



AFAM ITAB

Agriculture, Food
& Animal Management

August 2025

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As we move towards National Skills Week, 25 - 31 August, AFAM would like to remind stakeholders of the value of engaging in training for existing workers or new staff to improve workplace safety, productivity and technological advancement, maintenance of equipment and systems, biosecurity, staff management and workplace culture.

Stakeholders across the state, particularly small and medium enterprises, are encouraged to contact AFAM to contribute to a NSW skills priorities report. To have your say, please contact me at bholmes@skillsinsight.com.au by 5pm 31 August 2025.

Best wishes,
Ben
Executive Officer

Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarships - Applications closing soon

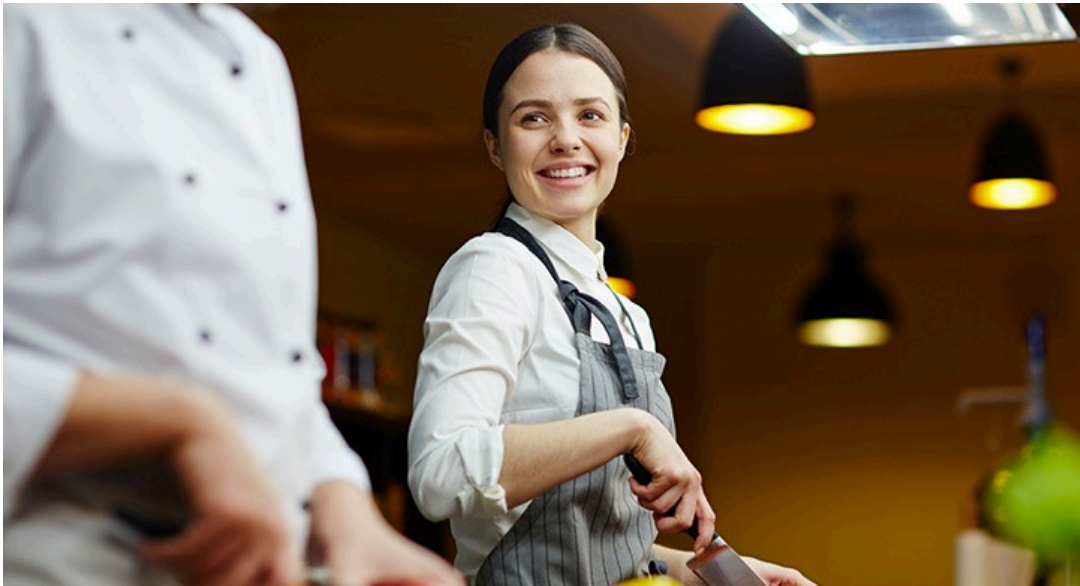
The Bert Evans apprentice scholarships are a NSW Government-run program offering grants of \$5,000 annually up to three years to help applicants overcome personal barriers to finish their apprenticeships and go onto rewarding careers. The scholarship program is named in honour of the late Bert Evans AO, a passionate advocate of vocational education for more than 30 years.

Scholarships are open to NSW registered apprentices in both metropolitan and country areas, including school-based apprentices who have demonstrated:

- hardship in their personal circumstances

- capability for vocational education and training that leads to successful completion of their trade training
- a positive attitude and application in workplace and formal training.

Applications close 31 August 2025. Read more about [eligibility criteria](#) and [how to apply](#).



Engagement activities

AFAM continues to engage closely with industry stakeholders across NSW, gathering rich, sector-specific feedback on training needs and workforce challenges. We are grateful for the valuable face-to-face discussions and invitations to attend events across multiple platforms. Recent skills forum engagement across Southwestern Sydney, Illawarra, the Southern Highlands and Central West included input from a broad mix of stakeholders across animal care and management, aquaculture, racing and breeding, and food and beverage manufacturing sectors.

This diverse and generous input is shaping our understanding of regional training priorities - helping to identify critical needs such as safety and machinery skills, technical competencies, improved training quality, and better access for priority cohorts. AFAM is continuing its regional skills forums this month across the Central Coast and Richmond. Our thoughts are with all stakeholders impacted by recent storms and flooding in the Hunter, New England and Mid-North Coast regions and we appreciate efforts to engage with us online at this time. AFAM welcomes participation from all industry stakeholders to ensure training solutions are responsive and inclusive.

Please contact Ben if you would like to discuss your industry training priorities, issues and challenges at bholmes@skillsinsight.com.au.



Above: Ben with Pet Industry Association Australia (PIAA) CEO Anthony Ramsay and Master Grooming Director of PIAA and the Dog Whiskerer, Jo Marsden.



Above: Panel at the NSW Thoroughbred Breeders inaugural Southern Highlands Breeders Seminar discussing the Power of Preparation in Thoroughbred pre-training programs.

L-R: James Bester, Greg Bennett, Chris Russell, Robert Petith and Steve Grant.



Above: Ben at Gumnuts Bakery with owner Tracy Nickl and current apprentices in front of the bakery's 'Apprentice Wall of Fame' showcasing the more than 30 apprentices that have undertaken or completed training at the bakery.



Above: Ben at Goodnight Oysters with representatives of the NSW Farmers Aquaculture branch who discussed the challenges around attracting and skilling new entrants to industry.

Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Regional Australia

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) has released the first phase of the Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Regional Australia (Roadmap). The Roadmap aims to provide an enduring, shared and overarching framework that empowers stakeholders to work collaboratively to elevate the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of the jobs and skills system across regional Australia. JSA consulted widely to develop the [Roadmap report](#) which offers communities and policymakers the tools to shape a system that better meets local needs.

A [recording of a webinar](#) about the roadmap held in July is also available to view.

