of qualified trainers and assessors is crucial for the successful delivery of training programs. Custom funding models that support the cost and time commitment required for obtaining qualifications, along with flexible training delivery options, can help address challenges associated with accessing workplace-based trainers and assessors.

3. Person-Dependent Initiation: Passionate individuals within the industry are frequently critical to the championing and the ongoing maintenance of RTO-employer relationships.

Successful training programs in the horse breeding sector often require significant investment and time to develop. The viability of these programs often depends on passionate industry champions who drive engagement, work with RTOs, Government and Industry to secure funding, and ensure the availability of resources. However, this comes with inherent risk of continuation if passionate individuals leave before relationships become sustainable.

4. Custom Funding Models: Tailored funding arrangements offset the challenges resulting from thin markets and low enrolment environments to ensure financial viability for an RTO.

Both employers and training providers face challenges in navigating the training system, including awareness of available qualifications, funding arrangements, and compliance

requirements. Placing training in industry settings and developing better information tools can improve access and issues with parties navigating the training system. Additionally, funding for skills pathway programs for career promotion, VET Schools and pre-employment programs assists to create a flow of trained workers. Simplifying the process for approved providers to receive funding and apply for funded qualifications would further enhance the viability of training programs. In addition, apprenticeship support network providers can be effective in nurturing partnerships between employers and RTOs and providing information about funding differences between states.

5. Aspire to Genuine Partnership: RTO-employer connections focussed on the long-term collaboration enable continuous improvement to the value realised from the partnership.

While national skill standards exist, variations in training delivery methods and resources create challenges for ensuring consistency across different states. Long-term collaboration among RTOs, industry stakeholders, and continuous improvement of training resources can help achieve national consistency.

Staff recognition, upskilling, and nurturing a career pathway promote retention and encourage career growth. Building sustainable career development programs over time provides for a steady flow of skilled workers and leadership succession within the industry.

6. Build Over Time: A capacity to start small, and gradually scale and enhance training programs has underpinned sustained growth in both training supply and impact.

Initiatives such as school-based programs and pre-employment programs play a vital role in creating pathways into the racing and breeding industry. Building these programs over time and enhancing them gradually ensures sustained impact and broader reach, breaking down perceptions about job opportunities and providing valuable career exposure.

Staff recognition, upskilling, and nurturing a career pathway promote retention and encourage career growth. Building sustainable career development programs over time will ensure a steady flow of skilled workers and leadership succession within the industry.

8. Recommended Next Steps

This project has generated insights from a limited sample of engagement. Based on the project's findings, potential next steps to facilitate increased and improved RTO-employer connections could include:

1. Trial and Evaluate

- **Implement and Evaluate the Six Success Factors:** Consider the development of one or more pilot projects in a specific region or industry sector to apply the six success factors. This involves selecting a region or sector which has not yet been able to develop RTO-employer relationships and seeking to implement the six success factors to assess their effectiveness.
- **Refine the Approach:** Use the insights gained from the pilot project(s) to refine and enhance the framework. Address any identified gaps or challenges to improve the set of better practices prior to encouraging a broader implementation.

2. Better Practices Communication

- **Develop a Comprehensive Communication Product:** Create a detailed document or digital resource that highlights the better practices identified through this project. This product could include case studies, success stories, and practical guidelines for RTOs and employers.
- **Distribute Widely Across the VET Sector:** Ensure that this communication product reaches a broad audience, including RTOs, employers, industry bodies, government representatives, and other stakeholders. Use various channels such as newsletters and online platforms to disseminate the information.

3. Knowledge Building Presentation

- **Create a Detailed Presentation:** Develop a presentation that encapsulates the findings and recommendations of this project. This should include data, insights, and practical advice on building and sustaining successful RTO-employer relationships.
- **Engage and Educate Stakeholders:** Use this presentation to engage stakeholders across the VET sector. Organise workshops, webinars, and meetings to share the findings, with a view to integrating these insights into the working approaches of RTOs and employers.

