



final report

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MINTRAC Training Network 2010- 2011 – Final Report

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Abstract

The twelve Training Network meetings held during 2011-2012 discussed a range of industry research and development outcomes, new regulations and their implications for the training system. In addition, a wide range of research and policy changes impacting the national training system and their implications for the meat industry were addressed through the networks.

The national training conference was themed *Training for sustainability* and over the course of the two days this theme was explored and discussed by one hundred delegates through the plenary sessions and eighteen workshop sessions structured across five sub-themes. Many of the workshops presented findings from current industry projects or research and then workshopped the implications for the training system.

The recommendations provided in Section 7 of this report focus on improving the adoption of industry research and development through the training system, improving the professionalism and capacity of meat industry trainers to meet these requirements, and ensuring that the currency and integrity of the meat industry training system is maintained in the face of significant changes being proposed to the Australian vocational education and training system.

Executive summary

The MINTRAC training networks provide the means of ensuring that R&D outcomes, innovation, new regulatory requirements and industry requirements become embedded into the meat industry training system and are delivered and assessed in a manner which is consistent across the industry. The networks also provide the means of ensuring that meat industry training requirements and priorities are communicated to State and Federal Training Authorities.

Attendees at network meetings include training managers, human resources managers, meat industry trainers, State Training Authorities, peak bodies, auditors and state-based industry training advisory boards.

Funding for this project in 2011-2012 included:

- twelve state-based network meetings
- professional development program
- national training conference.

The objectives of the project are to:

- facilitate the transfer of knowledge from research outcomes to training programs as part of the uptake of innovation in the meat processing industry
- ensure that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry
- ensure that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills
- provide accurate and current advice to State Training Authorities to ensure that public funding of training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements
- ensure that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to State funding for training.

The twelve network meetings held during 2011-2012 discussed a range of industry R&D outcomes, new regulations and their implications for the training system, for example:

- environmental issues such as methane gas capture, anaerobic pond covers and wastewater management – as a result of these discussions additional water units were included in the Training Package
- outcomes and implications of current research into European Animal Welfare requirements, their implications for Australian practice and changes required in the Australian training system
- innovations in cleaning technology – as a result additional Units of Competency were recommended for inclusion in the Training Package
- the meat inspection reform agenda, implications for the training system, the need for national standardisation of practice and identification of training requirements
- evidence of currency required by industry auditors and how this might be systematically addressed
- findings and outcomes of research into the impact of knife sharpness and the ongoing training responses required from industry – under recommendation from the networks the *Sharpen knives* unit of competency was updated and was made compulsory in some qualifications
- new regulations related to transporter fatigue management, the implications for processing plants and how this might be covered in training programs.

In addition, a wide range of research and policy changes impacting the national training system and their implications for the meat industry were addressed through the networks, for example:

- industry requirements relating to the review and update of the *Australian Meat Industry Training Package*, the new version of which was developed during this financial year
- national requirements for changes to qualification packaging rules and how these might be addressed in the meat industry without compromising quality of training and customer confidence in the system
- the national review into vocational education and training professional competency and how this affected the meat industry
- the national expert panel review into Traineeship and Apprenticeships and the impact of the recommendations on the meat industry
- emerging requirements for workforce development planning, implications for the meat industry and the training system.

The national training conference was themed *Training for sustainability* and over the course of the two days this theme was explored and discussed by one hundred delegates through plenary sessions and eighteen workshop sessions structured across five sub-themes:

- environmental sustainability
- sustaining quality trainers
- workforce sustainability
- training to sustain business
- sustaining quality training.

Many of the workshops presented findings from current industry projects or research and then workshopped the implications for the training system, for example:

- dispelling the myths about the meat industry's carbon footprint
- A.J. Bush's waste water management project
- strategies to improve recruitment and retention
- incorporating Green Skills into training
- energy conservation
- the implications of Sydney University research into work, skills and training in the Australian red meat processing sector
- livestock identification.

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1 Background

The MINTRAC Training Manager Networks were established in 2003. Since that time they have played an important role in ensuring that training programs and practitioners maintain pace with industry requirements, and in gaining funding for and managing training in the meat industry. As such, the MINTRAC training networks have a proven track record as an important means of adoption of research and development outcomes across the meat industry.

1.1 Network meetings

The structured approach of running state-based network meetings ensures consistent and regular access to the networks by Training Managers, HR managers, researchers and trainers, and the translation of new and emerging issues into the training system in a systematic and meaningful manner.

