



final report

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MINTRAC Meat Industry Training Network 2012-13

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Abstract

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.

Twelve training network meetings were held during 2012-2013, in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. The National Training Conference and Meat industry training awards were also held.

A wide range of issues were raised, discussed and actioned through the Training Network meetings during 2012-2013, for example: Requests for professional development programs; EU training requirements; and Continuous Improvement consultations.

Numerous negotiations and issues were raised with State and Federal Training Authorities in relation to funding and training priorities.

The MINTRAC Meat Industry Training Networks continue to play a vital role in facilitating the transfer of knowledge from research outcomes to training programs as part of the uptake of innovation in the meat processing industry; and ensuring that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry. The Networks ensure that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills and that training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements.

Six recommendations are made in this report.

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, HR managers, meat industry trainers, State Training Authorities, peak bodies, auditors and state-based industry training advisory boards.

Over 2012-13, the MINTRAC Training Networks addressed and achieved the following objectives:

- facilitating the transfer of knowledge from research outcomes to training programs as part of the uptake of innovation in the meat processing industry
- ensuring that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry
- ensuring that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills
- ensuring that training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements
- ensuring that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to training.

Twelve training network meetings were held during 2012-2013, in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Agendas are set by MINTRAC, with assistance from AMPC, 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.

Handouts from AMPC, the Australian Skills Quality Agency etc were collated into the meeting folders to ensure that any recent publications were appropriately disseminated. At each meeting MINTRAC also displayed any new products which had been released. All Training Network meetings were minuted, and minutes were distributed to attendees and those who apologised, AMPC, AMIC and MLA.

The following issues were raised, discussed and actioned through the Training Network meetings during 2012-2013:

- requests for professional development programs
- need for AAO – refresher training
- backpacker training
- Continuous Improvement consultations
- OPVs assessing the post-mortem unit
- issue of capped qualifications in SA
- opportunity to test a meat industry Skills in the Workplace application - SA
- EU training requirements
- induction program for professional entering the meat industry
- livestock handling competitions
- significant increase in enrolments in the Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services) qualification in Victoria
- AQTF requirements
- Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) opportunities.

Negotiations and issues raised with State and Federal Training Authorities included representations and submissions into:

- New Industry Participation Model in Victoria
- Introduction of Skills for All in SA
- Introduction of Smart and Skilled program in NSW
- Review into Agricultural Education and Training in NSW
- Review of the Skilled Priority Occupations List (SPOL) in WA
- Australian Workforce Productivity Agency (AWPA) review into VET fees and charges
- Future Focus – 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy
- Signed MOU with the Australian Skills Quality Agency (ASQA)

Approximately 80 delegates came together at the National Training Conference in Melbourne in April. Despite slight lower numbers than in previous years, the speakers over the two days delivered some strong and effective messages and combined to present a range of challenges and information.

A total of fourteen nominations were received for the MINTRAC National Training Awards which were announced at the MINTRAC Conference dinner.

The award winners were as follows:

- Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year Training Award – FGM Consultants
- Meat Industry Trainer of the Year Award – Wendy Hall
- Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year Award – Mandy Brasher.

1.1 Benefit to the industry

This year written material relating to R&D projects other than those directly involving MINTRAC continued to be made available for presentation at the network meetings. This material was discussed at the meetings and was well received by the attendees, many of whom asked for additional copies of the material so that they could distribute it more widely.

With some significant changes in federal and state funding policies and arrangements policies over the last twelve months, MINTRAC has been kept busy preparing submissions and attending consultations. The Training Networks are a critical element of being able to collect and collate rapid comment. In addition, by their very existence they provide a legitimacy that underpins responses provided by MINTRAC.

Regulators increasingly cite the meat industry training system as underpinning consistent practice and application of standards, meat safety outcomes and addressing market requirements. The Training Networks provide the mechanism to ensure that this confidence is well placed and remains accurate. MINTRAC has every reason to expect that this will increase over the next five years. Current industry and regulator responses to animal welfare concerns have been to increase and/or mandate training. While MINTRAC continues to have the capacity and authority to manage the responsiveness of the Australian Meat Industry Training Package to address emerging industry requirements, it is expected that this type of response will become normal practice.

