

SEPTEMBER 2025

National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy

Final

Council of Rural Research and Development
Corporations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we work throughout Australia and recognise their enduring connection to the land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present, and acknowledge emerging leaders. Furthermore, we express our gratitude for the knowledge and insights that Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contribute to our collective work in Australia.

We extend our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We acknowledge that Australia was founded on the genocide and dispossession of First Nations peoples and affirm that sovereignty was never ceded in this country. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, striving towards self-determination, equitable outcomes, and an equal voice for Australia's First Peoples.

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1 Introduction

1.1 GROWING MINDS, GROWING FUTURES

Food and fibre are the backbone of Australia's economy, environment and food security, and the next generation holds the keys to its future.

By connecting primary and secondary school students with the world of food and fibre, we unlock powerful opportunities, including:

- Diverse and rewarding careers in everything from ag-tech and research to finance, sustainability and hands-on innovation
- The chance to shape a future that supports Australia's prosperity, sustainability and global food security
- The knowledge to make informed decisions in their daily lives.

It's more than education, it's a pathway to purpose, possibility, and a stronger, more sustainable Australia.

Driven by a shared ambition to expand the reach and deepen the impact of food and fibre education, fifteen rural Research and Development Corporations have joined forces to lead the development of a National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy (the Strategy), with a focus on primary and secondary education, including Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools.



Figure 1-1: Agriculture Industry Day in Wagga Wagga 2023¹

¹ Jack of Hearts Photography, supplied by AgriFutures Australia

1.2 WHY FOOD AND FIBRE EDUCATION?

While there are many excellent examples of food and fibre education in Australian schools, it is lacking consistent traction in primary and secondary schools nationwide.

This presents significant challenges for the food and fibre sector, including difficulties in attracting a skilled workforce and developing the understanding and connections necessary to maintain community trust.

These challenges are further compounded by several factors, including:

- **Outdated public perceptions:** nearly one in five Australians believe rural industries have seen little change in the past 50 years²
- **Low levels of agricultural knowledge:** nearly 80% of primary students and 60% of secondary students mistakenly identified hand milking as a current technique used in commercial dairy production systems³
- **Urban-rural divide:** with close to three-quarters (73%) of Australians living in major cities, there is a disconnect between urban and rural communities⁴
- **Trust in sustainable practices:** just 53% of Australians agree that farmers, fishers and foresters manage their environmental impacts effectively⁵.

Despite these challenges, there are many opportunities and benefits to supporting food and fibre education in Australian schools.

For schools and students, food and fibre education can provide:

- **Real-world learning:** linking learning to daily life and providing opportunities to problem solve around critical global issues such as climate change and food security.
- **Diverse career options:** with a sector employing an estimated 1.7 million people on and off farm⁶, food and fibre offers varied and rewarding career options and multiple pathways into the workforce.

For the food and fibre sector, supporting food and fibre education:

- **Inspires careers:** helps students to understand the breadth of career opportunities in food and fibre
- **Strengthens community trust:** the more personal connections people have with those working in rural industries, the higher their level of trust in the sector⁷. Food and fibre education builds these connections, providing opportunities for students, teachers and school communities to connect with individuals in the food and fibre sector.
- **Maintains industry recognition:** helps young people connect with and understand the food and fibre sector.

By fostering curiosity, challenging assumptions, and showcasing diverse career pathways, food and fibre education can inspire the next generation to engage with an industry that is innovative, forward-thinking and at the forefront of some of the world's most pressing challenges.

² Voconiq (2023). Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Research Program.

³ Cosby, A., Manning, J., Lovric, K., & Fogarty, E. S (2022). The future agricultural workforce—Is the next generation aware of the abundance of opportunities.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023-24), *Regional populations*.

⁵ Voconiq (2024). Community Trust in Rural Industries: 2024 Summary: Year Five National Survey.

⁶ Wu, W, Dawson, D, Fleming-Munoz, D, Schleiger, E, & Horton, J (2019). The future of Australia's agricultural workforce.

⁷ Voconiq (2023). Community Trust in Rural Industries: Year Five National Survey 2023.

DEFINITIONS

Food and fibre – are products produced by agriculture (e.g. horticulture, viticulture, livestock, cotton, grains), fisheries (e.g. wild catch and aquaculture) and forestry (e.g. timber and wood products) industries.

Food and fibre education – teaching school students about how food and fibre are produced and the way products are processed for market. It aims to spark curiosity in young Australians, inspiring future involvement to secure the sector's long-term sustainability.

Rural Research and Development Corporations – drive innovation in the food and fibre sector, enabling primary producers and the Australian government to co-invest in strategic, collaborative and targeted research, development and extension. Through this role, many rural Research and Development Corporations support food and fibre education in Australian schools.

Industry – includes entities involved in food and fibre production and processing, as well as those supporting these industries. This can include local producers and agronomists right through to peak industry bodies and rural Research Development Corporations.

1.3 THIS STRATEGY

The Strategy sets a vision for the future where:

‘Australian students and educators are informed and empowered to champion a sustainable and thriving food and fibre sector.’

The Strategy aims to identify areas where collaboration can increase the reach and impact of food and fibre education. It outlines:

- Short, medium and long outcomes where change is sought (Section 4.1)
- Actions required to establish the foundations for successful Strategy delivery (Section 4.2)
- Core principles to guide the implementation of the Strategy (Section 5)
- Priority areas of collaborative action (Section 6)
- A plan to monitor and evaluate the Strategy (Section 7).

The Strategy does not intend to identify or replace all the initiatives, programs and innovations successfully supporting food and fibre education across Australia.