The network meetings serve not only as a forum to discuss research and development outcomes, but also to assess their implications for the training system and to identify the optimal ways of incorporating them into the training system. This may be in the form of modifications to the *Australian Meat Industry Training Package*, adjustments to the training and assessment materials, or the running of specific professional development programs to upskill trainers to ensure consistent roll-out to the industry.

At each network meeting, meat industry trainers receive presentations and literature relating to current industry research, receive information relating to processing and operational innovation, become familiar with new regulatory requirements and industry issues, and develop responses to concerns related to training (for example, adverse auditing outcomes).

1.2 Professional development program

The professional development program run through this network ensures that both trainers and on-plant personnel are receiving the same messages and that the training is therefore structured, consistent and relevant to meat industry requirements.

During 2010-2011, professional development opportunities offered through this network included:

- the Meat Industry Microbiological Skill Set
- How to conduct on the floor training
- New supervisor induction program
- JSA and hazard analysis
- Confined spaces training.

The geographic spread of meat processing plants and the nature of their training requirements create some difficult issues for plants seeking technical training for their staff. Traditionally industries such as food processing and the dairy industry have been able to attract employees with existing technical training and experience.

However, for a number of reasons the meat industry has largely had to 'grow its own technical experts' such as production supervisors and QA managers. The delivery of accredited training to these technical experts is a pressing issue as both customers and regulators require credible evidence of training/competency in wide variety of areas. Examples of this type of training include HACCP, animal welfare, micro-biology, internal auditing, implementation of food safety plans, OH&S etc.

This training has in the past been very difficult for the industry to access. The reasons for this difficulty include:

- the regional location of the majority of plants
- the small number of trainees at any one of the majority of plant
- the very limited number of training providers
- the limited numbers of trainers with the technical expertise to deliver this training to the meat industry.

For each of these types of training the seed money in the networks has enabled MINTRAC to establish suitable models of delivery and assessment, a body of competent trainers, appropriate support materials and a viable market into which this training can be sold. Our approach enables a viable number of trainees to be grouped in one area and creates a market which attracts training providers to take on the training. Equally this enables training capacity to be built in all states around Australia and not just in one or two centres.

MINTRAC has also played a role in dramatically improving the technical skills of existing trainers by running professional development workshops and accreditation sessions. By controlling these courses MINTRAC has also been able to use specific technical experts to deliver all over Australia giving regional operators and trainers and trainers exposure to leaders in their fields. As the models become established and the need for training accepted, MINTRAC has been able to leverage State funding for the ongoing provision of training, for example the animal welfare training in NSW, Victoria and SA. This has meant that a relatively modest industry investment has been multiplied by sometimes a factor of four to finance extensive training programs. Alternatively, where State funding is not readily available, we have been able to broker arrangements with RTOs to provide ongoing training on a commercial basis.

1.3 The national training conference

The national training conference provides an opportunity to look at the 'bigger picture'. Run across two days at the end of March each year, the conference is rotated across the states of Qld, NSW, Vic and SA in order to maximise access from those unable to make long trips. The 2011 conference was held in Adelaide and addressed the theme *Training for sustainability*. Over the course of the two days this theme was explored and discussed through plenary sessions and eighteen workshop sessions structured across five sub-themes:

- environmental sustainability
- sustaining quality trainers
- workforce sustainability
- training to sustain business
- sustaining quality training.

2 Project objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- facilitate the transfer of knowledge from research outcomes to training programs as part of the uptake of innovation in the meat processing industry
- ensure that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry
- ensure that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills
- provide accurate and current advice to State Training Authorities to ensure that public funding of training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements

- ensure that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to State funding for training.

3 Methodology

3.1 Training Network meetings

Twelve training network meetings were held during 2010-2011, in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

Agendas are set by MINTRAC, and attendees are invited to contribute items for discussion. AMPC, the State Training Authority, and the State Industry Training Advisory Board are all allocated permanent agenda items, and additional speakers are invited as required, for example in South Australia a presentation was given by the Group HR Manager for T&R, Brian Devey, on the chain of responsibility under transport fatigue legislation.

Handouts from MLA, Meat Industry Services, AMPC etc are collated into the meeting folders to ensure that any recent publications are appropriately disseminated.

At each meeting MINTRAC also displays any new products which have been released. Included in display items for 2010-2011 were:

- the *Animal Welfare Officer Skills Set* kit incorporating the newly developed distance learning materials and the new animal welfare standards
- the revised *Refrigeration Index Kit* which included the latest version of the RI software
- the *Humane Slaughter kit*, incorporating the new animal welfare standards
- the *Stock Handling kit*, incorporating the new animal welfare standards
- the *Calf Handling Kit*, which resulted from research conducted in 2009 – 2010.