4. Advocacy and Recognition

- **Awards:** JSCs could support awards through state and federal VET peak bodies to recognise and celebrate achievements in the development of RTO-employer relationships and their achievements. These awards should highlight efforts that lead to successful VET delivery.
- **Create Real Outcomes for Industries:** The recognition of these achievements could encourage additional industries, employers and stakeholders to strive for similar outcomes.

By trialling, communicating, educating, and recognising successful practices, the potential exists to support the VET sector to improve the accessibility of vocational education and training through the development RTO-employer connections, ultimately benefiting both learners and employers.

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10. Appendices

Appendix One – Stakeholder Engagement

Workshop Attendees

Name	Position and Organisation
Amber Agar	Busy at Work – Strategic relationships manager
Angus McAlpine	Stud Manager – Eureka Stud
Basil Nolan	Stud Owner - Raheen Stud
Crystal Greenwood	Teacher (Cert II Horse Care) - WA Colleges of Agriculture - Morawa
Di Palmer	Program and Operations Manager UQ Skills
Divina Jenks	Australian Industry Trade College (AITC)
Fiona Lacey	Mogumber Park – Thoroughbred Stud. TBA board
Gerry Amos	TAFE Queensland - Education Design Manager (Product lead)
Hannah Chitty	Racing Queensland – RTO Administrator
James Grasl	MEGT Australian Networks Support network
Jill Gray	DESBT – Program manager Southeast Region Department, Employment, Small Business and Training (SE QLD)
Jo Chiu	Industry Development Manager - Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance

Karen Mostyn	Senior Field Officer
Liz Woodberry	AVT – Equine veterinarian
Michael Grieve	Grandview Stud – Stud Owner TBA Qld Committee. Deputy Chair of Agri-Futures
Mick Holtham	Stud Manager- Allwood Stud Committee WASBA
Nambok Intharangsy	AQUIS Farm – Employer
Phil McGahan	Regional Director – TAFE Queensland
Phil Rienecker	Nambour Christian College – Head of Agricultural Science
Ron Fleming	Consultant Racing and Wagering WA and VET Training
Scott Wilson	Assistant Regional Manager - Busy at Work
Sharyn Lancaster	Racing Training Manager - Racing and Wagering WA
Sue Bain	Program Manager - Applied Vocational Training (AVT)
Wayne Swindell	Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office – Manager

Project Contributors

Name	Title	Organisation	State
Alan Abbott	Regional Manager	Busy at Work Apprenticeship Services	QLD
Alison Haines	Associate Vice Chancellor Katherine Region	Charles Darwin University	NT

Amber Agar	Strategic Relationships Manager	Busy at Work Apprenticeship Services	
Amber Vozella	Assistant Director, Skills Strategy	Skills Canberra	ACT
Anna-Lee Newell	Workforce and Skills Officer	Industry Skills Advisory Council, NT ISACNT	NT
Beverley Litster	Manager	Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training	QLD
Brad Pinch	Head of Industry and Partnerships	Australian Industry Trade College	QLD
Brian Collison	Stud Manager	Balmoral Park Stud	WA
Cameron Thomas	Acting Principal Specialist Regional Prosperity	Scenic Rim Regional Council	QLD
Cameron Wright	Branch Organiser	Australian Workers Union NSW	NSW
Christine Meunier	Equine Trainer	Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE) VIC	VIC
Cassandra Horan	General Manager - Australian Apprenticeship Support Network	Busy at Work Apprenticeship Services	QLD
Chloe McLeish	Manager, Human Resources	AQUIS Farm	QLD
Christine Meunier	Equine Trainer	Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE) VIC	VIC
Danielle Tiller	Silverdale Academy - General Manager	Silverdale Farm	NSW
David Cookson	Training Co-ordinator	Skillinvest	VIC
Gael Sparks	Industry Educator and Resource Developer Coordinator	Racing Queensland	QLD
Greg Nairn	Education Training and Industry Liaison	Department of Education	WA