1.4 STEPS TO SUCCESS

The Strategy focuses first on what rural Research and Development Corporations can collaboratively do to progress towards the long-term vision and outcomes, and then outlines steps to grow broader support, investment and partnerships for success.



Figure 1-2: Staged progress proposed to achieve the vision, starting with rural Research and Development Corporation (RDC) collaboration

2 Strategy development

Between November 2024 and September 2025, there were over 900 individual engagement touchpoints that helped to shape the Strategy⁸ (Figure 2-1).

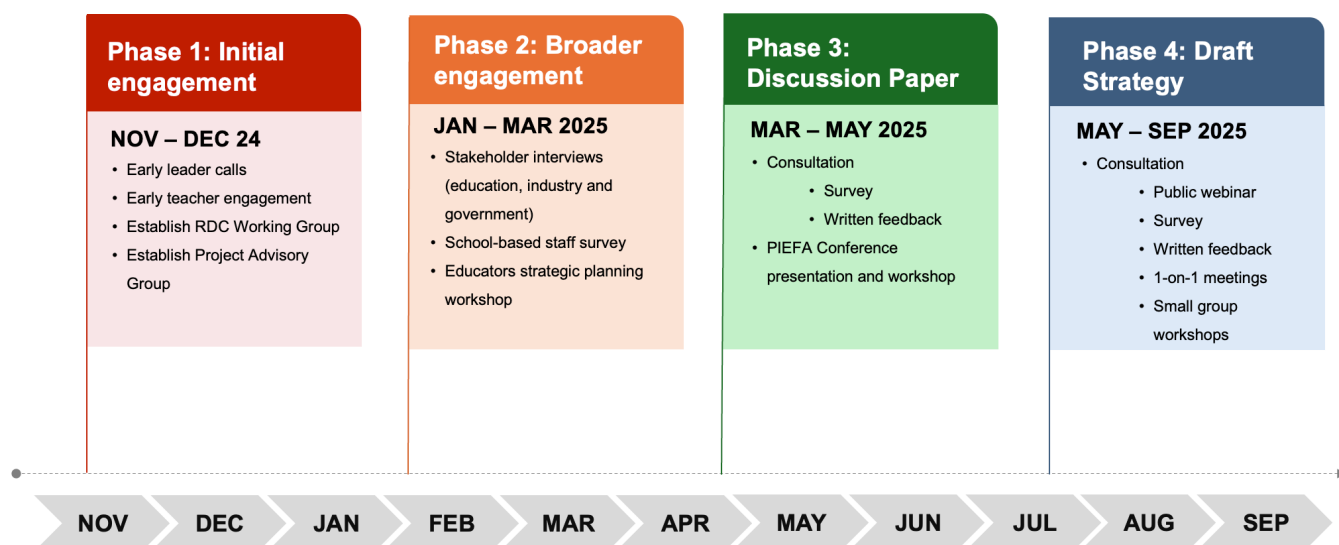


Figure 2-1: Engagement timelines and activities that supported Strategy development

A wide variety of stakeholders from across Australia (Table 2-1), including teachers, principals, academics, government, food and fibre industries/businesses and not-for-profit organisations, engaged through surveys, face-to-face conversations, interviews, meetings, workshops, and by providing feedback on a Discussion Paper and draft Strategy.

The Strategy was also informed by an extensive desktop review of current practices and research.

Table 2-1: Engagement participation by state and territory

STATE / TERRITORY	ENGAGEMENT NUMBERS
Australian Capital Territory	13
New South Wales	214
Northern Territory	8
Queensland	165
South Australia	72
Tasmania	37
Victoria	129
Western Australia	61
Australia wide ⁹	227

⁸ Individuals may be counted multiple times if they have engaged in more than one activity.

⁹ Where state or territory information was not collected or where individuals had a nationwide role, numbers were recorded and included in the Australia-wide total.

3 Current situation

3.1 FOOD AND FIBRE CHAMPIONS

Across Australia, many schools and educators champion food and fibre education, ranging from agricultural colleges, specialised agricultural high schools, to primary and secondary schools that deliver innovative programs through dedicated subjects, vocational training, and the integration of content across various learning areas/subjects.

Successful school-based food and fibre programs are typically supported by principals and learning area leaders, led by teacher champions, connected with local industry and the wider community and enriched by modern hands-on learning opportunities. Educators who integrate food and fibre into subjects such as design and technology, science and humanities achieve success by taking advantage of opportunities within the relevant curriculum framework.



Figure 3-1: Paddock to Plate Year 3-4 Science, Timboon Agricultural Project ¹⁰

3.2 CURRENT SUPPORT

A wide range of programs and initiatives support food and fibre education across Australia, with some providing long-term investment and support. These are delivered by various stakeholders, including the rural Research and Development Corporations, universities, private businesses, not-for-profit organisations, royal agriculture societies, scientific bodies and public institutions. A list of current initiatives supporting food and fibre education in Australian schools is provided in Appendix 1.

At the local scale, committed producers and local communities also support food and fibre education in schools.

While valuable and innovative initiatives, programs and support are already in place and should remain, there is recognition that greater collaboration in some areas could further enhance effectiveness and impact.

¹⁰ Photo credit Andrea Vallance

3.2.1 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Many rural Research and Development Corporations are actively involved in food and fibre education, although their approaches vary. Some develop education resources, professional learning and activities, while others focus on helping schools guide career and pathway choices.