One of the key industry priorities, as described in the Red Meat Industry Strategic Plan, is to “develop and retain appropriately motivated and skilled people for our industry”. The Training Networks play a critical role in the realisation of the objectives underpinning this priority.

The nature and structure of the Training Networks enables MINTRAC to assess, industry-wide, the impact of changes foreshadowed in the national training arena. This level of accessible,

timely industry intelligence is invaluable in enabling MINTRAC to respond and prepare responses to shape policy.

1.2 Recommendations

Six recommendations are presented in this report:

1.2.1 Recommendation 1

It is recommended that at least one hour be set aside at every meeting during 2013-14 to address revisions of Units. Wherever possible, papers should be distributed to attendees prior to the meeting.

1.2.2 Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the schedule of revisions of the Training and Assessment materials be tabled at all network meetings so that attendees can provide input to the revisions.

1.2.3 Recommendation 3

It is further recommended that attendees be invited to nominate technical reviewers for materials as they are redeveloped.

1.2.4 Recommendation 4

It is recommended that the Meat Safety qualifications be reviewed and updated as part of the Training Package review during 2013-14.

1.2.5 Recommendation 5

It is recommended that MINTRAC, with the support of AMIC, should make representations to DFEEST to resume the role of providing industry advice in South Australia.

1.2.6 Recommendation 6

It is recommended that MINTRAC staff should visit the NT during August 2013 to meet the key players and to discuss methods by which they can become involved in the training and MI&QA network system during 2014.

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2 Background

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.

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

This project includes:

- twelve state-based network meetings
- national training conference.

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).

A significant amount of Project Officer time under this project is spent providing individual advice to meat processing companies and trainers about the optimum application of the training system to meet business outcomes.

These networks are also a critical link between industry, and Federal and State Training Authorities. They enable MINTRAC to:

- access relevant and accurate information about training needs and priorities
- provide advice on industry priorities for the allocation of public funding dollars for training
- disseminate information about funds available for training to meat processing plants and to facilitate access to these monies
- negotiate auditing issues with training auditors
- disseminate advice and information about state and federal training priorities and issues.

3 Project objectives

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
- ensure that training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements
- ensure that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to funding for training.

4 Methodology

4.1 Network meetings

Twelve training network meetings were held during 2012-2013, in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

Agendas are set by MINTRAC, with input from AMPC, 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 Jodie Hummerston, AgriFood Skills Australia WELL broker, gave presentations at several of the network meetings in this round.

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 2012-2013 were:

- the revised versions of the free “delivering Training’ booklets for each sector
- the Stock Handling kit, incorporating the new animal welfare standards
- The Meat Safety Inspection Kit
- The Environmental Officer Skill Set Kit

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

4.2 National training conference

Run across two days at the end of March/early April 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.

4.3 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.

4.3.1 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.

4.3.2 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.

4.3.3 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 MTM11 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.

4.3.4 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.

4.3.5 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. All 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.

5 Results and discussion

5.1 Training Network meetings

All network meetings for the year were run according to schedule. Below is a summary of all scheduled and held meetings for the 2012-13 year.

5.1.1 First meeting

State	Location	Proposed Venue	Date
VIC	Melbourne	Best Western Airport Motel & Convention Centre, 33 Ardlie Street MELBOURNE (Attwood) VIC 3049	Thursday 12 July 2012

WA	Perth	Comfort Inn Bel Eyre Motel, 285 Great Eastern Highway, BELMONT WA 6104	Thursday 2 August 2012
QLD	Brisbane	The Colmslie Hotel, Corner Wynnum and Junction Roads, Morningside, Brisbane QLD 4170	Thursday 13 September 2012
NSW	Wagga	Quality Inn Carriage House, corner of Sturt Highway & Eunony Bridge Rd, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650	Thursday 1 November 2012
SA	Adelaide	Rydges Hotel South Park, Adelaide 1 South Terrace Adelaide SA 5000	Thursday 8 November 2012
NSW	Tamworth	Quality Hotel Powerhouse Tamworth, New England Hwy (Armidale Road), Tamworth NSW 2340	Thursday 15 November 2012