Hannah Wiemers	Agriculture Teacher	Isis District State High School	QLD
Ian Mcleod	CEO	MTO Group Pty Ltd	QLD
Idris Achmad	Apprenticeships Field Consultant	MEGT Australia	WA
Janet Murray	CEO	The Animal Academy Pty Ltd	WA
Jeanine Diederich	WASBA President	WA Standardbred Breeders Association (WASBA)	WA
Jennifer Buttress	Program Leader Animal Studies	Melbourne Polytechnic	VIC
Jeremy Smith	General Manager	Scenic Lodge Thoroughbred Stud	WA
Jill Gray	Program Manager South East Region	Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training (QLD)	QLD
Jo Duncan	Stud Manager	Forest View farm	WA
John Sunderland	General Manager Godolphin Woodlands	Godolphin Pty Ltd	NSW
Judi Forsyth	Lecturer	Central Regional TAFE (WA)	WA
Julie Hobbs	Chief Executive Officer	FutureNow - Creative and Leisure Industries Training Council	WA
Juliet Williams	Project Manager, TAFE Projects	Federation TAFE	VIC
Karen Day	General Manager – Equine Welfare & Traceability	Racing Australia	NSW
Katrina Teisini	Operations Manager	ForestWorks	VIC
Kay Gerard	Chief Executive Officer	Food, Fibre & Timber Industries Training Council WA	WA
Kelly Perry	Industry Development Manager Sport, Fitness and Recreation	FutureNow - Creative and Leisure Industries Training Council	WA

Kevin Ring	OH&S OFFICER	Australian Jockeys Association	NSW
Kim McLeod	Product Lead	TAFE Queensland	QLD
Kristen Doyle	Chief Operating Officer	Warwick Turf Club	QLD
Lee Smith	Director of Future Schools and Partnerships	The Australian Industry Trade College (AITC)	QLD
Leigh Graham	Executive Officer	The Racing Education Centre	VIC
Linda Molloy	TAFE NSW Horse Safety Australia	Horse Safety Australia	NSW
Lyndal Manson	Director, Governance, Policy and Projects	TAFE Directors Australia	ACT
Maddison Tims	Education and Project Manager	Thoroughbred Breeders Australia	NSW
Michelle Foxcroft	WA Division - President	Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA)	WA
Nathan Clarke	Senior Policy Officer	Department of Training and Workforce Development	WA
Nickie Berrisford	Executive Officer	Partners in Ag	VIC
Nicole Hughes	Field Operations Manager	MEGT Australia	VIC
Rob Rule	Manager/ Company Secretary	Timber Training Creswick	VIC
Rod Morris	Industry Skills Advisor	Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (Darling Downs South West Region)	QLD
Ross Hanley	Manager, Industry Engagement	Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training (QLD)	QLD

Scott Wilson	Assistant Regional Manager	Busy at Work Apprenticeship Services	QLD
	National Organiser		
Shane Roulstone		Australian Workers Union	NSW
Sharyn Lancaster	Racing Training Manager	Racing and Wagering WA	WA
Sherree Price	Assistant Director – Industry Engagement	Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)	QLD
Shonagh Bradstock	Portfolio Manager Science and Environment	South Metropolitan TAFE (WA)	WA
Skye Rhodes-Mitchell	Education Coordinator Animal Science	Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE) VIC	VIC
Sue Crampton	Business Manager & Senior Consultant	Animal Industries Resource Centre	QLD
Suzanne Seinor	Senior Program Officer	Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA)	WA
Suzy Turnbull	Head Teacher	TAFE NSW	NSW
Tania Broad	Director	Goodlands Farrier School	WA
Tara Meling	Lecturer	Central Regional TAFE	WA
Tim Biggs	Educational Team Leader	TAFE Queensland	QLD
Tom Reilly	CEO	Thoroughbred Breeders Australia	NSW
Vanessa Hawkins	Founder	12 Points Psychology	VIC
Kirsten Doyle	Chief Operating Officer	Warwick Turf Club	QLD