In addition to running their own programs or, in some cases, as their sole investment, many rural Research and Development Corporations have supported the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA) for more than a decade (see Section 3.2.2). Rural Research and Development Corporations that support PIEFA meet regularly to shape its objectives and share ideas.

Despite these arrangements and initiatives, rural Research and Development Corporations, through the Council of Research and Development Corporations, have recognised the opportunity to collaborate more effectively in supporting food and fibre education.

3.2.2 PRIMARY INDUSTRY EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA

PIEFA was officially incorporated in 2008 as a not-for-profit company formed through collaboration between the Australian Government, primary industries organisations and the education sector. PIEFA's mission is to engage Australian schools and the community through education about food and fibre production and careers.

Funding from rural Research and Development Corporations and various other investors enables PIEFA to provide a range of resources, professional development, support and advocacy to promote food and fibre education in Australian schools.

3.3 CURRICULUM

The Australian Curriculum V9, developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)¹¹, includes more than 14,900 references to food and fibre.

In the Australian Curriculum, food and fibre is featured specifically within Design and Technologies from Foundation to Year 8 and as additional learning opportunities offered by states and territories in Years 9 -10 electives. It is also featured across the curriculum in content descriptions in Foundation to Year 6 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), and Years 7-10 Geography and Science and in content elaborations in other learning areas, such as Mathematics.

The Australian Curriculum identifies five key interrelated aspects for learning about food and fibre, including sustaining life, valuing resources, designing solutions, and meeting challenges, as well as economy and people.

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum is the responsibility of states and territories, who decide when their schools will implement it. Schools implement the Australian Curriculum according to legal and system policies and schedules.

3.4 PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

Stakeholders involved in developing the Strategy highlighted a range of complex, interconnected factors that limit school and student participation in food and fibre education. Using what we heard, Figure 3-2 has been developed to provide a visual map of the key patterns, structures and beliefs that negatively affect whether food and fibre education is supported in Australian primary and secondary schools.

¹¹ ACARA's work is set and agreed by all of Australia's education ministers in the form of the Education Ministers Meeting.

Of the numerous and varied existing programs and activities designed to boost food and fibre education, many aim to address specific 'patterns' and 'structural barriers' shown in Figure 3-2. For example, various programs have developed and provided curriculum-linked lesson plans to assist teachers who are short on time, or provided professional development for educators who lack confidence in teaching food and fibre. Significant effort has also been made to incorporate references to food and fibre into the Australian Curriculum (Section 3.3).

A range of less obvious structural barriers and patterns are not commonly addressed, such as industry capacity and capability to connect and support schools, school leadership decision-making and the design of commodity-focused support programs rather than programs that target the direct needs and opportunities within curriculum.

This Strategy recognises that to gain increased traction and new involvement in food and fibre education, organisations must collaborate to address factors throughout the 'root zone' shown in Figure 3-2. They must join forces to address both visible patterns and deeper issues, such as common mistaken beliefs held by parents and school communities.