5.1.2 Second meeting

State	Location	Location	Date
Qld	Brisbane	The Colmslie Hotel, Corner Wynnum and Junction Roads, Morningside, Brisbane, Queensland 4170	Wednesday 17 April 2013
NSW	Wagga Wagga	Quality Inn Carriage House, corner of Sturt Highway & Eunony Bridge Rd, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650	Wednesday 1 May 2013
SA	Adelaid	Rydges South Park Adelaide, 1 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000	Wednesday 8 May 2013
Vic	Melbourne	Best Western Airport Motel & Convention Centre, 33 Ardlie Street, Attwood, Victoria 3049	Monday 20 May 2012
WA	Perth	Comfort Inn Bel Eyre Motel, 285 Great Eastern Highway, BELMONT WA 6104	Thursday 23 May 2013
NSW	Tamworth	Quality Hotel Powerhouse Tamworth, New England Hwy (Armidale Road), Tamworth NSW 2340	Wednesday 29 May 2013

Attendances at the meeting have been slightly down on previous years. This is a reflection of the reduction of the number of RTOs servicing the meat industry (down by ten over the last eighteen months), plus the significant amount of restructuring and financial pressure placed on RTOs as new state systems come into play. Below is a summary of attendances.

State	Location	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
QLD	Brisbane	40	45	39
VIC	Melbourne	41	52	35
WA	Perth	26	23	25
SA	Adelaide	26	30	36
NSW	Tamworth	29	32	26
NSW	Wagga	25	22	26
Meeting totals		187	204	197
Conference		96	110	78
Total Attendances		283	314	265

5.2 Key Issues raised

5.2.1 Request for professional development programs

Requested program	Requested by	Progress
Regulatory compliance workshops	Victoria	We are working with AMIC and DAFF to set this up; not likely to occur until next year
AWOSS	Victoria WA SA	Was scheduled as industry funded training under the PD program
MHA	Victoria	Deferred until new project in place – will then be reviewed
Internal audit	Victoria	Not run due to large number of other workshops
Internal auditing	WA:	Not run due to large number of other workshops
NLIS	WA:	Referred to ongoing project
Livestock handling	WA: Qld	Was scheduled as industry funded training under the PD program
MSA & Chiller assessment	WA:	Not yet addressed
Declared allergens; additives;	WA	Not yet addressed
Knife sharpening	Qld	Offered under PD (FFS) program
Certificate IV Leadership	Qld	EOIs for a NWDF program sought – insufficient requests
AQIS ATMs and OPVs on how to assess AWOs.	Qld	Not yet addressed
Dispositions and currency training	SA	Being addressed through MI Currency project
Meat inspection	SA Wagga	NWDF applications invited – insufficient requests
Lean Manufacturing	SA	Not addressed by MINTRAC as available through state funding
E-learning – training record systems; employee induction; contractors etc	Wagga	Suite of FFS IT programs were offered but insufficient uptake to run
Dog handling	Wagga	Referred to upcoming project

5.2.2 Need for AAO – refresher training (Raised by WA)

- Required in offal disposition
- Currency for those who have been out of the game
- DAFF is looking at developing an assessment tool.

Progress

Part of ongoing discussions with DAFF

5.2.3 Backpacker training (Raised by WA)

- DAFF is starting to get concerned about this
- National increase in microbial load on product – could be linked to dirtier stock and other factors, but reduction in accredited training could also be a factor.

Progress

Proposed new Certificate III qualifications may help address this issue.

5.2.4 Continuous Improvement Consultations (All States)

Issue discussed

MTMR321A Assess customer expectations (raised by Qld) Still believe that students are not going to be able to do it. Problem is with it being a compulsory unit.

MTMR301 *Prepare specialised cuts* (raised by Qld) – listed as no change on the mapping statement – but had a new element added.

MTMPS300 *Assess product in chillers* – AUSMEAT request to modify unit to suit changed requirements

Waste Water Skill Sets – discussion of proposal put forward by National Steering Committee of Water Project

New Certificate III Qualifications – second stage discussions

Outcome

Matter was addressed at the National Meat Retailing conference in November. Will be reviewed again by MSC in June 2013.

Added to the Continuous Improvement Register

Generally agreed that there needs to be two units – to be addressed during major rewrite of the TP 2013-14

Concept of the four Skill Sets supported – to go back for one further round of meetings

Proposal for 3-4 qualifications generally supported – to go back for one further round to refine content.