All Training Network meetings are minuted, and minutes are distributed to attendees and those who apologised, AMPC, AMIC and MLA.

3.2 Professional development program

Professional development requirements are established by:

- a survey distributed to all processing companies twice-yearly, inviting them to identify their requirements
- a scheduled discussion item on every network meeting agenda
- incidental requests made directly to MINTRAC by processing plants from time to time.

Every program is costed, and Training Network funds are used to subsidise the attendance of meat processing companies. Frequently the programs are advertised to other industry groups and RTOs in an effort to reach optimal numbers enabling the program to be financially viable.

The program is then advertised by:

- direct mail to the standard MINTRAC mail lists
- advertising on the MINTRAC website
- advertising through the *Mintracker* newsletter
- other means as appropriate to the specific program.

Frequently, follow-up telephone calls to plants will be made in an effort to negotiate sufficient numbers to enable courses to be run.

MINTRAC receives, confirms and invoices all registrations, manages all venue bookings and catering arrangements, contracts facilitators, and prepares attendance lists and other documentation for the program. Facilitators are required to distribute and return evaluation forms for every program.

3.3 The national training conference

Run across two days at the end of March each year, the conference is rotated across the states of Qld, NSW, Vic and SA in order to maximise access from those unable to make long trips.

The theme and location of each National Training Conference are set twelve months in advance, and the draft program and keynote speakers in place by the end of November. Workshop sessions are finalised during January and February.

A project budget is set early in the planning, and funds are drawn from:

- the budgeted contribution from the Training Network project
- delegate registrations (red-meat levy-payers receive a subsidy)
- exhibitors
- sponsorships.

All aspects of the conference are managed in-house by MINTRAC, including the management of registrations, exhibitors, marketing and publicity, printing and conference facilitation. Delegates are asked to complete an evaluation at the end of every conference, and this feedback informs the changes and improvements made to subsequent conferences.

MINTRAC commissions an experienced evaluator to attend the conference sessions, to facilitate the final plenary discussion session and to produce the conference outcomes report.

3.4 The meat Industry training awards

The Meat Industry Training Awards program is run each year to foster and recognise excellence in training in the meat industry.

There are five meat industry awards.

3.4.1 Meat Industry Training Initiative Award

The Meat Industry Training Initiative Award recognises a leading edge program or product developed and implemented for the purpose of providing high quality education and training in the meat industry. The principal nominee is one organisation (or part thereof) which initiated or implemented the development of the program or product.

3.4.2 Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award

The Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award is presented to an enterprise with twenty or more employees that demonstrates outstanding commitment and excellence in the provision of training to their employees.

Organisations which are RTOs providing services to the meat industry are not eligible for this category. Enterprise RTOs may nominate under this category.

3.4.3 Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year

To be eligible for this award, an organisation must:

- be a Registered Training Organisation with one or more qualifications from the MTM07 *Australian Meat Industry Training Package* on its scope of registration
- have as its core business the delivery of vocational education and training
- have provided training and assessment services to a meat processing company within the last twelve months.

3.4.4 Meat Industry Trainer of the Year

The Meat Industry Trainer of the Year Award recognises innovation and excellence demonstrated by individuals providing vocational education and training to meat industry students.

3.4.5 Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year

This award is for a person who has undertaken an accredited vocational education and training qualification, relevant to the meat industry, within the last twelve months, either as a full-time or part-time student.

MINTRAC runs the entire awards program in-house, and the announcements and presentations are made at the National Training Conference dinner. Prizes include a plaque and three of the awards include a prize from sponsors. MINTRAC has Honour Boards in its office which record the winners each year.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Training Network meetings

Twelve training network meetings were held during 2010-2011, as shown in the table below.

State	Location	2010	2011
Victoria	Melbourne	7th October	17 February
Western Australia	Perth	12 October	10 March
New South Wales	Tamworth	21 October	12 May
Queensland	Brisbane	4th November	3 March
South Australia	Adelaide	18th November	5 May
New South Wales	Wagga Wagga	2nd December	24 February

4.1.1 Key issues raised

Key issues raised through the training network meetings were as follows.

New Skills Sets

From July to December 2010, industry networks were invited to provide feedback on the feasibility and possible content of the following Skill Sets:

- Meat Processing Environmental Officer Skill Set
- Religious Slaughter Skill Set
- Head Chain Operator Skill Set
- Tripe Room Operator Skill Set
- Meat Processing Safety Officer Skill Set
- Bandsaw Operator Skill Set.

The final report and recommendations have now been completed and were approved at the Meat Standing Committee meeting on 29th March 2011.