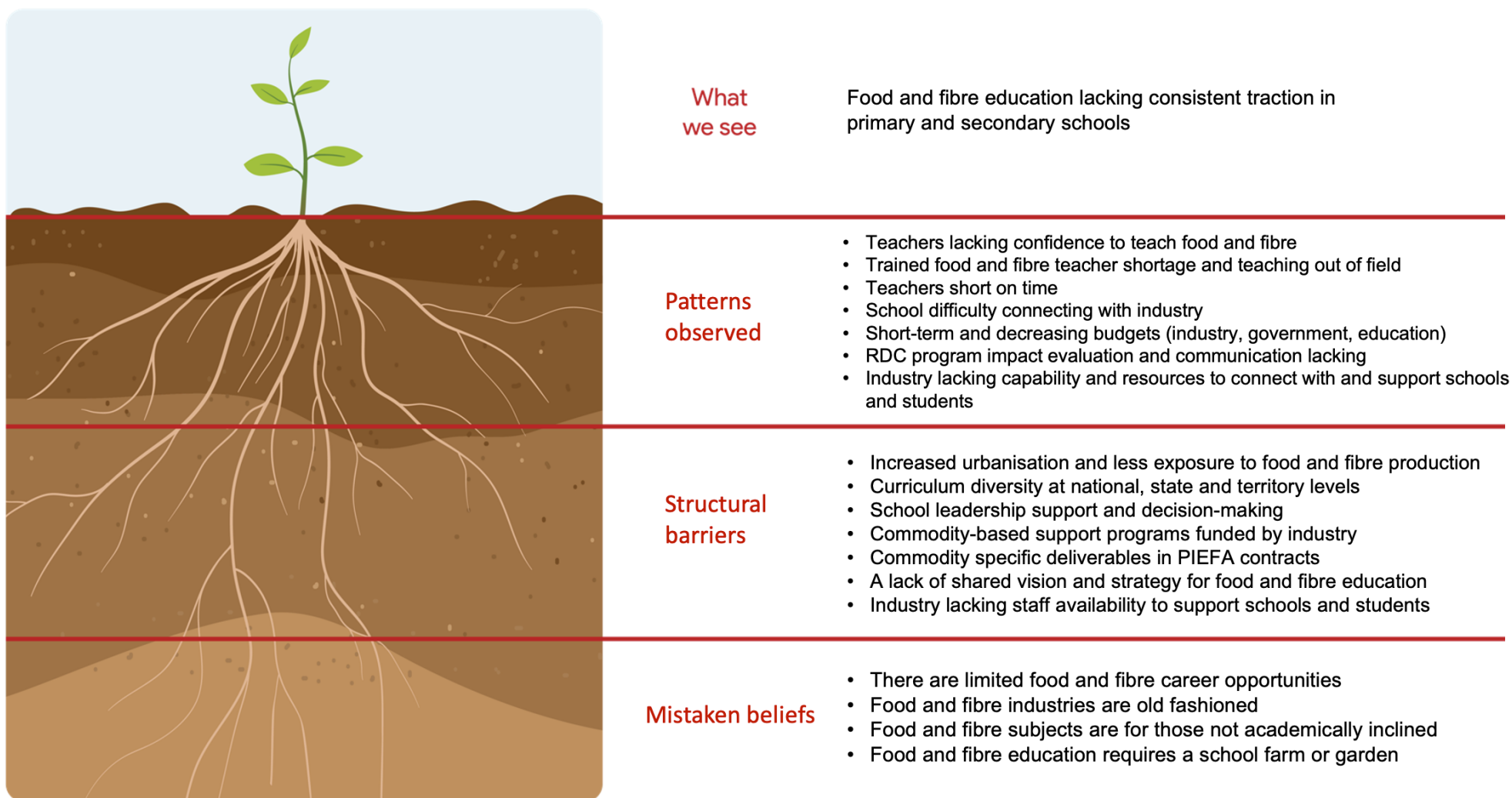


Figure 3-2: Main factors negatively affecting food and fibre education¹²

¹² Adapted from the Paul Ryan (Australian Resilience Centre) Iceberg Model for Systems Thinking

4 Cultivating change

4.1 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Strategy sets out a long-term vision, supported by short, medium and long-term outcomes where it seeks to drive change, as illustrated in Figure 4-1.

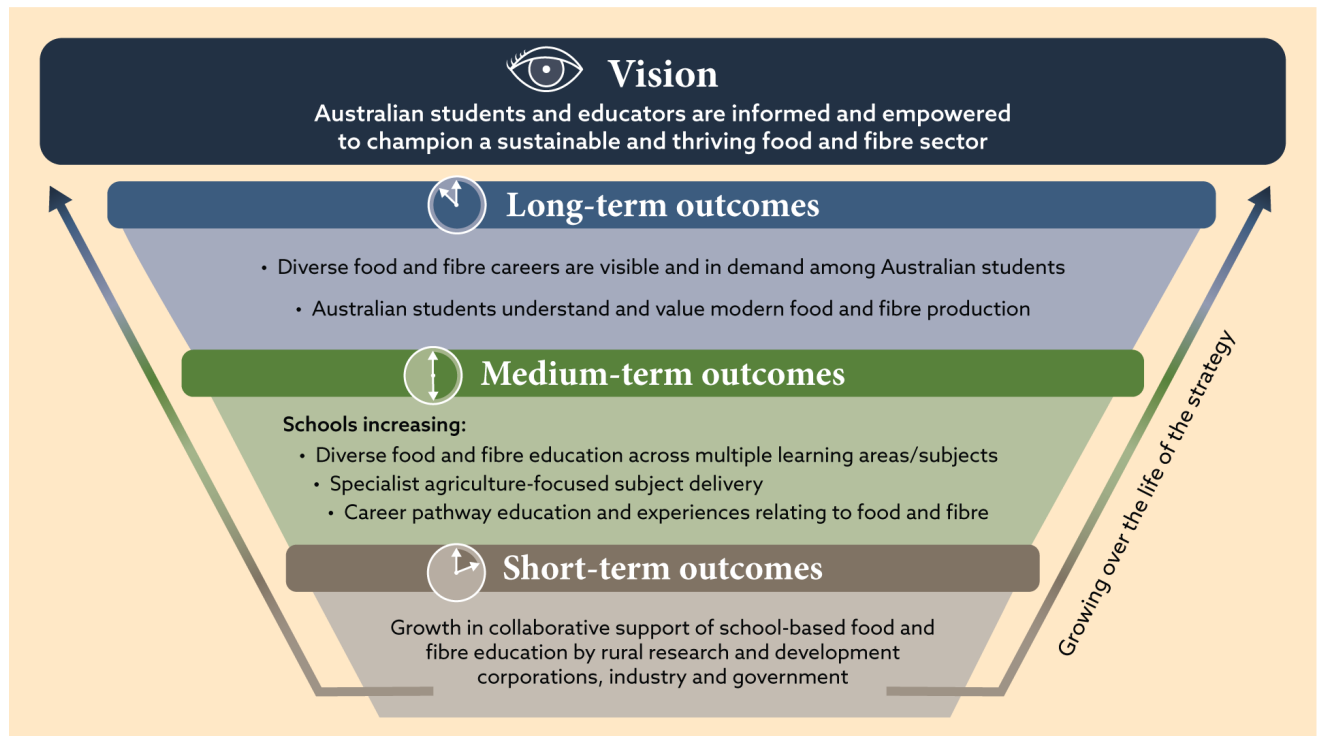


Figure 4-1: Vision and outcomes for the Strategy

4.2 LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Fifteen rural Research and Development Corporations have come together to initiate this Strategy. While they are taking the lead in its early stages, it is clear that numerous other organisations have an interest in supporting food and fibre education, and can shape, support, or invest in it.

Recognising this, the Strategy adopts a staged approach, designed to foster alignment, strengthen collaboration, and support collective progress towards the long-term vision. It will initially focus on how rural Research and Development Corporations can lead and drive change, before broadening to include strategic partnerships with government, industry and other key stakeholders.

A series of phased activities has been developed to support the achievement of the short, medium, and long-term outcomes over the next 10 years. The foundational steps are shown in Figure 4-2 and explained in more detail in the following section. Together, they aim to build momentum toward a more collaborative and coordinated approach to supporting food and fibre education.