5.2.5 OPVs assessing the postmortem unit

- Conflict of interest?
- RTO should be doing the assessing
- Clive will be talking to AQIS to develop some protocols.

Progress

Now likely to be addressed through major review of the Meat Safety qualifications over 2013-14

5.2.6 Issue of capped qualifications in SA

- Funded training list updated every two months – some qualifications already capped (none are meat); next update 19 Nov; **Comment:** some concern expressed about the lack of notice/consultation about capping decisions

Progress

MINTRAC provided input into the consultations in January 2013.

5.2.7 Opportunity to test a meat industry Skills in the Workplace application - SA

Skills in the workplace – aim is to support businesses and upskill their staff – includes Skill Sets at Certificate III then full qualifications at Certificate IV and above; opportunity here to test a meat industry application; takes about 2 months to get an application up; AMIC currently has an application on the table; need to be in targeted priority areas (includes AgriFood); Skill set must be in the Training Package; scaled levels of company contributions; priority lists do not currently include any meat qualifications – suggested that Certificate IV Meat Safety and Quality Assurance probably should be on the list.

Progress

AMIC worked with State ITAB to develop a proposal. However the submission was unsuccessful.

5.2.8 EU training requirements

At each 2012 meeting Clive Richardson provided a brief overview of the regulations which came into play by 1 January 2013:

- Nominated and trained Animal Welfare Officer
- Accredited training required for handlers, restrainers, stunners, shacklers, stickers, assessment of effective stunning.

Progress

As several companies were still not fully prepared, these programs received priority for industry-funded training from Jan-March 2013.

5.2.9 Induction program for professional entering the meat industry (Wagga)

The need for an induction program for professionals entering the meat industry was discussed – had been previously tried by MINTRAC but could only be on a FFS basis and there was minimal interest.

Progress

No further action will be taken on this matter.

5.2.10 Livestock handling competitions (NSW meetings)

Clive Richardson discussed the possibility of introducing a competition on areas such as livestock handling and movement to discuss professionalism of the use of desirable skills.

- There was some discussion and interest in this possibility
- CSU has also done some interesting research on dog use and sheep behaviour
- State-based competition?
- Same type of competition for cattle
- RTOs to go away and engage with the employers about possibility of hosting a demonstration and field day.

Progress

This item is still being discussed and may be incorporated into the current Livestock Handling Extension project.

5.2.11 Significant increase in enrolments in the Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services) qualification in Victoria

Two reasons for this increase were identified:

- Use of this qualification as an alternative to Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs) as a result of the loss of traineeship incentives
- Use of the qualification as an alternative to Certificate III in Meat Processing (Boning Room) due to a more attractive funding option.

The need to preserve the integrity of the qualifications and to avoid enrolling students in inappropriate qualifications was discussed at all network meetings.

5.2.12 AQTF requirements

Requirements around the issuing of Certificates and third party assessment were discussed at each of the second round meetings. In addition, a full day on assessment validation was held at the national conference.

5.2.13 Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) opportunities

With the appointment of the AgriFood Skills Australia WELL broker in January 2013, she was invited to make a presentation at each of the second round of network meetings. As a result several meat processing companies are now in the process of preparing proposals for WELL Training programs with her assistance. In addition, the discussions gave rise to a MINTRAC application for further WELL funding to run national workshops in diary and report writing.

5.3 Negotiations and issues raised with State and Federal Training Authorities

5.3.1 New Industry participation model – Victoria

As part of the ongoing Victoria restructure of industry advisory arrangements, the State Food ITAB closed its doors in December 2012.

MINTRAC received a letter from the Victorian Minister for Higher Education and Skills in September 2012, providing an overview of the new arrangements and advising us that we would be contacted in relation to arrangements for consulting with us on the skills needs of our industry.

Just before Easter we received a further communication inviting our input into the Skills and Training Needs Report – a written submission was provided.

In addition the Director for Higher Education and Skills was invited to send a representative to the 2013 Victorian network meeting but was unable to attend.

5.3.2 Introduction of Skills for All in SA

SA Department of Further Education, Employment, Science & Technology, presented an overview of the program at the first SA meeting.

