



final report

Project Code: A.MIN.0101
Prepared by: Jenny Kroonstuiver
National Meat Industry Training Advisory
Council (MINTRAC)
Date published: June 2012
PUBLISHED BY
Meat and Livestock Australia Limited
Locked Bag 991
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

MINTRAC Meat Industry Training Network 2011-2012

Meat & Livestock Australia acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government and contributions from the Australian Meat Processor Corporation to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

This publication is published by Meat & Livestock Australia Limited ABN 39 081 678 364 (MLA). Care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However MLA cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information or opinions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests. Reproduction in whole or in part of this publication is prohibited without prior written consent of MLA.

Abstract

Twelve MINTRAC Training Network meetings were held during 2011-2012, in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, attracting strong industry and Registered Training Organisation attendances. The project also included the MINTRAC national Training Conference and the five national meat industry training awards.

The Training Networks 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. They also serve to ensure that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry, and that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills. A vital role is to ensure that training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements, and that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to training.

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 2011-12, the MINTRAC Training Networks addressed and achieved the following objectives:

- 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 training.

Twelve training network meetings were held during 2011-2012, 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.

Handouts from MLA, Meat Industry Services, AMPC etc were collated into the meeting folders to ensure that any recent publications are 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 2011-2012:

- Animal Welfare Issues
- AMPC Fact Sheets
- current AMPC and MLA research projects
- Skill Sets
- Continuous Improvement matters
- Certificate III in Feedlot Operations
- AEMIS reforms
- low stress handling
- European Union regulations
- Cert II Traineeships
- MTM11 implementation, extensions to scope and transfer to ASQA
- National Workforce Development Fund
- workforce development training
- core skills listed in the Training Package.

Over 100 delegates came together at the National Training Conference in Melbourne in March to explore the implications of trends in federal policies; look at the workforce development solutions adopted by some enterprises; and unpack the challenges for industry trainers.

A total of twenty nominations were received for the MINTRAC National Training Awards which were announced at the MINTRAC Conference dinner on Wednesday 28th March 2012. Of note this year was the extremely strong field of candidate for Trainer of the Year, RTO of the Year and Vocational Student of the Year – judging in these categories was particularly challenging. Sponsorship of prizes to the value of \$1,000 was received for each award.

The award winners were as follows:

- Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award - Teys Australia (Tamworth)
- Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year Training Award - South West TAFE
- Meat Industry Trainer of the Year Award - Tom Collyer
- Meat Industry Training Initiative Award - Central West Community College
- Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year Award - Daniel Lewis

1.1 Benefit to the industry

For the first time this year, written material relating to R&D projects other than those directly involving MINTRAC was 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 materials so that they could distribute it more widely.

This year MINTRAC has faced a significant challenge in trying to marry the business and strategic requirements of the industry with some significant changes in National Vocational Education and Training Policy, including:

- retaining Certificate II qualifications as the preferred industry entry level qualification despite a federal move to favour Certificate IIIs
- challenging the removal of Employer subsidies for and access to Certificate II level Traineeships
- developing Skill Sets as an accredited training alternative
- ensuring industry priorities are accurately and comprehensively addressed in state funding policies.

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.

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 Units of Competency in stunning, waste water, NLIS, mechanical stimulation, writing SOPs, environment for rendering
- incorporation of Bar Coding and NGERs reporting requirements into training and assessment materials
- discussion around the feasibility of Meat Retail Small Business Skill Sets
- discussion around the nature and design of Smallgoods Skill Sets for Butchers
- debate over the proposed content of new abattoirs Skill Sets in the areas of: meat processing core skills; despatching carcass from the slaughter floor; packing meat products; operation of packaging machinery; loadout; processing animal covering; fellmongering; slinks; vehicle operation; and transporting livestock.

Ensuring that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to training has continued to be an important role of the networks. State Training Authorities have attended every meeting, usually armed with information about funds available for meat industry requirements.

With some significant changes in federal and state policies over the last twelve months it has felt as if the structure of the meat industry training system is under siege. This has been particularly apparent in the need for MINTRAC to respond to federal and state consultation documents. 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 and address emerging industry requirements, it is expected that this type of response will become normal practice.

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.

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.