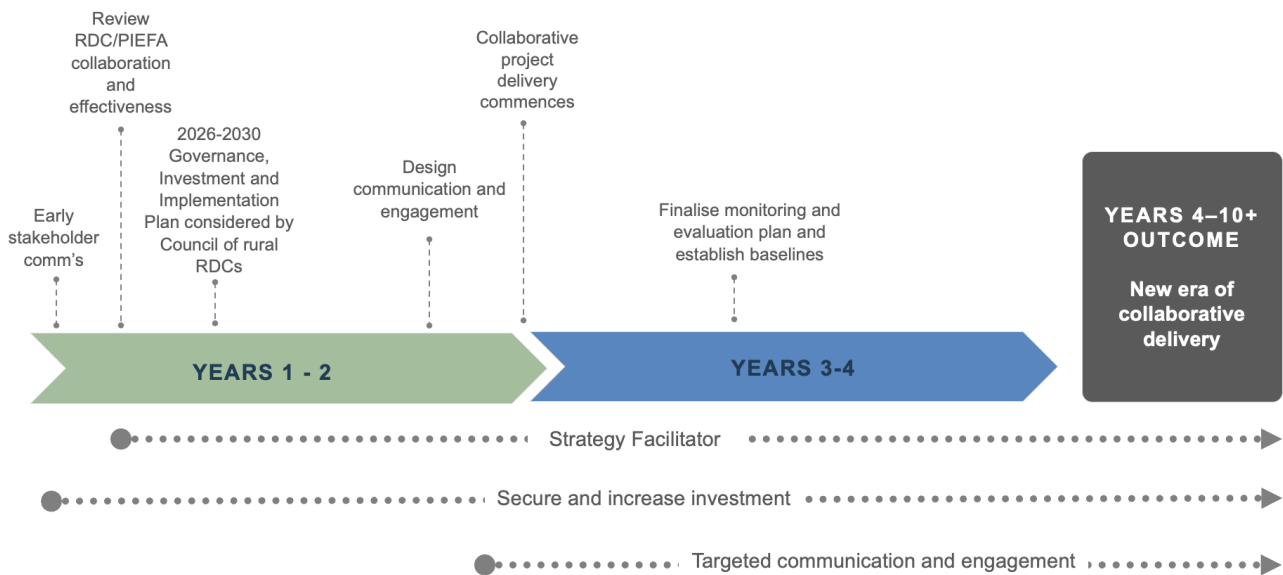


Figure 4-2: Foundational steps to support the staged achievement of the long-term outcomes

Key elements of Figure 4-2 are described in more detail in the following section, including:

- The collaboration and effectiveness review proposed for rural Research and Development Corporation programs and investments that support food and fibre education, including PIEFA activities
- Governance, implementation and investment
- Plans for communication and engagement
- Baseline establishment, reviews and continuous improvement.

COLLABORATION AND EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

As a first activity following the release of the Strategy, an in-depth review of rural Research and Development Corporation programs and investments that support food and fibre education, including PIEFA activities, will occur. The review will aim to identify opportunities to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and scalability, foster increased collaboration and map alignment with the priorities of the Strategy. Draft key evaluation questions for the review are provided in Appendix 2.

GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND INVESTMENT

Building on the learnings and recommendations from the collaboration and effectiveness review, a Governance, Investment, and Implementation Plan, including detailed accountabilities and responsibilities and a stakeholder engagement plan, will be developed.

Key elements of the Plan will include:

- **Governance** will include representatives from rural Research and Development Corporations, government and education sector experts, along with mechanisms to facilitate input from state/territory and peak industry bodies in planning and delivery. The governance model will be reviewed regularly to allow for continuous improvement.
- **An initial multi-year investment** will be sought from rural Research and Development Corporations, with additional co-investment sought from industry and government to support collaborative project delivery, once implementation is established.
- **A facilitator** will be required to lead the implementation of the strategy, which will include exploring government and industry co-investment opportunities and driving collaborative projects.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

An early stakeholder communication plan will be developed in year one, focused on promoting the Strategy, its pathway to implementation and opportunities for collaboration. In year two, a comprehensive fit-for-purpose communication and engagement plan will be designed for implementation throughout the life of the Strategy. This will be designed to achieve Strategy outcomes and target change against clearly defined problems, such as dispelling misconceptions, increasing school adoption of food and fibre education, driving structural change and boosting investment and collaboration. It will target schools, government and industry, as further detailed in Section 6.

BASELINE ESTABLISHMENT, REVIEWS AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In year three, the monitoring and evaluation plan will be finalised and research will be undertaken to establish a series of baselines for ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement, and to enable impact reporting on the Strategy. In year five, a review of Strategy implementation, considering impact, effectiveness, efficiency and including a plan for opportunities for improvement, will occur. A draft monitoring and evaluation framework to guide this activity is provided in Section 7. An annual review of Strategy implementation and planning for continuous improvement will also be undertaken.

5 Strategic principles

Two sets of strategic principles have been developed based on insights gathered during the Strategy's development. They are intended to guide the Strategy's implementation, highlighting both high-level criteria for food and fibre education investment and best practice characteristics of programs that support food and fibre education.

5.1 STRATEGIC ROOTS

The 'strategic roots' provide a set of high-level criteria for investment in food and fibre education.