Key points:

- Has already led to a significant increase in VET enrolments
- Most applicant RTOs received contracts for 2-3 years
- TAFE SA is now separate statutory authority; Meat – 22 courses – six are fee free at Certificate I and II level
- Skill Sets are available from 19 November – not meat at the present as it is a very rudimentary list – still a lot of discussion around Skill Sets
- Funded training list updated every two months – some qualifications already capped (none are meat); next update 19 November; Comment: some concern expressed about the lack of notice/consultation about capping decisions
- Skills in the workplace – aim is to support businesses and upskill their staff – includes Skill Sets at Certificate III then full qualifications at Certificate IV and above; opportunity here to test a meat industry application
- There's also a workforce development fund to address specific industry issues.
- In April 2013, MINTRAC provided on-line feedback into a review of the Skills For All Funded Training List.

5.3.3 Introduction of Smart and Skilled program in NSW

Presentations were given by STA representatives to all four meetings.

Key features:

- Big changes to funding arrangements occurring over the next couple of years
- 2013 – STS will have a part-qualifications budget plus a full qualifications budget for existing workers – will be fairly limited
- Quality outcomes are now a big focus – e.g. capability of workplace to provide appropriate training is very important
- July 2014 – the full program, with revised Skills list for funding commences.
- In January 2013, MINTRAC provided advice into the Smart and Skilled training priorities for NSW for 2013-14.

When the first list of priorities was released, we were extremely concerned that there were only two meat processing qualifications listed. After a further discussion with NSW STA we provided an updated list of the meat industry training priorities which they undertook to distribute to their regional centres.

In May 2013, MINTRAC attended further consultations to provide advice into training priorities from July 2014 onwards. We also encouraged participants from both the Wagga Wagga and Tamworth network meetings to provide input into the regional consultations and provided each person with a list of dot points of what had already been presented.

5.3.4 Review into Agricultural Education and Training in NSW

A discussion paper was released later in 2012. In consultation with AMIC, MINTRAC provided a submission to this inquiry.

5.3.5 Review of the Skilled Priority Occupations List (SPOL) in WA

During April 2013, the FFTITC in WA sought assistance for their response to the draft SPOL. The State had indicated that there was insufficient evidence supporting the retention of meat boners and slicers and slaughterers on the SPOL. MINTRAC provided additional evidence to support the retention of these groups on the SPOL.

5.3.6 Australian Workforce Productivity Agency (AWPA) review into VET fees and charges

AWPA released a discussion paper inviting comment. MINTRAC placed a notice in MINTRACker inviting RTOs who had concerns with the new proposals to raise them, with MINTRAC so that we could prepare an industry response if necessary. No comments were received.

5.3.7 Future Focus – 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy

AWPA released Future Focus – 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy. MINTRAC provided input into the consultation process underpinning this report, and some of our concerns relating to funding for Certificate II qualifications were noted in the report. We attended a further consultation around the release of this report in Brisbane in early May.

5.3.8 Signed MOU with the Australian Skills Quality Agency (ASQA)

ASQA is responsible for the registration and auditing of Registered Training Organisations. IN February 2013, MINTRAC signed an MOU with ASQA with the following objectives:

- To provide a mechanism for the sharing of relevant information to inform ASQA's risk management and regulation of the VET sector
- To enable ASQA to access subject matter expertise where appropriate from MINTRAC to assist ASQA in performing its regulatory functions.

5.4 The MINTRAC National Training Conference

Delegates gathered for the 2013 MINTRAC National Training Conference at the Rydges in World Square Sydney early in April. Despite slight lower numbers than in previous years, the speakers over the two days delivered some strong and effective messages and combined to present a range of challenges and information.

Day one followed the traditional format of keynote speakers and a series of breakout presentations and workshops. Keynote speakers included Michelle Edge (AMPC) and Rod Coogan (MLA) who spoke about the changing role of Research and Development Corporations, and how their respective organisations were meeting the challenge. This was followed by the MINTRAC report, where MINTRAC staff provided an overview of the current projects and activities of MINTRAC.

Eight break-out sessions then challenged delegates with presentations about current industry issues such as the changes to the regulatory environment, new microbiological testing requirements, changes to animal welfare requirements and meat inspection training. A second stream looked at education and training issues such as the change to the Training Package, the ACSF and WELL programs.