As a result of budget decisions to significantly reduce access to Commonwealth subsidies for Level II traineeships, and of directions mapped out in the significant Skills for Prosperity Report released in May 2010, a need for the development of further Level II Skill Sets has been identified and will be put to the Networks in the second half of 2011.

Available State and Federal funding

At each meeting the State Training Authority representatives provided an overview of current and soon to be available funding opportunities to support meat industry training. Following each meeting, MINTRAC has been providing support to individual RTOs and companies to access appropriate funding for their training needs.

Information about new funding opportunities has also been included in each edition of Mintracker.

After the NSW reduction in access to Certificate II Traineeship for existing workers over 24 years of age, MINTRAC negotiated a trial program for the funding of core units with NSW DET. This program is currently under trial at Cargill's (Tamworth) and Peel Valley Exporters (T&R), and is due to be completed in mid-June. Following this an evaluation of the outcomes and issues of the trial will be prepared and submitted to NSW DET. The Department has indicated a willingness to commit further funding to the program dependent on the trial outcomes and subject to funding availability.

Training Package Continuous Improvement

At each meeting, progress reports were provided on the progress of the Training Package continuous improvement process. A full workshop session was also presented at the conference.

It would be usual for matters raised on the Issues Register to have been discussed at each network meeting, but as the revised Training Package was completed in December of 2010, there were no issues to discuss in the first round of 2011 network meetings.

Request for new product

Stunning: visual training materials demonstrating correct positioning of the captive bolt gun for use on small stock, with particular emphasis on OH&S – required. We are currently working on developing specialised training materials.

4.1.2 Industry R&D dissemination

The twelve network meetings held during 2011-2012 discussed a range of industry R&D outcomes, new regulations and their implications for the training system, for example:

- environmental issues such as methane gas capture, anaerobic pond covers and wastewater management – as a result of these discussions additional water units were included in the Training Package
- outcomes and implications of current research into European Animal Welfare requirements, their implications for Australian practice and changes required in the Australian training system
- innovations in cleaning technology – as a result additional Units of Competency were recommended for inclusion in the Training Package
- the meat inspection reform agenda, implications for the training system, the need for national standardisation of practice and identification of training requirements
- evidence of currency required by industry auditors and how this might be systematically addressed
- findings and outcomes of research into the impact of knife sharpness and the ongoing training responses required from industry – under recommendation from the networks the

Sharpen knives unit of competency was revised and made compulsory in some qualifications

- new regulations related to transporter fatigue management, the implications for processing plants and how this might be covered in training programs.

4.1.3 Negotiations and issues raised with State Training Authorities

State Training Authority representatives attended most of the scheduled meetings.

Below is a cumulative list of matters raised during these discussions.

- Training Package endorsement processes and the role of STAs (all)
- skills requirements forecasts (Qld)
- Approved Providers List, SSP and PPP funding (NSW)
- changes to User Choice arrangements (NSW)
- new funding arrangements (Vic)
- available funding programs (WA)
- outcomes-based auditing and inclusion of industry expertise (SA)
- trial Core Units program and possible roll-out (NSW)
- Training Plan and supervisor workshops (NSW)
- School-based traineeships and Apprenticeships (NSW).

Impact of the Federal Budget

In May, a Federal budget announcement indicated that Commonwealth employer subsidies had been removed from level II Traineeships except for identified specialised groups (including rural and remote). Initial scanning indicates that the processing plants of Beenleigh, Dinmore, ACC and Brooklyn will definitely be affected. A clarification of terms was sought from DEEWR and an assessment of impact undertaken, as well as a decision about further action. This process is continuing.

4.1.4 Network attendance statistics

Over the 2010-2011 year 283 individual attendances were recorded at Training Network meetings and conference. This year, attending RTOs were asked to indicate which companies they provided services to, so that there was a clearer picture of the coverage of this network in relation to red-meat processing levy-payers.

The breakdown of this coverage is provided below (note: at some meetings both the company and the RTO attended):

	Plants attended	Their RTOs attended	Total plants represented
Network meetings	24	62	67
Conference	17		

4.2 Professional development program

The Professional development program for 2010-2011 was slow starting due to the very late signing of the contracts. As a result of this, primary attention was given to setting up professional development programs for the Environment and MI&QA networks, because at the time their contracts were due to end in December 2010, and by the time the professional development needs had been assessed, very little time remained to set up and run the programs.

