



AFAM ITAB

Agriculture, Food
& Animal Management

July 2025

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This month, the Farm Safety Week initiative “Second chances – who knows how many you will get”, reminded us of the importance of workplace safety which is a primary concern for employers and workers across industry sectors. AFAM encourages everyone to consider safety training needs and to engage in conversations about those experiences that can be turned into lessons for a safer future.

AFAM is continuing targeted efforts to investigate and collect industry feedback on training needs, issues and challenges across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations. Stakeholders across the state, particularly small and medium enterprises, are encouraged to arrange a consultation visit or online meeting to contribute to a NSW skills priorities report. To have your say, please contact me at bholmes@skillsinsight.com.au.

Best wishes,
Ben
Executive Officer

Become a Trainer and Assessor with fee-free training

Have you considered putting your expertise to use in training the next generation of skilled workers? Fee-free training is available to become a qualified vocational education and training (VET) trainer and assessor. Fee-free training is available for the nationally recognised TAE40122 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment with courses taking an estimated four months to complete.

For those who would like to teach VET subjects in schools, a new Commonwealth payment, available from 1 July 2025, will deliver \$331.65 per week to eligible initial teacher education students undertaking their mandatory professional experience placements. This support recognises the critical role of placements in preparing classroom ready teachers and ensures students can focus on becoming great educators without fear of financial hardship.

Learn more about [fee-free TAE courses](#) and the new [Commonwealth initiative](#).

AgSkilled program extended until June 2026

The Minns Labour Government is investing an additional \$5 million into the AgSkilled program supporting new and existing agricultural workers to access training and help them adapt to evolving industry demands and opportunities.

AgSkilled allows producers and employers to build the productivity of business by upskilling existing workers and providing new industry entrants with training in critical skills. Existing industry employees and job seekers can gain the skills employers want with industry relevant and up-to-date training to improve career and employment prospects.

AgSkilled training comprises industry identified, tailored courses delivered across four key training pillars:

- Production, Technology, Business and Safety.

Learn more about [AgSkilled 3.0](#) and [available training](#).



Engagement activities

Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT Skills Conference

AFAM attended the 2025 Skills Conference which featured 17 guest speakers including the NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education the Hon. Steve Whan MP who announced the 2025-2026 skills budget. Topics covered at the conference included improvements in apprenticeship and traineeship systems, the role of Group Training Organisations (GTOs) and Apprentice Connect Australian Providers

(ACAP), the state and impact of the economy on the future workforce and promoting inclusive workplaces. A highlight of the conference was the recognition of the importance of VET as a highly valued and esteemed career pathway in schools as well as continuation of funding for priority industries identified in the NSW Skills Plan which includes agriculture, agrifood and advanced manufacturing.

Smart and Skilled update

NSW Skills List updated - Version 16

The NSW Skills List has been updated. This update covers changes due to:

- Updates to Training Packages including AHC - Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management
- Updates to Vocational Training Orders (VTOs)
- Review of qualifications with Trade-related (T) tag
- Updates to the prices of two qualifications
- Updates to tags on Skills List for NSW Fee Free qualifications.

For more details read the [July Smart and Skilled update](#). Download the [NSW Skills List Version 16](#).

NSW fee-Free Apprenticeships and Traineeships extended to December 2025

The department has confirmed a six-month extension of fee-free apprenticeships and traineeships for students who commence their Smart and Skilled training up until 31 December 2025. Fee-free apprenticeships and traineeships remove financial barriers for students and support a strong future of skilled workers to build the NSW economy.

For more details and to learn more about Smart and Skilled 2025-26, changes to contract terms and conditions, operating guidelines and related policies, as well as financial caps, read the [July Smart and Skilled update](#).

Agriculture short course available

Short course training in using front end loaders and attachments is now available through Smart and Skilled, which will lead to a Statement of Attainment. The details are available [here](#).

National Skills Week: 25 - 31 August

National Skills Week is a great time for employers to promote their opportunities and stories of success, and help encourage more learners to look at VET options. The theme this year is *Explore ALL the Options* with the aim to highlight VET's diversity, career pathways and the success stories, as well as bringing focus to emerging skills needs and industry trends.

If you're looking for ways to participate and make an impact, industry and employers, RTOs, schools and supporters of VET can [find ideas](#) by visiting the [National Skills Week webpage](#).



Farms of the Future - Agtech training program

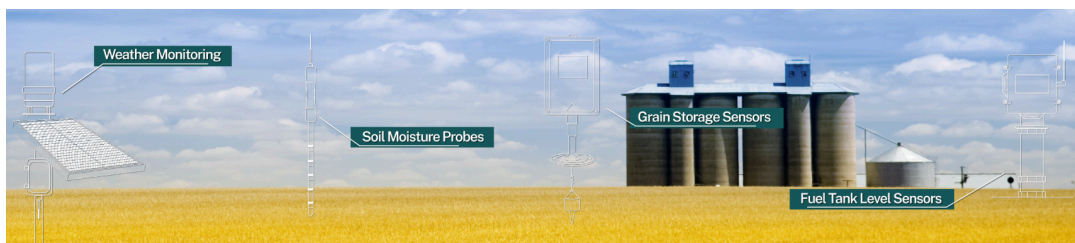
[Farms of the Future](#) is committed to helping farmers embrace technology for increased productivity, market competitiveness and better resource management by focusing on digital skills in farming and engaging with the Agtech industry. One of the components of the program is Agtech Education which offers free courses to equip farmers with the knowledge and skills to identify, implement and utilise cost effective Agtech.