A highlight of Day 1 was the closing session entitled '15-minute snapshots' where five presenters gave short presentations on a variety of topics.

The conference dinner featured the presentation of the MINTRAC Training Awards (see elsewhere in this newsletter), and Fast Jimmy, renowned magician and entertainer.

Day 2 saw a shift in focus and in pace – the assessment validation workshops. Keynote presentations from Berwyn Clayton and Jeannie Cotterell opened the sessions with a frank and open appraisal of the upcoming changes to assessment validation requirements. The groups then split into intensive workshopping sessions to look more closely at the assessment validation process. Many participants walked away with vouchers for Bekina boots – organised by Hepworths Industrial wear, and a very popular prize.

5.5 The Meat Industry National Training Awards

A total of fourteen nominations were received for the MINTRAC training awards. However, only three categories of awards were contested. Of note this year was the extremely strong field of candidate for Vocational Student of the Year – judging in this category was particularly challenging.

Sponsorship of prizes to the value of \$1,000 was received for each award.

The award winners were announced at the MINTRAC Conference dinner.

5.5.1 Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year Training Award

Winner: FGM Consultants

Other finalists:

- Independent Institute of Food Processing
- William Angliss Institute
- TAFE SA

Sponsorship toward the prize for this award was received from AgriFood Skills Australia.

5.5.2 Meat Industry Trainer of the Year Award

Winner: Wendy Hall

Other finalists:

- Darren Scott
- Martyn Paynter

Sponsorship toward the prize for this award was received from MINTRAC.

5.5.3 Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year Award

Winner: Mandy Brasher

Other finalists:

- Kathleen Baker
- Julie Lay
- Kathy Cox
- Linda Fernando
- Hongli LU (Vicky)

Sponsorship toward the prize for this award was received from Hepworth's Industrial Wear.

6 Success in achieving objectives

6.1 Facilitate the transfer of knowledge from research outcomes to training programs as part of the uptake of innovation in the meat processing industry

This year a wide range of AMPC Fact Sheets have been presented at Training Network meetings. This material has been discussed at the meetings and has been well received by the attendees, many of whom asked for additional copies of the materials so that they could distribute it more widely.

In addition, AMPC representatives were present and made presentations to most of the 2013 meetings

Handouts distributed have included:

- The impact of a carbon price on the red meat processing industry – plant and firm level analysis
- The impact of a carbon price on the red meat processing industry
- Risk management case study for processors
- The red meat processing industry in Australia
- Saleyard verification review
- The red meat processing industry in Australia
- The impact of a carbon price on the red meat processing industry – plant and firm level analysis
- The impact of a carbon price on the red meat processing industry in Australia
- Meat science tutorials
- Dark Cutting Beef and animal temperament
- Recycled water opportunities in sustainable food production and manufacture
- Industry Biosecurity standards for meat processing – a new project
- Environmental Officer Training in the Australian Red Meat industry
- Development of the WHS manual for red meat industry supervisors.
- E.Coli study tour
- Identification of barriers to the adoption of technology in the meat industry project
- Developing a consistent approach to NLIS practices in meat processing - Stage 1
- Waste water workshops.

Also:

- Meat Technology Update – The effect of diet on sheepmeat flavour.

6.2 Ensure that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry

This year there has seen significant restructuring of funding and priority systems at both State and Federal level and MINTRAC has prepared multiple submissions and representations on behalf of the industry, as indicated in Section 4.3 of this report.

Of concern has been a drop in the number of Registered Training Organisations servicing the industry as several have closed their doors in the face of an increasingly competitive environment and a reduction in available state and federal funding.

6.3 Ensure that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills

The role of the networks in providing trainers with current knowledge about industry trends and requirements, as well as identifying professional development programs which enable trainers to build their skill levels, has remained an important role of the network meetings.

6.4 Ensure that training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements

A significant number of changes to the accredited training available to the industry have been discussed and debated at the network meetings. These have included:

- new Skill Sets in waste water and smallgoods production for butchers
- the feasibility of new qualifications at Certificate III level
- the need to review the Meat Safety qualifications
- changes to the meat retailing qualifications
- review and update of the Animal Welfare Officer Skill Set units to facilitate their use in the saleyards, feedlots and transport sectors.