JSA are now seeking further feedback to shape the next phase. Your experiences can help shape a stronger, fairer system. By making a submission, you can:

- share what's working well in your community
- highlight local challenges
- suggest new ideas or approaches
- help make sure regional voices are part of national decisions.

Submissions are open until 2 October 2025. Have your say by visiting the [JSA consultation webpage](#).



Smart and Skilled update

Update of NSW Fee Free Programs

Training Services is providing regular updates on the progress of enrolments in the available free places to give providers greater visibility on take up and an earlier indication of when places are likely to be exhausted.

- NSW Fee Free Tranche 2 - there are very limited places available with 93% of places enrolled.

Fee-Free apprenticeships and traineeships extended to 30 June 2027

A plan to build support for apprenticeships and traineeships into the NSW skills system by offering a longer period of fee-free was announced as part of the 2025-26 NSW Budget. The department has confirmed a two-year extension of current fee-free apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements until 30 June 2027.

NSW apprentices and new entrant trainees undertaking a traineeship qualification specified on the NSW Skills List, who commence their apprenticeship or traineeship qualification with Smart and Skilled provider by 30 June 2027, will continue to access their training with no fee. Their training is fully subsidised by the NSW Government.

Skills Delivery and Management Policy 2025-26 updated

The updated policy, Version 1.1, can be found on STS Online > Smart and Skilled Contract Management > Support Documents. Learn more in the Smart and Skilled Update.

Policy on non-apprenticeship pathways for trade-related qualifications updated

The *Smart and Skilled Policy on Non-Apprenticeship Pathways for Trade-Related Qualifications* supports individuals who meet certain criteria to gain formal qualifications through non-traditional pathways. The following minor updates have been made:

- Section 1.3 Approved trade-related full qualifications now correctly refer to "Additional Arrangements" column (previously "Strategy") where qualifications covered by the policy are marked with a "T" in the NSW Skills List. This includes:
 - ACM40818 Certificate IV in Farriery
 - RGR40221 Certificate IV in Racing (Jockey)

The updated policy, Version 5.1, can be found at [Smart and Skilled trade-related qualifications policy](#).

For more information read the [August Smart and Skilled update](#).

AgSkilled 3.0 - units added to endorsed course list

The following units of competency have been added to the AgSkilled 3.0 endorsed course list:

Pork and Poultry industry:

- [AHCLSK423](#) Develop feeding plans for livestock
- [AHCPLY208](#) Collect and pack eggs for human consumption
- [AHCPLY209](#) Grade and pack eggs for human consumption
- [AHCPLY211](#) Collect, store and handle eggs from breeder flocks
- [AHCWRK318](#) Comply with industry quality assurance requirements
- [AHCWRK404](#) Implement quality assurance procedures
- [AHCWRK215](#) Collect and record production data
- [AHCLSK354](#) Monitor livestock production growing environments
- [AHCPLY303](#) Maintain health and welfare of poultry
- [AHCPRK311](#) Care for health and welfare of pigs
- [AHCPLY210](#) Catch and load poultry
- [AHCPRK202](#) Move and handle pigs
- [AHCPLY308](#) Set up sheds for placement of poultry
- [AHCPLY311](#) Clean and disinfect poultry production sheds
- [AHCPLY309](#) Brood poultry
- [AHCPLY312](#) Implement and monitor biosecurity measures in poultry production

DPIRD GROW program:

- [BSBCMM412](#) Lead difficult conversations
-

Provide feedback on part-time bread baking apprenticeship proposal

AFAM is seeking industry feedback on a proposed pilot program for a Part-Time *Certificate III Bread Baking* apprenticeship. Feedback could include supporting the proposal with an expression of interest or identifying issues and concerns on equivalent trade level outcomes and the impact on industry.

Offering part time work opportunities may attract a broader and more diverse range of candidates to support the workforce needs of your organisation. Barriers to employing skilled staff differ between small, medium and large enterprises and regional, rural and remote communities. Part-time apprenticeships offer employees flexibility to gain recognised training from part-time work opportunities, provide skills to a diverse cohort and more inclusive and equitable training opportunities for existing workers or new entrants. The proposed term for the part-time apprenticeship would be 60 months.

If you have feedback to provide or interest in participating in a pilot (subject to endorsement following investigation), please contact AFAM Executive Officer, Ben Holmes bholmes@skillsinsight.com.au before **Friday 29 August 2025**.

Agricultural vocational education and training survey

Charles Sturt University is conducting a survey of VET stakeholders who are associated with the delivery and administration of agriculture courses as a part of the AHC, ACM and RGR training packages.

The purpose of the survey is to gather insights from VET stakeholders in the field of agricultural vocational education and training (Agricultural VET). Feedback received through the survey will help identify challenges and opportunities for improving the quality of agricultural education and training programs.

Have your say by completing the [online survey](#)

National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy

AgriFutures Australia has led the development of a [National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy](#) on behalf of 15 research and development corporations (RDCs), which is now available for public consultation.

The strategy details ways to unlock learning opportunities for urban and rural students and educators across primary and secondary systems. It follows the release of the National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy Discussion Paper in May 2025.

To provide feedback, stakeholders are invited [complete a survey](#) by **Wednesday, 20 August**.

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSC) project updates

Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance (MISA) JSC have published their [2025 Workforce Plan](#) (WFP).

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.

Planning Stage:

- [Concept for an Ag Trade Apprenticeship](#)

Development Stage:

- [Attraction and Retention Guidance](#)
- [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](#)

Finalisation:

- [Essential Meat Processing Skills](#)
- [Worker Safety Induction Pilot](#)

Other projects underway:

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



NSW grants, opportunities & scholarships

The following grants, opportunities and scholarships are available to employers and vocational learners. Follow the links for more information.

[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.

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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