The 'Monitoring your farm with Agtech' course will be **held on Wednesday 20 August 2025 in Young NSW**. The course aims to develop knowledge and skills in:

- farm planning with Agtech
- identifying what Agtech solutions are available
- understanding connectivity needs
- the benefits of monitoring a farm with Agtech.

It is a valuable opportunity for farmers to review the needs of their properties and establish the know-how to plan and integrate optimal connectivity and Agtech on their farms.

To register for this event or your interest in the free online Agtech Fundamentals training course, visit the [Agtech webpage](#).



2025 TLA Landscape Expo

Presented by The Landscape Association and now in it's third year, this is a must-attend event for landscape professionals, offering an incredible opportunity to connect, showcase, and grow within a highly targeted trade audience.

Apprentices, employees, employers and suppliers from landscape construction, design, horticulture, nursery gardens and turf industry sectors are encouraged to attend this year's expo which is expected to be bigger and better than 2024.

The Expo is on Wednesday 27 August 2025 at new location - Howie Pavilion at Sydney Showground.

To learn more, book your tickets and discover who will be speaking and demonstrating at this year's expo, visit [The Landscape Association website](#).



Jobs and Skills Councils (JSC) project updates

Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance (MISA) JSC will shortly be releasing their 2025 Workforce Plan (WFP) which will be available from **5 August 2025** on the [MISA website](#).

MISA's major project from the 2024 WFP, the Attraction Campaign is shortly to be released as well. This project centres around a promotional campaign to highlight the jobs and careers available in manufacturing to positively impact the industry wide challenge of attracting the future workforce required. The campaign will appear on TV, in print and social media channels so keep your eyes peeled for this on screens near you.

Also readying for launch is their [Case Studies project](#) promoting emerging skills and best practice examples to help highlight the emerging skills in manufacturing and share these with the wider field.

In a food and beverage industry specific project, the review into training in the baking industry has finished the industry consultation process with an initial report being completed and ready for review.

Skills Insight JSC currently have training package and research projects underway in various stages. To learn more and provide input please follow the links below.

Initial Stages:

- [Attraction and Retention Guidance](#)
- [Concept for an Ag Trade Apprenticeship](#)

Development Stage:

- [Community-based Aquaculture Training Tools](#)
- [Rural Operations](#) (this project has been paused while qualification reform work takes place)
- [Veterinary Nursing Skills and Qualification Review](#)
- [VET Workforce Project](#)

Broad Consultation:

- [Career Pathways for Agricultural Trades](#)
- [Flock Safe Project](#)
- [Worker Safety Induction Pilot](#)

Finalisation:

- [Essential Meat Processing Skills](#)

Other projects underway:

- [Qualification reform](#)
- [Workforce Plan](#)



NSW grants, opportunities & scholarships

The following grants, opportunities and scholarships are available to employers and vocational learners. With the recent drought in southern regions of the state, primary producers might consider applying for the [Natural Disaster Relief Loan](#): primary producers directly affected by a declared natural disaster may be eligible for a low interest loan of up to \$130,000 to support recovery.

Follow the links for more information.

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

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

Boarding scholarships for isolated students: assists eligible students from rural areas who are required to board to attend NSW public specialist high schools – including agricultural boarding schools.

Continuing Apprentices and Trainees Placement Service (CAPS): CAPS helps apprentices and trainees find jobs or continue with their qualification when their training contract ends before completion.

Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant: the grant adopts a number of strategies to develop and support First Nations people through the creation of training and employment opportunities.

Employers funding and support: learn about government incentives and supports to employ and train apprentices and trainees.

Fee-Free training for agriculture, forestry and fishing: giving broad access to government-subsidised training and high-level courses in targeted priority areas.

Free Workshops: Supervising your apprentice or trainee: free workshops for employers and supervisors of apprentices or trainees in the workplace held across NSW.

Living Away From Home Allowance for Apprentices: an allowance is available to eligible full and part-time apprentices and school-based apprentices during the first 3 years of training who need to move away from home in order to start or remain in an apprenticeship.

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

Resources to Assist in Supervising Your Apprentice or Trainee: a series of videos and resources are available.

Women in trades: Resources available to attract women into trades for industry and educators.

Other Grants and opportunities:

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

Food Rescue Rebates - The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is working to reduce good quality food suitable for human consumption from being disposed to landfill. The rebates are part of a suite of organics programs available to support NSW to halve organics waste to landfill by 2030.

Amount: Up to \$2,000 per rebate with a total funding pool of up to \$800,000

Status: Open, ongoing until 30 June 2027, until funding is expended, or at the EPA's discretion.

Find information about these and all available grants and funding opportunities on the [NSW Government website](#).

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

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