6.5 Ensure that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to funding for training.

This has continued to be an important role of the networks. State Training Authorities have attended most meetings, usually armed with information about funds available for meat industry requirements.

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

7.1 Currency and relevance of the meat industry training system

With some significant changes in federal and state funding policies and arrangements policies over the last twelve months, MINTRAC has been kept busy preparing submissions and attending consultations. The Training Networks are a critical element of being able to collect and collate rapid comment. In addition, by their very existence they provide a legitimacy that underpins responses provided by MINTRAC.

MINTRAC expects that this will continue to be the case over the next five years, particularly if there is a change in federal government later this year.

7.2 National consistency in meat industry training and assessment

Regulators increasingly cite the meat industry training system as underpinning consistent practice and application of standards, meat safety outcomes and addressing market requirements. The Training Networks provide the mechanism to ensure that this confidence is well placed and remains accurate.

MINTRAC has every reason to expect that this will increase over the next five years. Current industry and regulator responses to animal welfare concerns have been to increase and/or mandate training. While MINTRAC continues to have the capacity and authority to manage the responsiveness of the Australian Meat Industry Training Package address emerging industry requirements, it is expected that this type of response will become normal practice.

7.3 Addressing industry strategic priorities

One of the key industry strategic planning priorities, as described in the Red Meat Industry Strategic Plan, is to “develop and retain appropriately motivated and skilled people for our industry”. The Training Networks play a critical role in the realisation of the objectives underpinning this theme, including:

- contributing information and resources to companies seeking to promote the industry as a career choice and a desirable employment option
- providing relevant and applicable training to encourage retention
- increase availability and access to relevant training options which suits the requirements of both companies and individuals
- influencing government support for strategic and semi-skilled labour programs
- clearly articulating the career options available in the industry.

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

The nature and structure of the Training Networks enables MINTRAC to assess, industry-wide, the impact of changes foreshadowed in the national training arena. This level of accessible, timely industry intelligence is invaluable in enabling MINTRAC to respond and prepare responses to shape policy.

It is expected that this structure will continue to operate effectively over the next five years.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Rewriting of the all Units of Competency in the Training Package

During 2013-14 the entire Training Package will be rewritten to address the Streamlining of Training Packages requirements. This will require a significant amount of consultation and reviewing at network meetings for the whole year.

8.1.1 Recommendation 1

It is recommended that at least one hour be set aside at every meeting during 2013-14 to address revisions of Units. Wherever possible, papers should be distributed to attendees prior to the meeting.

8.2 Rewriting of the Training and Assessment support materials

During 2013-15 (over two years) all Training and Assessment materials will be revised and updated to address changed Unit requirements.

8.2.1 Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the schedule of revisions be tabled at all network meetings so that attendees can provide input to the revisions.

8.2.2 Recommendation 3

It is further recommended that attendees be invited to nominate technical reviewers for units as they are redeveloped.

8.3 Review of the Meat Safety qualifications

Over the course of the year it has become evident that changed regulatory requirements and practices around the introduction of AEMIS mean that a review and updating of the Certificates III and IV in Meat Processing (meat Safety) is required. Discussions on this subject between AMIC and DAFF have already commenced.

8.3.1 Recommendation 4

It is recommended that the Meat Safety qualifications be reviewed and updated as part of the Training Package review during 2013-14.

8.4 Changes to State advisory arrangements in South Australia

At the last meeting the SAFHITC announced that it would no longer be funded by the State Government from July 2013, but would continue to operate using retained earnings.

8.4.1 Recommendation 5

It is recommended that MINTRAC, with the support of AMIC, should make representations to DFEEST to resume the role of providing industry advice in South Australia.

8.5 Provision of State advice in the Northern Territory

With AACo planning to commence meat processing operations later this year, the inclusion of the Northern Territory into the network system needs to be considered. PITAC is the State ITAB, but MINTRAC has not met the current CEO, although we have had regular email and telephone contact.

8.5.1 Recommendation 6

It is recommended that MINTRAC staff should visit the NT during August 2013 to meet the key players and to discuss methods by which they can become involved in the training and MI&QA network system during 2014.