Strategy and impact	Direct investment to initiatives that support the achievement of the Strategy's outcomes and include mechanisms for measuring and demonstrating impact.
Continuity	Prioritise long-term projects with continuity, over short-term activities.
Build from existing	Strengthen and scale existing efforts by partnering with established organisations, networks, associations and initiatives, while fostering continuous improvement.
Geographic distribution	Seek to provide services and support across all states/territories and in urban, rural and remote areas.
Expertise	Draw on education, industry and government expertise to guide investment decision making, including consideration and place-based needs and priorities.
Supporting existing and attract new	Direct investment toward attracting new food and fibre educators while also supporting, inspiring and equipping existing food and fibre educators.

5.2 SEEDS OF SUCCESS

The 'seeds for success' outline the key characteristics of best-practice programs that support food and fibre education, which will guide on-ground delivery.

Modern and inspirational	Ground program content in an accurate, contemporary and future-oriented representations of the food and fibre sector.
Hands on and experiential	Include hands-on, real-world opportunities for students and educators to engage with food and fibre production, producers and industries across the value chain.
School-friendly	Engage educators with in-school expertise in the design and development of high-quality programs and materials to ensure they targeted to the needs of educators and schools and strategically leverage areas where educators are struggling to deliver against curriculum requirements.
Diverse support	Consider opportunities to cater for diverse needs and remove participation barriers of schools and students, including those in urban, rural and remote settings, those with and without farm gardens, students with a range of academic capabilities, schools in low socio-economic areas and First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

6 Collaborative action

Three priority areas for collaborative action have been identified to focus future investment and delivery, these include:

- School-industry connections and support
- School-focused support and engagement
- Government support and structure.

The following sections present a series of proposed projects and initiatives focused on improving the traction of food and fibre education in Australian schools through collaborative efforts. It does not encompass all existing initiatives, programs and innovations supporting food and fibre education across Australia. Instead, it aims to identify areas where increased collaboration can enhance the reach and impact of food and fibre education.

An overview of the structure of these sections is provided in Figure 6-1.

PROJECT / INITIATIVE	WHEN	OPPORTUNITIES
Provides list of key priority collaborative projects and initiatives.	Identifies when a focus on collaborative action should occur for each project / initiative.	Identifies things that should be considered when implementing the project / initiative to maximise impact, minimise duplication and leverage from the existing.

Figure 6-1: Overview of the structure used to present priority areas for collaborative action

As outlined in Section 4.2, implementing this Strategy should involve building partnerships and securing investment from an increasing number of stakeholders over time.

High-level objectives have been set for each priority area, each of which link back to the outcomes listed in Figure 4-1. A plan to monitor and evaluate these outcomes is provided in Section 7. Separate monitoring and evaluation plans will be developed as required for each individual collaborative project.

6.1 SCHOOL-INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORT

Priority area objective

To engage industry in food and fibre education through both investment and direct connection and support of schools.

Rationale

Only 25% of food and fibre educators find it easy to access industry contacts to support their programs, revealing a significant gap between schools and industry¹³. Educators consistently identify strengthening this connection as a key priority to advance food and fibre education, providing real-life experiences, opportunities for VET assessments, and inspiration for students and educators.

Research into community trust in rural industries shows that the more personal connections people have with those working in rural industries, the higher their level of trust in the sector¹⁴, meaning school and industry connections are an important element in maintaining social license for food and fibre industries.

Numerous peak industry bodies, large-scale enterprises, and local food and fibre industries, beyond just rural Research and Development Corporations, have an interest in supporting and encouraging school engagement in food and fibre education.

Table 6-1: Projects, timelines and opportunities for school-industry connections and support

PROJECTS / INITIATIVES	WHEN	OPPORTUNITIES
Support industry, along the value chain, and schools to connect at local scales for in and out of school experiential and real-life student learning, activities for competency assessments and teacher support/professional development, including: - Identifying industry-school connection opportunities - Facilitation of connections between primary and secondary schools and industry - Resources, training and support for the industry to understand how to support a school.	Year two onwards	- Use the collaboration and effectiveness review in year one to identify existing rural Research and Development Corporation funded initiatives and opportunities for collaboration - Involve industry at a range of scales, from local producers and agriculture support providers through to peak bodies and rural Research Development Corporations where there is interest and capacity - Consider collaboration with existing established programs providing this service e.g. CSIRO STEM Professionals in Schools Program, the Kids to Farm initiative or other existing initiatives - Consider examples of where school-industry connections are working well and elements of success that can be replicated - Scale this initiative over time, building a solid foundation from year two that can be expanded with the support of additional partners over time.
Industry communication and engagement campaign to increase investment and commitment to food and fibre education, encourage the collaborative delivery of the Strategy and to report back on progress and impact.	Year three onwards	- Use the communication and engagement plan designed in year two to inform communication and engagement required - Consider sponsorship models for collaborative project delivery.

¹³ Reported data was collected in the school-based staff survey completed as part of this project.

¹⁴ Voconiq (2023). Community Trust in Rural Industries: Year Four National Survey 2023.

6.2 SCHOOL-FOCUSED SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

Priority area objective

To inspire, equip and provide support to new and existing food and fibre educators.

Rationale

Accessible, high-quality support is essential for school-based staff to effectively deliver food and fibre education. While most educators report that professional development opportunities are generally accessible, they continue to encounter significant challenges¹⁵. These include the need for more tailored support, as well as resources that are current, adaptable and versatile enough to meet the diverse needs of classrooms and curricula.

There is also a critical need to broaden understanding of what food and fibre education involves and the career opportunities the sector offers. Among both teachers and principals, student perceptions are identified as a major barrier to delivering specific food and fibre subjects¹⁶. Providing targeted support for school-based staff (teachers, career advisors) and students is essential to raise awareness, boost interest and strengthen engagement in food and fibre education.