Contents

	Page
2	Background.....9
3	Project objectives9
4	Methodology10
4.1	Training Network meetings 10
4.2	National training conference 10
4.3	The meat Industry training awards 10
4.3.1	Meat Industry Training Initiative Award 11
4.3.2	Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award 11
4.3.3	Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year 11
4.3.4	Meat Industry Trainer of the Year..... 11
4.3.5	Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year 11
5	Results and discussion.....11
5.1	Training Network meetings 11
5.1.1	Key Issues raised 12
5.1.1.1	Animal Welfare Issues..... 12
5.1.1.2	AMPC Fact Sheets..... 12
5.1.1.3	Current AMPC and MLA research projects..... 12
5.1.1.4	Skill Sets 12
5.1.1.5	Continuous Improvement matters..... 12
5.1.1.6	Certificate III in Feedlot Operations 12
5.1.1.7	AEMIS reforms 13
5.1.1.8	Low stress handling..... 13
5.1.1.9	European Union regulations 13
5.1.1.10	Cert II Traineeships..... 13
5.1.1.11	MTM11 implementation, extensions to scope and transfer to ASQA 13
5.1.1.12	National Workforce Development Fund..... 13
5.1.1.13	Workforce development training..... 13
5.1.1.14	Core skills listed in the Training Package 13
5.1.2	Industry RD&E Extension 13
5.1.3	Negotiations and issues raised with State Training Authorities 14
5.1.3.1	The Budget decision in relation to traineeships 14
5.1.3.2	South Australian Skills for All priorities 14
5.1.3.3	Senate Economics Committee Inquiry into the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Bill 2012..... 14
5.1.4	Network attendance statistics..... 14
5.2	The National Training Conference 14
5.2.1	Keynote presentations..... 15

5.2.1.1	Dr Caroline Smith Director, Skills and Workforce Development Policy, at Skills Australia	15
5.2.1.2	Jeannie Cotterell - General Manager, Product Development & Implementation, AgriFood Skills Australia.....	15
5.2.2	Plenary sessions	15
5.2.2.1	The Value of Skill Sets	15
5.2.2.2	Employing backpackers.....	17
5.2.2.3	The Burning Questions (Final conference session)	17
5.2.3	Workshop theme: Diversifying the workforce	18
5.2.3.1	Gary Brown - Group Training Manager, Teys Australia	18
5.2.3.2	Dave Matthews - General Manager Human Resources, Teys Bros	18
5.2.3.3	Milton James - Director, Boys from the Bush Director	18
5.2.3.4	Stephan Knoll – Director, Independent Institute of Food Processing	19
5.2.4	Workshop theme: Workforce development	19
5.2.4.1	Ivan Neville - Manager, Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch, DEEWR	19
5.2.4.2	Brad Armstrong - Project Manager, Food Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council WA	19
5.2.4.3	Michelle Edge - CEO Australian Meat Processor Corporation	19
5.2.4.4	The changing face of meat inspection training - Round table discussion	19
5.2.4.5	Wendy Hall - RTO Manager, Response Learning.....	20
5.2.4.6	Terry Nolan - Director, Nolan Meats Pty Ltd	20
5.2.5	Workshop theme: Critical issues and emerging challenges	20
5.2.5.1	Clive Richardson - Senior Project Manager, MINTRAC	20
5.2.5.2	Jodie Hummerston - Project Officer, MINTRAC.....	20
5.2.5.3	Jenny Kroonstuiver - CEO, MINTRAC.....	20
5.2.5.4	John Sumner - Consultant, MLA.....	21
5.2.6	Networking and exhibits	21
5.2.7	Conference dinner.....	21
5.3	The National Training Awards.....	21
5.3.1	Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award	21
5.3.2	Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year Training Award.....	21
5.3.3	Meat Industry Trainer of the Year Award.....	22
5.3.4	Meat Industry Training Initiative Award	22
5.3.5	Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year Award	22
6	Success in achieving objectives	22
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	22
6.2	Ensure that the meat industry training system meets the business and strategic requirements of the industry	23
6.3	Ensure that the training personnel of the meat industry have currency of knowledge and skills	23

6.4	Ensure that training for the meat industry continues to address industry priorities and requirements.....	23
6.5	Ensure that the meat industry receives equitable and adequate access to training.....	24
7	Impact on meat and livestock industry – now and in five years time	24
7.1	Currency and relevance of the meat industry training system	24
7.2	National consistency in meat industry training and assessment	24
7.3	Addressing industry strategic priorities	24
7.4	Ensuring that changes foreshadowed in the national training agenda do not conflict with meat industry training priorities.....	25
8	Conclusions and recommendations	25
8.1	Recommendations	25
8.1.1	Alternatives to level II qualifications.....	25
8.1.1.1	Recommendation 1:	25
8.1.2	Actioning the findings of the training benchmarking survey.....	25
8.1.2.1	Recommendation 2:	25
8.1.3	RTO attendance at Training Network meetings	26
8.1.3.1	Recommendation 3:	26
8.1.4	Distribution and dissemination of AMPC and MLA research information	26
8.1.4.1	Recommendation 4:	26

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. 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.

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.

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, for example:

- training solutions to address corrective action requests
- structure and organisation of training programs to meet company requirements
- availability of funded training to meet identified needs.