Priority for Training Network professional development was given to the *Meat Microbiological Skill Set*, which was to support the implementation of a funded R&D project from the 2009-2010 financial year. This project had identified applicable training which had NATA approval for the on-site screening of pathogens in meat processing laboratories. A total of \$20,000 was committed to subsidising five red meat processing places in this program, which was set up and run by Symbio Alliance. Applications were accepted and assessed between September and December and the course commenced in 2011. The \$5,000 per student was split into a commencement and completion payment, and was made subject to satisfactory student progress.

The remaining programs were identified through the Professional Development Needs Survey which went out to all processing companies in January 2011 and a number of programs were set up. All advertised programs except one ran, as follows:

Activity	Location	Funds committed	Number of attendees	Did it run?
<i>Meat Industry Microbiological Skill Set</i>	Qld + e-learning + on-job training	\$20,000	5	Yes
How to conduct on the floor training	Wagga	\$5,000		Postponed
New supervisor induction program	Wagga	\$5,500	14	Yes
New supervisor induction program	Melbourne	\$4,500	8	Yes
JSA and hazard analysis	Bunbury	\$5,500	18	Yes
JSA and hazard analysis	Bunbury	\$5,500	Not available	Due to run in June 2011
Confined Space training	Gundagai	\$5,500	Not available	Due to run in June 2011

4.3 The national training conference

The national training conference was themed *Training for sustainability* and over the course of the two days this theme was explored and discussed by 100 delegates through plenary sessions and eighteen workshop sessions structured across five sub-themes:

- Environmental sustainability
- Sustaining quality trainers
- Workforce sustainability
- Training to sustain business
- Sustaining quality training.

Greg d'Arville facilitated a panel discussion at the close of the conference, featuring Anne-Marie Curran (Primo Quality Meats), Kay Gerard (Food, Fibre & Timber Industries Training Council WA), Paul Sandercock (Australian Meat Industry Council SA), and Michael Rafferty (University of Sydney). Greg had attended all plenary sessions, and sampled most of the eighteen 'streamed' sessions, in an attempt to identify key themes. Following is a summary of the main issues he found, and some responses from the panel and conference delegates.

4.3.1 Skill portability

Several sessions addressed the linked questions of attracting and retaining staff against the background of strong competition from multiple sources including the mining industry. The question of whether to regard meat industry employment as a destination or as one stop (or many stops) on a career journey has become increasingly valid. On the 'one stop' analysis the goal would be to increase the time spent at that stop and make repeat stops more likely.

One participant noted that the mines generally retain employees for no more than two years, raising the possibility of an individual travelling from (for example) meat processor to mine to meat processor over a period. The proposition of a 'sustainability cadetship' as opposed to a 'meat cadetship' was discussed.

4.3.2 Retention strategies

Cadetship itself is an example of a staff development and retention strategy, and in the course of the conference examples of successful and less successful cadetship experiences were shared. Panelists were invited to share other strategies, and the common element appeared to be employee engagement. Congratulations letters following a period of employment and employee events such as picnics were among the practices used.

4.3.3 Shape of the workforce

While several speakers addressed the seemingly unique characteristics of different demographic groupings (baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y etc) others argued that individuals are a product of their environment regardless of generational label. The point of the discussion was to establish whether workplaces should become more flexible to cater for the allegedly different requirements of different groups.

For example, baby boomers are seen as being more attracted to early starts than Gen Y members. Whether this is a result of generational preferences or the ageing process – i.e. perhaps Gen Y will be less keen on late starts when its members are in their late forties – it is reasonable to assume that a greater variety of job hours and types will attract a greater variety of workers. And given the imminent workforce crisis – e.g. a shortfall of 150,000 workers predicted for Western Australia – anything that has the potential to expand the pool of prospective employees should be considered.

4.3.4 Role of the trainers

A fundamental question arose in a number of sessions: should training providers in the meat industry see themselves as meat industry training specialists or as VET professionals currently engaged in meat? Many participants felt that the latter would generate greater professionalism but was not the case in practice. And in any case there is a counter-argument: that meat is a unique industry requiring unique training approaches.

Allied to this is the issue of supervisor involvement in training delivery. There was a general consensus that keeping HR and training as close as possible to the job itself, and maximising the involvement of supervisors, would optimise learning and behavioural outcomes. There is an ongoing challenge though, and that is to demonstrate the value of training and overcome what may be a low level of receptiveness in some workplaces.

4.3.5 Consistency/flexibility

This issue emerged in the 2010 conference as well, and arose from new government flexibility requirements in relation to training packages. As noted then "all elements of the meat industry

package are seen as essential” and the introduction of a defined proportion of elective topics over the past year has been a challenge.