Table 6-2: Projects, timelines and opportunities for school-focused support and engagement

PROJECTS / INITIATIVES	WHEN	OPPORTUNITIES
Professional learning and experiential opportunities for primary, secondary, VET, existing teachers, educators in training, early career teachers, careers educators and school leaders focused on: - Modern food and fibre production and value chains - Diverse career opportunities (urban and rural) - Diverse qualification, training and other pathways to food and fibre careers - Confidence to teach in multiple learning areas.	Year three onwards	- Use the review in year one to identify existing rural Research and Development Corporation funded initiatives and opportunities for collaboration - Consider existing providers of food and fibre professional learning and partnerships with existing educator networks such as Teacher (primary and secondary) and Career Associations, VET Clusters, Regional Learning Hubs and partnerships with universities and registered training organisations involved in educator training - Consider collaborations with the National Nutrition Foundation and/or Nutrition Australia to paddock to plate learning opportunities - Tailor opportunities to suit place-based food and fibre priorities and locally available further education pathways
Review and update the Primezone and Career Harvest websites maintained by PIEFA to provide central hubs of up to date, high-quality curriculum linked materials and career resources: - Review and adapt existing sites and resources - Consider the need for new resources, prioritising the focus on: - The integration of food and fibre content in multiple learning areas	Year three onwards	- Use the review in year one to identify existing rural Research and Development Corporation funded initiatives and potential opportunities for the improved use of the Primezone and Career Harvest websites - Consider the integration of other resources and content that has already been developed by government and industry (see Appendix 1) - Use data from the Community Trust in Rural Industries National Survey (Voconiq) to target new resources that drive trust and acceptance of rural industries

¹⁵ Reported data was collect in the school-based staff survey completed as part of this project.

¹⁶ Reported data was collect in the school-based staff survey completed as part of this project.

PROJECTS / INITIATIVES	WHEN	OPPORTUNITIES
– The portrayal of modern production and value chains – Diverse food and fibre careers.		▪ Consider collaborations with National Nutrition Foundation and/or Nutrition Australia to provide paddock to plate resources.
Deliver a school-targeted communication and engagement campaign, including a focus on: ▪ Diverse opportunities for food and fibre education in urban, rural and remote schools, with or without farms/gardens ▪ Diverse and fulfilling career opportunities (rural and urban) ▪ How to communicate with parents and carers about the value of food and fibre education and career pathways ▪ Available food and fibre education support and resources.	Year three onwards	▪ Use the communication and engagement plan designed in year two to inform communication and engagement required ▪ Use the review in year one to identify existing rural Research and Development Corporation funded initiatives and opportunities for collaboration ▪ Consider partnerships with existing networks that connect with schools such as principal, teacher (primary and secondary) and career associations ▪ Consider socio-economic, cultural and learning barriers to participation in food and fibre education ▪ Use data from the Community Trust in Rural Industries National Survey (Voconiq) to target key messages and opportunities that drive trust and acceptance of rural industries ▪ Consider broader opportunities for industry and other stakeholders to collaborate on the design and delivery of a community-targeted food and fibre perceptions campaign to shift community views on: – Modern food and fibre production and value chains – Diverse career opportunities (rural and urban).
State-based or regional 1:1 support and advice for schools about food and fibre education, tailored to the different needs of states/territories and remote/rural/urban schools.	Year four onwards	▪ Use the review in year one to identify existing rural Research and Development Corporation funded initiatives and opportunities for collaboration ▪ Consider existing models and programs of 1:1 support for food and fibre education that already operate and how they can be scaled or integrated
Partner with industry and government to help schools access funding and infrastructure needed to deliver food and fibre programs.	Year five onwards	▪ Use the review in year one to identify existing rural Research and Development Corporation funded initiatives and opportunities for collaboration ▪ Consider leveraging or extending existing models of financial support for schools including supporting schools to access new technology, funding to meet safety and compliance requirements and to support schools with and without farms or gardens to teach food and fibre ▪ Consider how access to funding and infrastructure can support schools to equitably participate in food and fibre education e.g. support for schools in remote settings and for First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

6.3 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND STRUCTURE

Priority area objective

To engage federal, state and territory governments in the support of food and fibre education through co-investment and improvement to curricula and compliance requirements.

Rationale

Strong government backing is vital to advancing food and fibre education in Australia. State, territory and federal governments hold key responsibilities in the development of curriculum, setting school compliance requirements and providing school funding and infrastructure that directly impact the delivery and quality of education.

It can be years between changes to curricula at the national, state, and territory levels, so it is essential that this is addressed collaboratively when the opportunity arises.

Table 6-3: Projects, timelines and opportunities for government support and structure

PROJECTS / INITIATIVES	WHEN	OPPORTUNITIES
Support the ongoing integration of food and fibre in Australian, state/territory curricula across various learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, including the use of consistent terminology.	Year one onwards	- Use the communication and engagement plan designed in year two to inform communication and engagement required - Continue to work closely with the ACARA to ensure food and fibre remains well reflected in the Australian curricula and includes relevant elaborations - Continue to support PIEFA who have relationships with national and state/territory curriculum authorities to advocate for food and fibre content integration.
Work with federal, state and territory governments to identify opportunities for co-investment and support of collaborative food and fibre education projects.	Year one onwards	- Include government representatives in the governance arrangements for the Strategy - Use the communication and engagement plan designed in year two to inform the communication and engagement required - Consider collaboration opportunities with agriculture, fishing, forestry and education departments and curriculum authorities.
Support state and territory governments to develop and implement pragmatic and efficient compliance approaches for school food and fibre programs e.g. animal care management, machinery, agri-tech.	Year three onwards	- Use the communication and engagement plan designed in year two to guide activities, including promoting the importance of food and fibre programs in schools and the need to address compliance challenges schools commonly encounter - Share successful compliance approaches and initiatives between states and territories.