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

MINTRAC will achieve the following objectives to MLA's reasonable satisfaction:

- 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 training.

4 Methodology

4.1 Training Network meetings

Twelve training network meetings were held during 2011-2012, 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 Wendy Hall, from Response Learning 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 2011-2012 were:

- the Meat Safety Inspection Kit
- the revised versions of the free “delivering Training” booklets for each sector
- the Humane Slaughter kit, incorporating the new animal welfare standards
- the Stock Handling kit, incorporating the new animal welfare standards
- new resources for meat retailing.

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 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 facilitator to facilitate the conference plenary sessions.

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 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.

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. 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 scheduled network meetings have been held according to schedule, as follows:

State	Location	2011 meeting	2012 meeting
QLD	Brisbane	Thursday 18 August 2011	Thursday 15 March 2012

VIC	Melbourne	Thursday 22 September 2011	Thursday 16 February 2012
WA	Perth	Thursday 13 October 2011	Thursday 8 March 2012
SA	Adelaide	Thursday 20 October 2011	Thursday 3 May 2012
NSW	Tamworth	Thursday 27 October 2011	Thursday 10 May 2012
NSW	Wagga	Thursday 3 November 2011	Thursday 19 April 2012

5.1.1 Key Issues raised

The following issues have been raised, discussed and actioned through the Training Network meetings during 2011-2012.

5.1.1.1 Animal Welfare Issues

Concerns arising from the incidents at Trafalgar and Wilberforce have given rise to a great deal of discussion at Training Network meetings. Discussion related to the importance of following the AMIC Animal Welfare standards and appropriate accredited training.

5.1.1.2 AMPC Fact Sheets

AMPC fact sheets have been distributed at every meeting. A brief commentary about the key points and relevance of each sheet to the training process was included in the latest round of meetings.

5.1.1.3 Current AMPC and MLA research projects

Projects which may be of interest/relevance to trainers were discussed at Training Network meetings. Predominantly these have been the environmental projects and trainers were encouraged to attend the environment network site visits as well.

5.1.1.4 Skill Sets

The 36 Skill Sets discussed during 2011 were approved by MSC in December and have now been included into the Training Package.

Further Skill Sets were considered in the 2012 round of meetings, in the areas of:

- smallgoods for butchers
- business skills for butchers
- level II abattoirs.

5.1.1.5 Continuous Improvement matters

The recommendations arising from the nine matters considered in 2011 were addressed and approved by MSC in December 2011, and most of these have now been actioned by AgriFood. A further four issues relating to new units and changes to current units were considered in the 2012 round of meetings and the final recommendations are due to go to the Meat Standing Committee in June 2012.

5.1.1.6 Certificate III in Feedlot Operations

This matter was placed on the agenda at the request of University of Ballarat, who had requested both a mapping to the Meat Industry units and a discussion of the qualifications. At several meetings, concern was expressed at the lack of focus on animal handling and horse riding in the qualifications. As these are not meat industry qualifications, participants were encouraged to raise their own concerns onto the AgriFood Continuous Improvement Register.

We have now been advised by AgriFood that this qualification is to be reviewed, and we will contribute to this review as appropriate.

5.1.1.7 AEMIS reforms

The current state of the AEMIS reforms and the likely impact on training was a matter for discussion at every meeting.

5.1.1.8 Low stress handling

The importance of whole-of-chain low stress handling and possible training solutions was a matter for discussion at every meeting during 2011 and 2012.

5.1.1.9 European Union regulations

The 2013 changes and the likely impact on the training systems continue to be discussed at every meeting. The new unit MTMP3004A *Assess effective stunning and bleeding* was created in order to prepare for these regulations, and the associated training materials and trial training programs were discussed at the network meetings.

5.1.1.10 Cert II Traineeships

Following the removal of Commonwealth subsidies for Certificate II traineeships in the May budget, the meat industry has been in ongoing negotiation with DEEWR. An update of progress in these negotiations has been provided at every meeting.

5.1.1.11 MTM11 implementation, extensions to scope and transfer to ASQA

The MTM11 Australian Meat Industry Training Package was endorsed at the end of June 2011. Consequently there have been numerous discussion at each network meeting, covering:

- qualification structures
- progress in gaining extension to scope
- state approval processes for Traineeships and Apprenticeships
- understanding changes to the Training Package
- the Evidence Guide for trainer qualifications and experience
- state transitions to ASQA.

5.1.1.12 National Workforce Development Fund

The Federal Government announced a new national fund to replace the Enterprise-Based Productivity Places Fund in September. MINTRAC has obtained funding for five programs under this program and the nature and progress of these programs has been discussed at every meeting.