Appendix Two – Workshop Agenda Topics and Categories of Attendees

Categories of Workshop Attendees

Where	Number of Attendees
Warwick, Qld	7
Perth, WA	8
Brisbane, Qld	10

Attendees

Stud Managers and Owners

Training providers (private and government)

State Training Government (DESBT and AQIA)

Apprenticeship and traineeship services

Racing Qld and Racing and Wagering WA

WA College of Agriculture

Australian Industry Trade College (AITC)

Secondary school

Agenda Items Covered during Workshops

1) Understanding Training Pathways

- Explanation of Certificate III Horse Breeding (entry-level) and Certificate IV Horse Breeding (upskilling).
- Importance of formal training for the industry.

2) Navigating Formal Training

- Exploring RTO and TAFE processes for employers to access formal training.

- Discussion about training locations and methods.
- 3) Government Support and Funding
- Input from State Government representatives on advice, funding and access assistance available.
 - Information on how employers can benefit from government support.
- 4) Traineeships
- Presentations by Australian Apprenticeship Support Network providers on navigating the process of employing a trainee.
 - Guidance on the process of employing staff under a traineeship.
- 5) Benefits for employers and employees.
- Role of Group Training Organisations (GTOs) for employers for seasonal staffing requirements.
- 6) Collaboration and Maximising Viability
- Roundtable discussion on building strong relationships between employers and RTOs.
 - Exploring mutual benefits and expectations.
- 7) Resources and Infrastructure
- Discussion on the resources required for effective training.
 - Guidelines on creating a conducive environment for learning.
- 8) Promoting Careers in Horse Breeding
- Collaboration with school career advisors.
 - Strategies for promoting careers in horse breeding at schools.
- 9) Post-Secondary Education Opportunities
- Discussion about further education options post-secondary school specific to horse breeding.

Appendix Three – Question prompts for Workshop based discussion and activities

How could successful RTO-employer partnerships can be formed and implemented in the Racing and Breeding Industry.

- 1) What is the starting point?
- 2) What needed to be in place for these partnerships to work?
- 3) What options are currently available for accredited training in the horse breeding sector, and could they be applied more widely?
- 4) What are the challenges faced by both RTO and employers, and what could be the potential risks for these partnerships to continue to operate successfully in the future?

Appendix Four – Interview Questions with Fast Track and Silverdale Participants

- 1) What sort of work/research went into setting up the Fast Track Program/Programs at Silverdale Farm? How long did it take from planning to enrolling trainees?
- 2) What needs to be in place for a program like this to be successful?
- 3) Benefits of the program?
- 4) What were the main challenges/hurdles to get over?
- 5) Are there any risks identified for it to continue to operate and be successful?
- 6) Completion rates and future employment?
- 7) What are the future plans for the program?

Appendix Five – Outcome Data

Outcome Data – Fast Track Program

Intake	Total Class Size	Graduating Class Percentage	Industry Involvement Post Graduation ** Percentage of students who stayed longer than a year in the Thoroughbred Industry post their Fast Track graduation.
2018	15 students	60% of students graduate	78% of students stayed longer than a year
2019	17 students	82% of students graduate	93% of students stayed longer than a year
2020	11 students	82% of students graduate	89% of students stayed longer than a year
2021	13 students	85% of students graduate	91% of students stayed longer than a year
2022	15 students	73% of students graduate	82% of students stayed longer than a year
2023	18 students	78% of students graduate	100% of students stayed longer than a year

2024	20 students	TBA	TBA
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Outcome Data – Silverdale Farm Internship Program (open)

Year	Program Participants	Completed	Employed in the Industry	Further Study
2022	20	14	6	4
2023	23	21	10	3