The industry has had some success in achieving recognition of its unique workforce and special challenges. But as successive governments seek to perfect the vocational training framework, further friction can be anticipated.

4.3.6 The business of water

Some astonishing figures emerged from certain sessions, including the vast differences between assessments of the amount of water used to produce a kilogram of beef: from 27 litres to 50,000 litres depending on the methodology adopted. Given that the real cost of water is said to be \$6 per kilolitre (in South Australia) this dichotomy is a matter of serious concern.

But regardless of the true measure of water consumption, as we move inevitably towards a fully-priced water market the economic imperative to conserve, recycle and efficiently use water will become compelling for industry participants. A mindset identified in research, requiring rapid payback of conservation investments, is an issue to be addressed by training (among other things); and conservation competencies are already being addressed in training packages. The issues are not necessarily complex: 50% of available water savings arise (it is said) from fixing leaks.

4.3.7 Community acceptance

A key driver for sustainability investments is cost, as noted above. Another vital driver is (or should be) the social licence to operate. Urban expansion means that in many parts of the country meat processors are physically closer to communities and need to address environmental issues. You would not, for example, wish to have a 20-metre flare erupting regularly as part of a methane treatment process.

Training should build skills that reduce the likelihood of such events, but can also have a role in the education and engagement of the local community. Examples of such engagement include schools-based and pre-vocational programs.

4.4 The national training awards

The 2010-2011 Meat Industry Training Awards opened on 1 December 2010 and were advertised in the December edition of *MINTRACker*. Nominations closed on 25 February 2011, and judging was finalised on 7th March 2011. Winners were announced and presentations made at the MINTRAC Conference dinner on 30th March 2011.

Seventeen nominations were accepted, and three further late nominations were rejected.

Sponsorship to support the prizes was received from Hepworths and Nach Trading. AMPC and MLA are automatically listed as sponsors.

Those shortlisted and the winners were:

4.4.1 Meat Industry Training Initiative Award

- **Winner:** Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE - Kangaroo Harvester Refresher Training
- T&R Murray Bridge - Productions Operations Cadetships

4.4.2 Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award

- **Winner:** Dardanup Butchering Company
- Baa Moo Oink
- Gawler River Cattle Co

4.4.3 Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year

- **Winner:** Response Learning
- Independent Institute of Food Processing
- Hunter TAFE

4.4.4 Meat Industry Trainer of the Year

- **Winner:** Warren Nicholls - Axial Training
- Cees Wesselingh - Independent Institute of Food Processing

4.4.5 Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year

- **Winner:** Stacey McKenna, The Midfield Group
- Sheldon Brunt, The Midfield Group
- Shannon Edwards, Gawler River Cattle Co
- Shane Wittman, The Midfield Group

5 Success in achieving objectives

5.1 Facilitating the transfer of knowledge from research outcomes to training programs

Facilitating the transfer of knowledge from research outcomes to training programs as part of the uptake of innovation in the meat processing industry continues to be one of the great strengths of the networks. In 2010-2011 this objective was clearly achieved as shown by:

- adjustments made to the Australian Meat Industry Training Package in the form of:
 - new units of competency in the areas of water and cleaning
 - adjustments to the structure of qualifications to reflect the importance of knife sharpness
 - the development of new qualifications to address executive leadership training requirements
- adjustments made to training and assessment materials to incorporate research and development outcomes, such as the development of new kits and updating of training materials to accommodate changes to animal welfare requirements including the introduction of updated standards
- discussion and dissemination of meat science updates produced by Meat Industry Services.

5.1.1 Training statistics

To give a snapshot of the penetration of training across the industry during 2010-2011, the following statistics are provided:

Program type	Enrolments
Trainees and apprentices commenced in 2010 - these statistics are provided by NCVET	6,750
Diploma of Meat Processing students commenced 2010-2011 – includes EBPPP and an estimate of enrolments through other sources of funding	70
Meat Inspection Training enrolments into Certificates III and IV in Meat Processing (Meat Safety) during 2010-2011 – includes EBPPP, State-based PPP and other sources funding (numbers are estimated); some were also registered trainees	300
Animal Welfare Officer Skills Set enrolments (2010-2011) estimate only	120
Enrolments in other nationally accredited training 2010-2011 (estimate only)	200
Participation in MINTRAC professional development programs, 2010-2011 (estimate, as some programs are yet to run)	70

5.2 Ensuring that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry

During 2010 a national decision was made by the National Quality Council that Australian Training Packages would adopt a standardised approach to qualification packaging rules. This decision had the potential to erode the integrity of the meat industry qualifications, particularly at a time when qualifications such as the Certificates III and IV in Meat Processing (Meat Safety) were coming under close scrutiny during the remodelling of the Australian meat inspection system. There was also a high risk of a reduction in customer confidence in the integrity of the qualifications. The networks provided an ideal vehicle to discuss the implications of the decision and to negotiate and discuss the compromise which was eventually reached through the Meat Standing Committee.