5.1.1.13 Workforce development training

This is the new 'buzz word' and an understanding an appreciation of workforce development planning processes is becoming a critical component of accessing funding for training. MINTRAC has now been successful in obtaining both industry funding and state funding for conducting workshops in this area, plus Workforce Development was the theme of the annual conference in March.

5.1.1.14 Core skills listed in the Training Package

MINTRAC has commenced a project to map a number of Units of Competency to the Australian Core Skill Framework. This project was discussed at the Adelaide meeting and advice sought on unit priorities.

5.1.2 Industry RD&E Extension

At each meeting, MINTRAC staff provide an overview of current R&D projects and activities, their progress, and their likely impact on the training system. All projects which involve MINTRAC are

summarised in a handout which is presented to every meeting; verbal updates are provided for AMPC/MLA projects which are not supported by separate written materials.

5.1.3 Negotiations and issues raised with State Training Authorities

State Training Authority representatives attended every network meeting held during 2011-2012. In addition separate representations were made on a number of issues including funding for specific issues such as animal welfare training to support industry response to new market and regulatory requirements.

5.1.3.1 The Budget decision in relation to traineeships

We continue to address the industry impact of restrictions to access to Commonwealth subsidies for level II Traineeships. A meeting with the Minister's Chief of Staff occurred in April 2012.

5.1.3.2 South Australian Skills for All priorities

These priorities were released by DFEEST in December 2011. MINTRAC identified that the very poor coverage of meat industry priorities gave raised for concern and alerted AMIC SA to the issue, with a recommendation that further input be provided as a matter of urgency. In addition SA DFEEST was invited to the May Training network meeting to receive further industry feedback. HR Managers from five SA abattoirs attended the meeting and were able to provide detailed comment and advice.

5.1.3.3 Senate Economics Committee Inquiry into the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Bill 2012

MINTRAC was invited to provide a submission to this inquiry in April 2012. A very short time frame, across Easter, was provided, so a very brief submission was prepared with as much information as could be collected in the time allowed. The MINTRAC submission was extensively quoted in the final report.

5.1.4 Network attendance statistics

Training Network attendances continued to rise this year. Below is a summary of the attendances.

State	Location	2011 meeting	2012 meeting	Total attendances	Same time last year
QLD	Brisbane	20	25	45	40
VIC	Melbourne	28	24	52	41
WA	Perth	12	11	23	26
SA	Adelaide	12	18	30	26
NSW	Tamworth	14	18	32	29
NSW	Wagga	12	10	22	25
Conference				110	96
Totals		98	106	314	283

5.2 The National Training Conference

Over 100 delegates came together in Melbourne in March to explore the implications of trends in federal policies; look at the workforce development solutions adopted by some enterprises; and unpack the challenges for industry trainers.

5.2.1 Keynote presentations

5.2.1.1 Dr Caroline Smith Director, Skills and Workforce Development Policy, at Skills Australia

Dr Smith's presentation, titled 'Workforce Development: A national perspective' outlined the findings of Australian Workforce Futures: a national workforce development strategy, and then described strategies to address the key national workforce development challenges in Australia. These challenges are first to increase workforce participation within marginalised groups and second to deepen workforce skills to improve productivity.

The presentation also focussed on work underway to develop a second National Workforce Development Strategy. An important part of this project is identifying possible scenarios for Australia's future to 2025. Scenarios are alternative visions of the potential future, and provide a means to make decisions that take account of uncertainty and to address the limitations of long term forecasting. The scenarios will influence economic modelling of the supply and demand for skills to 2025 and inform the development of the new strategy, which will be published by December 2012.

5.2.1.2 Jeannie Cotterell - General Manager, Product Development & Implementation, AgriFood Skills Australia

In April 2011, the joint Industry Skills Councils released a report titled 'No More Excuses – an industry response to the language, literacy and numeracy challenge'. Nearly 12 months later, this presentation looked at the national conversation about foundation skills in vocational education and training and how our products and services are evolving to meet the needs of all learners. Jeannie described the progress and types of initiatives already occurring in the agrifood sector, and in particular the meat industry, and further initiatives including the ACSF mapping project, due to commence within the next few months.

5.2.2 Plenary sessions

5.2.2.1 The Value of Skill Sets

This session began with three short presentations from: Jenny Kroonstuiwer, MINTRAC; Jeannie Cotterell, AGRIFOOD; and Kerry Johnson, Teys Australia.

Conference participants were asked to consider three questions as the basis for the plenary discussion – the following notes are a summary of the main discussion points and include notes from the table groups.

Describe which skill sets you believe will give best value to the industry (and why?)

- Basic Meat Industry Skill Set.
- Pre-employment.
- Food Safety.
- Environmental Skill Set – sustainability.
- Knife Sharpening.
- Humane Slaughter.
- Pack Units.
- Trim Units.
- Offal Processing.
- Effective Stun / Stick.
- Bandsaw.
- Drover.
- Lariage Supervisor.

- Animal Welfare – meet customer and industry requirements.
- Stock Handling.
- Game Harvester.
- Leadership – Supervisors (include OH&S, QA and Meat Safety).
- Smallgoods for Butchers.
- AWOSS.
- Head work / meat recovery.

Why?

- Any skill set that deliver on issues topics that are – politically sensitive, meet community expectations and/or meet customer requirements.
- to meet increased demands – such as regulation and testing.

Describe the value you believe the Industry will gain from having these skill sets in place

- They present recognised, achievable and practical goals for new workers who may have had learning challenges.
- They provide additional skills on top of a qualification for those keen to develop themselves further.
- Up-skilling of our workforce.
- Accreditation.
- Recognition of skills / professionalism.
- Will help with the training matrix for individual sites.
- Enable the employer to achieve compliance and retain markets.
- Satisfy community expectations – public perception.
- Better animal welfare.
- Meet EU regulations.
- Meet customer (eg. McDonalds) requirements.
- National uniform approach – gives a National standard – hopefully leading to market access.
- Greater workforce flexibility.
- Provides options for casuals.
- Value add to our products, better (head) meat recovery – improved product quality (primal recovery \$, excess trimming, carcase grade). Improved Product quality – pH shelf life, reduction in bruising, etc.
- Staff retention, employee satisfaction and professional development.
- Many already have Cert 3 but need continuous / updated training to ensure food safety.
- Could offer skill sets as part of a qualification to those interested. What is the possibility of achieving a qualification from a combination of skill sets??
- Provide an opportunity to attract and prepare the right candidate – employee will have an understanding of what they will be experiencing in their new role.
- Describe your image of the ideal 'system' around skills sets
- to use as building blocks for full qualification/s or as additions to existing qualifications in specialised areas.
- Other points raised:
- Concern that we are losing knowledge and qualifications from the Industry / losing the breadth of skills we once had.
- Skill Sets and formal qualifications should not be mutually exclusive – they should be seen as supporting each other – and should recognise that the individual should be able to drive their own learning.
- Concern with lack of funding to support Skill Sets.
- Is it possible to look at how someone could progress through Skill Sets to gain a formal qualification?

5.2.2.2 Employing backpackers

This session began with three short presentations from: Jenny Kroonstuiver, MINTRAC; Jason Ollington, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; and Iona Taylor, JBS Australia.

Conference participants were asked to consider three questions as the basis for the plenary discussion – the following notes are a summary of the main discussion points and include notes from the table groups.

What are the main issues and opportunities with Employing Backpackers?

- Churn factor – turnover!
- Draining the knowledge pool at the plant – small enterprises are using Team Leaders to do continuous training – has major impacts!
- They are a cheap alternative.
- Perceived differently in different communities – some see as good as they do jobs the locals will not, whereas other communities see them as taking local jobs.
- No funding available – but also depends on the enterprise level of commitment to accredited training and meeting regulations.
- Opportunity – they can fill gaps and go into jobs that require little or no training.

What training do Backpackers need?

- In house – induction.
- Need to be able to sign off on work instructions.
- RTO and Enterprise could develop a basic program to cover hygiene, workplace health and safety, etc.
- Ideally we could aim for a network that is mutually beneficial – where a trained backpacker can go to / be referred to another site or Enterprise – move them around enterprises so they work 6-9-12 months.
- The challenge is to create a benefit for Industry (not just an individual Enterprise).

5.2.2.3 The Burning Questions (Final conference session)

Several “burning Questions” were identified from the concurrent sessions and participants chose to work on three of them in small groups – the following notes are a summary of their main discussion points.

What are the gaps in the training currently available to deliver to, and support a diverse, multi-cultural workforce?

- No training gap – there is a cultural gap!
- Need to have the right systems, symbols and behaviour displayed.
- Need to address whole organisation system and not just training.
- Need to have an awareness of the differences.
- But – there is still a gap for trainers – is an opportunity to up-skill workers of particular cultural groups to become trainers (in their workplace).
- How might we replicate the “Boys From The Bush” without destroying it?
- Already documented in reports – trial of what works and what doesn’t. Description of why things (current approach) works.
- Have a checklist of requirements – recruitment, out of hours support, accommodation, etc
- Have formula for success – critical components (e.g. prohibition),
 - coping with resistance / opposition,
 - sustainability,
 - carers – agencies / foster care systems,

- relocation expenses (JSA),
- recruitment – industry involvement.

How do we create the Meat Industry as a career choice?

- Issue of retention versus attraction of new people to the Industry.
- Need to promote the benefits such as – stable career, training opportunities, success stories, positives of the team environment.
- Need to advertise the opportunities – VET in schools, flyers to schools.
- Do MLA / MINTRAC have a single page on career opportunities / pathways to give to training councils?