In addition, a revised version of the *Australian Meat Industry Training Package* was developed during this period. Over the course of the past four years, all the changes which had been identified, discussed and debated through the networks were incorporated into the revised package. Fourteen new Skills Sets, also developed in consultation with the networks, were identified and approved for incorporation into the Training Package.

5.3 Ensuring that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills

This objective has been clearly achieved through the discussions generated at network meetings, the conference presentations and workshops sessions and the professional development program. Over the 2010-2011 year 81% of all RTOs attended at least one MINTRAC training or network event.

5.4 Providing accurate and current advice to State Training Authorities

Providing accurate and current advice to State Training Authorities ensures that public funding of training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements. This is a particularly important role of the networks. During 2010-2011, this objective was achieved in the following ways:

- the involvement of the State Industry Training Advisory Boards in the meetings gave them an opportunity to both collect and disseminate information about training priorities and funding decisions for their states
- the presence of State Training Authority representatives at most meetings enabled them to hear firsthand the issues and concerns affecting the meat industry and gave legitimacy to the priorities for funding promoted by both the State Industry Training Advisory Boards and MINTRAC
- when areas of particular concern arose, the networks provided the detail, personnel and information required for MINTRAC to undertake separate negotiations, for example in relation to the Qld cut in User Choice funding, and the NSW restriction of Certificate II Traineeships to those under 25 years of age.

5.5 Ensuring equitable and adequate access to State funding for training

The period 2010-2011 saw the commencement of a period of significant change in both State and Federal funding priorities and policies. The presence of the networks enabled MINTRAC to:

- distribute information about opportunities and changes to funding practices quickly and to enable the meat industry to maximise opportunities, particularly in relation to Productivity Places funding – the meat industry gained significant access to these funds in Qld, NSW, Vic, Tas and SA (WA did not promote this program separately)
- put together and manage 185 training places nationally in meat inspection and Diploma under the Enterprise-Based Productivity Places Program
- negotiate adjustments or alternative arrangements to state funding decisions which disadvantaged the meat industry, for example:
 - the Qld cut in User Choice funding, where an increase in funds was negotiated
 - the NSW restriction of Certificate II Traineeships to those under 25 years of age, where an alternative program was trialled (and will potentially be rolled out).

6 Impact on meat and livestock industry – Now and in five years time

6.1 Currency and relevance of the meat industry training system

The presence of the networks ensures that the meat industry training system remains current and responsive to meat industry priorities and current research findings. This is achieved through:

- rapid dissemination of research outcomes and incorporation into the national training system
- meeting formats which ensure that all attendees are receiving consistent messages
- regular provision of professional development to ensure trainer currency.

6.2 National consistency in meat industry training and assessment

The Training Networks continue to provide a vehicle to ensure that there is national consistency in training and assessment. This is achieved by:

- regular discussion about training practices and strategies
- continual improvement of the *Australian Meat Industry Training Package*
- across-the-board use of standardised training and assessment materials
- regular professional development of trainers and assessors
- close liaison between Registered Training Organisations and company personnel.

6.3 Addressing industry strategic priorities

As the *Meat Industry Strategic Plan* is rolled out, the Training Networks provide the vehicle to ensure that the training implications of new and emerging strategies are rapidly addressed and incorporated into the training system. Examples of how this is achieved include:

- a wide range of strategies which have been discussed and debated to address industry priorities to improve recruitment and retention
- addressing the training requirements posed by an increasing industry reliance on migrant labour such as foreign language resources, literacy and numeracy support materials, coping with diversity in the workforce, and a focus on upskilling trainers
- the adoption of training programs and strategies to address the new Australian meat inspection requirements – the network provided the means to identify the need to rapidly train a large cohort of new inspectors and the information required to support the application for funding
- ensuring that credible, accredited, comparable training programs are in place to match new and emerging customer requirements, for example the EU requirements due to come into effect at the beginning of 2013.