Other “burning Questions” raised but not tackled included:

- Given the Industry drivers of:
 - need for a whole of chain perspective,
 - meeting expectations of the corporate customers and consumers; and
 - Industry Strategic Directions and priorities
- = how are RTO's going to deliver on these drivers and develop the trainers required?
- How do we maximize each person's entry into an appropriate workplace? And keep this sustainable?
- Who should be driving Workforce Development?
- And, within this, what should be the respective roles of Industry / Enterprises / RTO's?
- And, where to from here?

5.2.3 Workshop theme: Diversifying the workforce

5.2.3.1 Gary Brown - Group Training Manager, Teys Australia

Managing a Diverse Workforce, The RESPECT Model - How it Changed Me

This presentation began with a short overview of the Teys Australia operation and workforce that currently comprises employees from over 40 different nationalities. An outline of the RESPECT Diversity Management Model, developed out of many years of trying to make sense of cultural difference in the 'lucky country' was provided. Finally, Gary presented some 'confessions' from a HR Manager who started to make a difference when he found the ability to change himself.

5.2.3.2 Dave Matthews - General Manager Human Resources, Teys Bros

Cameron Dart - Director, AWW

Refugees - the Solution for Regional employers

David focussed on one of Teys Australia's key strategic objectives: the continued development of their people. However, in some parts of Australia they just don't get the people any more, and in conjunction with the mining and gas boom in Queensland had to look at what else they could do. The presentation explained how Teys developed a program in conjunction with DEEWR, DIAC and a refugee agency to bring Burmese people to Central Queensland and to the town of Biloela. Cameron provided an overview of AWW's role as part of the solution.

5.2.3.3 Milton James - Director, Boys from the Bush Director

True Australians, ideally suited to the meat processing industry, are going to waste
Milton is a social worker with considerable experience in the development and delivery of work schemes for young Indigenous people from the Torres Strait, Cape York Peninsula, Gulf of Carpentaria, Northern Territory, and the Kimberly region.

Milton James's extensive professional practice has proven that there are hundreds of young Aborigines living in remote northern communities, who are willing to leave home for work in feedlots and abattoirs in other parts of the country.

His not-for-profit organisation called Boys from the Bush Projects (Remote Area Work Scheme) has consistently achieved a 50% or greater retention rate for its participants for a minimum of 12 months. The reason these young people are interested in abattoir work, is because most of them are accustomed to the hunting of wild animals for food, along with the accompanying sensations (texture, sights, sounds and smells) involved in hunting, killing and preparing carcasses for human consumption. Also the families of these young people have a historical connection to the pastoral (cattle) industry. Working with cattle and other aspects of rural service delivery, is similar to what their great-grandfathers and grandfathers were employed in over the past 125 years.

5.2.3.4 Stephan Knoll – Director, Independent Institute of Food Processing Enhancing Pre-Skills for employment

Stephan's presentation was an investigation into screening candidates, moulding pre-existing base skills, nurturing confidence, instilling motivation and ambition in trade and vocational industries. This session reflected the programs and strategies IIFP has undertaken to successfully work directly with enterprises to source, and increase retention of new staff and take on a "company proud" frame of mind.

5.2.4 Workshop theme: Workforce development

5.2.4.1 Ivan Neville - Manager, Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch, DEEWR Understanding workforce skills and demographics

This workshop provided an overview of the meat processing workforce, including its age and educational profile, key occupations, and recent employment trends. It also highlighted some important sources of labour market information to consider when preparing workforce development plans, on topics such as vacancy trends, skill shortages and future prospects.

5.2.4.2 Brad Armstrong - Project Manager, Food Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council WA

Planning and coordination of a strategic response to workforce development issues in the Western Australian Food, Fibre and Timber industries

The FFTITC 2011 Workforce Development Plan is the result of comprehensive research undertaken by the training council. It identifies workforce development needs of FFTITC's various industries and outlines strategies to improve industry's ability to attract and retain workers, while ensuring the required workforce skills are available for industry to remain competitive and develop to its full potential. The information was collected through a range of qualitative and quantitative methods including: industry surveys, Industry Advisory Group meetings and state wide industry site visits.

5.2.4.3 Michelle Edge - CEO Australian Meat Processor Corporation

Michelle provided an overview of the types of RD&E programs and strategic initiatives being undertaken by AMPC as part of the capacity building of the Australian meat industry. An important focus at the current time is building capacity and skills in the areas of environment.

5.2.4.4 The changing face of meat inspection training - Round table discussion

Scott Robinson - Facilitator, Response Consulting Australia

Jodie Mackrell - Training Manager, Skills Base Australia

Mark Rickard - Teacher, Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE

Clive Richardson – Senior Project Officer, MINTRAC

This group explored the impact of changes in the training of meat inspectors arising from the Australian implementation of the AEMIS system. The changes have led to a range of different training delivery strategies, the new workforce role of the AQIS Authorised Officer and a new focus in the workforce development plans of meat processing enterprises.

5.2.4.5 Wendy Hall - RTO Manager, Response Learning

Workforce development plans. What are they?

This presentation was a brief snapshot of a planned detailed MINTRAC workshop which addresses how meat enterprises can make more informed decisions on workforce supply and demand, align workforce development planning with business strategy, gain access government funding in the future, respond to changes in training requirements, and respond better to labour market pressures.

5.2.4.6 Terry Nolan - Director, Nolan Meats Pty Ltd

Nolan Meats employs approximately 350 local people to help deliver quality beef products to the Australian and International markets. Terry provided an overview of the 'people team' approach to workforce structure in the company, a structure which has enabled the company to embrace innovative approaches to product development, meat inspection and workforce development.

5.2.5 Workshop theme: Critical issues and emerging challenges

5.2.5.1 Clive Richardson - Senior Project Manager, MINTRAC

Addressing whole-of-chain expectations in training

The meat processing industry's corporate customers are becoming increasingly keen to have guarantees from processors that the livestock in the processor's supply chain have been raised and transported in an humane fashion. This will represent challenges to quality assurance programs for processors, stock transporters, sale yards, feedlots and producers. The challenge for RTOs will be to deliver meaningful training that results in competent stock handlers and good animal husbandry practices.

This supply chain approach to training will require a new level of cooperation between the players. To date the various steps in the supply chain have taken a silo approach to training with virtually no communication between the RTOs, ITABS and Industry bodies in the various sectors. The new and emerging market requirements will demand a coherent and uniform approach to training to ensure that competencies in the various sectors align. Training and assessment materials will have to reflect a greater awareness of the interconnection and interdependence of the different steps in the supply chain.

5.2.5.2 Jodie Hummerston - Project Officer, MINTRAC

I'm not a literacy expert, what can I do?

Language, Literacy and numeracy are a high priority for Australian industry and government. 46% of working-age Australians do not have the literacy levels required to effectively perform in their jobs. The number for those without adequate numeracy skills is even higher. There are insufficient LLN practitioners around Australia to cope with industry and the training sector's needs, especially in regional areas. So what can vocational trainers and meat industry managers do to help their trainees?

This presentation provided an overview of MINTRAC's recent 2-day LLN for trainers and discuss future projects planned to help with building LLN skills in the meat industry.

5.2.5.3 Jenny Kroonstuiver - CEO, MINTRAC

How well prepared are meat industry RTOs to meet industry requirements over the next 10 yrs?

In the weeks preceding the conference, RTOs participated in a benchmarking survey. This session presented the findings of the survey and highlighted those areas where RTOs needed to consider their own workforce development approaches to meeting future industry requirements

5.2.5.4 John Sumner - Consultant, MLA

The new world of microbiological testing - what does this mean for trainers?
Since the late-1990s microbiological testing in the meat industry has become increasingly important in two major arenas. Firstly market access for red meat, particularly for manufacturing meat for grinding, where abattoir laboratories are becoming more sophisticated to deal with new, molecular microbiology techniques for identifying pathogenic E. coli. Secondly, smallgoods manufacturers now seek to control *Listeria monocytogenes* using a mix of conventional and predictive microbiology.

The requirement for staff trained in modern microbiology formed the basis of this paper.

5.2.6 Networking and exhibits

As always, networking was an important aspect of the conference.

Session breaks also enabled the delegates to meet with the exhibitors:

- Kentmaster
- AMPC/MLA
- WELL - DEEWR
- MINTRAC
- E-Works
- Hepworths Industrial Wear
- Anago.

5.2.7 Conference dinner

The conference dinner included the presentations of the MINTRAC national training awards, a Diploma of Meat Processing Graduation ceremony and entertainment from "A Day At the Races".

5.3 The National Training Awards

A total of twenty nominations were received for the MINTRAC training awards. Of note this year was the extremely strong field of candidate for Trainer of the Year, RTO of the Year and Vocational Student of the Year – judging in these categories 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 on Wednesday 28th March 2012.