6.4 Ensuring that changes foreshadowed in the national training agenda do not conflict with meat industry training priorities

In the first five months of 2011, Skills Australia has produced a number of reports and policies for the national vocational education and training system which will affect the national training system over the next five years. The networks will provide an important means of ensuring that as these changes are gradually introduced, the meat industry is positioned to take advantage of changes which benefit the industry, and to negotiate areas which do not. Some of the implications of these reports and potential changes are itemised in the recommendations below.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Embedding of industry research outcomes into the training system

It is clear from discussions with MLA and AMPC that many research programs are producing findings that have implications for the training system and need to be included in either the *Australian Meat Industry Training Package* or the training and assessment support materials, and that training providers need to be upskilled to provided current and appropriate training. This is particularly evident in the following areas:

- environment: water conservation, waste water treatment, energy conservation, carbon sequestration
- new technology: automated evisceration, robotic sani-vac machinery, new handpieces for electrical stunning of small stock, new pelt pullers, ATP testing sticks
- meat science: implications of research into shelf life, revised *e.coli* testing requirements.

7.1.1 Recommendation 1:

It is recommended that MINTRAC continue to raise these matters for discussion at Training network meetings and invite comment about actions to be taken to ensure they are adequately addressed in the training system.

7.2 Professional training skills

It has become evident throughout the year that there is a continuing need to improve the professional skills of the industry's trainers and assessors. The nature of the Australian VET workforce was also the subject of a commissioned study by the Productivity Commission which reported in May 2011 - *Education and Training Workforce: Vocational Education and Training*. Many of the findings are directly relevant to the meat industry training system.

7.2.1 Recommendation 2

It is recommended that a series of guest speakers present short workshop sessions at the Training Network meetings during 2011-2012. MINTRAC will, drawing from the recommendations of the Productivity Commission Report, prepare the agenda for the first round.

Attendees will be invited to nominate their preferred topics for the second round of meetings. In addition, MINTRAC will foster a focus on the improvement of professional training skills through:

- offering a range of targeted PD programs
- publicising other publicly available programs such as those run by Skills Australia and IBSA
- continuing the e-learning section of the Mintracker newsletter.

7.3 Literacy and numeracy

It has long been recognised that there is a significant need for a focus on literacy and numeracy skills in the meat industry. The release of the Core Unit support CDs during 2011 was welcomed by industry trainers and many discussions at network meetings indicated that trainers felt under-skilled and under-resourced to deal with the range of challenges their student population posed.

This is not only a meat industry issue. In April 2011, the Industry Skills Councils released a joint publication called *No more excuses* which suggested that LLN skills were a critical issue impacting the ability of Australians to participate effectively at work.

7.3.1 Recommendation 3

MINTRAC has already submitted three applications to the Workforce English Language and Literacy program to run projects in 2011-12. If successful, these projects will be regularly discussed at network meetings, and will result in both professional development programs and additional resources for meat industry trainers.

It is also recommended that the guest speaker sessions include presentations related to LL&N teaching skills.

7.4 The changing nature of VET

Throughout 2010-11 a number of federal and state reports have heralded change ahead for training packages and the national training system. The *Training Products for the 21 Century* report signalled significant changes ahead for Training Packages, some of which affected the development of the MTM11 *Australian Meat Industry Training Package*.

The *Skills for Prosperity* report, released by Skills Australia in April 2011 was presented as a 'roadmap for vocational education and training' with a range of recommendations that will (if adopted) have significant impact on the meat industry.

7.4.1 Recommendation 4

It is recommended that MINTRAC continue to monitor and respond to the *Skills for Prosperity* changes as they are adopted and rolled out over the coming year. The changes should be a regular discussion item at Training Network meetings, and the meeting used as both a consultation forum and a means of disseminating information.

7.5 Adapting to accommodate changed funding arrangements

During 2010-2011 it became evident that both State and Federal Governments were moving away from commitments to fund Level II Traineeships, with the result that there was a significant reduction of access to funding across the industry, a trend that is set to continue.

7.5.1 Recommendation 5

It is recommended that MINTRAC explore alternative strategies to maximise training benefits and access to funding for the industry. As part of this recommendation, MINTRAC should also explore the feasibility and implications of developing additional Skill Sets, particularly at level II, to take advantage of alternative funding structures, should they become available.

7.6 Workforce development planning

Federal and state policies relating to training are increasingly becoming underpinned by requirements for comprehensive evidence of enterprise workforce development planning. For example, this was a strong recommendation of the *Skills for Prosperity* report mentioned above. While most of the larger enterprises already undertake workforce development planning in many forms, many of them would struggle to refine this into the type of evidence required to ensure access to future training arrangements. In addition, few Registered Training Organisations currently possess the skills to provide advice and support for companies to achieve this.

7.6.1 Recommendation 6

It is recommended that MINTRAC provide professional development programs to support companies to develop workforce development plans that will satisfy future training requirements, and that RTOs be upskilled to continue providing this support and advice.

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