5.3.1 Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award

Winner: Teys Australia (Tamworth)

Runner up: Harvey Beef

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

5.3.2 Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year Training Award

Winner: South West TAFE

Other finalists:

- Independent Institute of Food Processing
- William Angliss Institute

Not shortlisted:

- FGM Consultants
- TAFE SA
- TAFE Western Sydney Institute Nepean College

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

5.3.3 Meat Industry Trainer of the Year Award

Winner: Tom Collyer

Other finalists:

- David Suggett
- Cee Wesselingh

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

5.3.4 Meat Industry Training Initiative Award

Winner: Central West Community College

Runner up: Kentmaster Pty Ltd

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

5.3.5 Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year Award

Winner: Daniel Lewis

Other finalists:

- Brett Scoble
- Diana Edwards
- John Voss

Not shortlisted:

- John Smith
- Ben Sheen
- David Morrison.

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

For the first time this year, written material relating to R&D projects other than those directly involving MINTRAC has been made available for presentation at the 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.

Handouts distributed have included:

- The National Animal Welfare RD&E Strategy
- Red Meat Processing Innovation – cogeneration and geothermal energy utilisation
- Handling Livestock Principles – reducing stress and improving efficiency
- Environmental Officer Training
- Red Meat Processing Innovation – Robotic Ovine Cutter
- Paunch waste as boiler fuel
- Waste Water Management Manual
- Cost benefits of e-surveillance system for animal health monitoring.

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

This year MINTRAC has faced a significant challenge in trying to marry the business and strategic requirements of the industry with some significant changes in National Vocational Education and Training Policy, including:

- retaining Certificate II qualifications as the preferred industry entry level qualification despite a federal move to favour Certificate IIIs
- challenging the removal of Employer subsidies for and access to Certificate II level Traineeships
- developing Skill Sets as an accredited training alternative
- ensuring industry priorities are accurately and comprehensively addressed in state funding policies.

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 Units of Competency in stunning, waste water, NLIS, mechanical stimulation, writing SOPs, environment for rendering
- incorporation of Bar Coding and NGERs reporting requirements into training and assessment materials
- discussion around the feasibility of Meat Retail Small Business Skill Sets
- discussion around the nature and design of Smallgoods Skill Sets for Butchers
- debate over the proposed content of new abattoirs Skill Sets in the areas of: meat processing core skills; despatching carcass from the slaughter floor; packing meat products; operation of packaging machinery; loadout; processing animal covering; fellmongering; slinks; vehicle operation; and transporting livestock.

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

This has continued to be an important role of the networks. State Training Authorities have attended every meeting, 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 policies over the last twelve months it has felt a bit as if the structure of the meat industry training system is under siege. This has been particularly apparent in the need for MINTRAC to respond to federal and state consultation documents. 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.

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

Despite a period of significant industry downturn and consolidation, attendances and participation in the Training Networks continues to rise. This year also saw an increased participation from HR Managers and company personnel and a willingness to provide comment into the many national and state issues arising on the Vocational Education and Training agenda.

It is clear that the Training Network continues to play an important role in

- providing industry input into state and federal Vocational Education and Training policy affecting the meat industry
- ensuring RD&E outcomes are incorporated into the *Australian Meat Industry Training Package*, and that they are consistently and effectively implemented
- facilitating industry access to federal and state funds available to support training programs
- ensuring that meat industry trainers remain current and are familiar with industry RD&E outcomes.

8.1 Recommendations

8.1.1 Alternatives to level II qualifications

Over the course of 2011-12 successful government policy statements indicated an increasing marginalisation of Certificate II level qualifications and a commensurate reduction in funding support. Although MINTRAC has worked with industry representatives to challenge these policies and to re-state the industry case for Certificate II as the preferred entry level qualification, it is vital that the industry position itself to have alternatives in place if these representations continue to fail.

8.1.1.1 Recommendation 1:

It is recommended that MINTRAC continue to develop Skill Sets at level II and to seek funding options to ensure that viable and meaningful access to entry level training remains accessible by the meat industry.

8.1.2 Actioning the findings of the training benchmarking survey

The Training benchmarking survey, conducted in March 2012, identified several areas where RTOs could develop and expand their scope of registration.

8.1.2.1 Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that MINTRAC work with RTOS to ensure that identified gaps in scope and trainer expertise are addressed during the 2012-13 year.

8.1.3 RTO attendance at Training Network meetings

With the move to ASQA and changes in federal VET policies, it is becoming critical that all meat industry RTOs attend at least one MINTRAC industry event to remain abreast of the changes.

8.1.3.1 Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that MINTRAC seek to reach a target of 85% participation from all RTOs with meat processing qualifications on their scope of registration during 2012-13.

8.1.4 Distribution and dissemination of AMPC and MLA research information

The 2011-12 year saw a steady increase in the availability of R&D information to the Training Networks, especially with the inclusion of AMPC Fact Sheets in the agenda materials. However, it was difficult to control the availability, distribution and discussion of these fact sheets.

8.1.4.1 Recommendation 4:

It is recommended that a more systematic and controlled approach to distributing and discussing R&D materials be adopted during 2012-13 to ensure meaningful coverage of the available information.