7 Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed for the Strategy (Table 7-1), incorporating indicators, the establishment of baselines, and the required frequency of measurement for the areas of change and long-term outcomes. The framework is designed to be robust yet achievable and affordable.

The framework should be implemented collaboratively as part of the foundational elements described in Section 4.2. Before implementation, further work is required to confirm the indicators, identify data collection methodologies and document assumptions.

Individual monitoring frameworks should be developed for each collaborative action (Section 6) prior to implementation to ensure continuous improvement and the ability to communicate impact.

Table 7-1: Monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategy

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS (SEEKING POSITIVE CHANGE OVER TIME)	BASELINE	FREQUENCY OF MEASUREMENT
Long-term outcomes			
Diverse food and fibre careers are visible and in demand among Australian students	Primary and secondary student interest in food and fibre careers	Establish in year three	Every 10 years
Australian students understand and value modern food and fibre production	Food and fibre knowledge of primary and secondary students	Establish in year three or use existing data to provide baseline where possible	
Medium-term outcomes			
Schools increasing:			
Diverse food and fibre education across multiple learning areas/subjects	# of teachers (in each state/territory) integrating food and fibre education into science and design/technology learning areas ¹⁷	Establish in year three	Every 5 years
Specialist agriculture-focused subject delivery	# of year 11 and 12 students enrolled in dedicated food and fibre learning (including VET) in each State	Use existing data to establish the baseline	
Career pathway education and experiences relating to food and fibre	Level of educator and career advisor knowledge and confidence in identifying jobs and educational pathways for food and fibre careers	Establish in year three or use existing data to provide baseline where possible	Every 10 years

¹⁷ Note science and design/technology have been selected as proxies for other areas of learning. Data could be collected through relevant teacher association.

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS (SEEKING POSITIVE CHANGE OVER TIME)	BASELINE	FREQUENCY OF MEASUREMENT
	# of educators (in each state/territory) participating in food and fibre career-related professional development	Establish in year two	Every 5 years
Short-term outcomes			
Growth in collaborative support of food and fibre education by rural Research and Development Corporations, industry and government	Dollar value of collaborative investment in food and fibre education	Establish in year two	Every 5 years
	Number of rural RDCs, industry and government entities actively involved in collaborative food and fibre education	Establish in year two	



Figure 7-1: Monitoring greenhouse temperatures, Corinda State High School for AgriFutures Australia Producer Technology Uptake Program¹⁸

¹⁸ Photo supplied by AgriFutures Australia.

Appendix 1: Current initiatives

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LED INITIATIVES

Table A1-1: Existing resources and programs developed by the rural Research and Development Corporations

RURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES
AgriFutures Australia	Engaging secondary students in agricultural careers
Australian Eggs	All About Eggs website Virtual egg industry career tour
Australian Meat Processor Corporation	Career and school resources
Australian Pork Limited	Classroom activities
Australian Wool Innovation	Learn About Wool website Wool4School competition School Merino Wether Challenge competition Woolmark Learning Centre website
Cotton Research and Development Corporation / Cotton Australia	Teach the Teacher Cotton Field Tours Lessons and units Education kit
Dairy Australia	Discover Aussie Dairy Programs include Picasso Cows and Cows Create Careers
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	Seafood careers – school resources
Forest and Wood Products Australia	ForestLearning program Growing careers
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Grain educational resources
Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited	Phenomenon! teaching resource
Meat & Livestock Australia	Australian Good Meat Education website School resources Smart Farming Virtual Classroom Red meat industry career hub
Wine Australia	Careers in viticulture and wine - for school and teachers webpage

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

- [ActiveEwe course](#)
CQUniversity, NSW Department of Education
- [Ag in a Box](#)
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW
- [AgPatch: Growing literacy](#)
NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- [AgVision](#)
NSW Government, Yanco Agricultural High School
- [Agri-Tech Check](#)
CQUniversity, Victorian Association of Agricultural and Horticultural Educators
- [Agribusiness Gateway to Industry Schools Program](#)
CQUniversity, AgForce, AgriFutures Australia, Queensland Agriculture Teachers Association
- [Agriculture Teachers Professional Development Conference](#)
Charles Sturt University
- [Australian Agricultural Centre](#)
- [Burdekin's Sweetest School](#)
CANEGROWERS
- [Canopy Hub](#)
- [Career Harvest](#)
PIEFA, Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture
- [Centre for Bee Education](#)
- [Chicken Meat educational resources](#)
- [Discover Ag](#)
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW
- [Royal Queensland Show \(Ekka\) education resources](#)
- [Excited4Careers in Agriculture](#)
CQUniversity, National Career's Institute
- [Extension careers in reef water quality](#)
CQUniversity
- [Farm Day Excursions](#)
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW
- [Farm Gate Program](#)
VEG Education
- [Farmwall](#)
- [Farmer Time](#)
PIEFA
- [Farm My School](#)
- [FarmVR](#)
- [FEAST \(Food Education and Sustainability Training\)](#)
OzHarvest
- [Feedlot TECH](#)
Australian Lot Feeders' Association
- [Food and Fibre Careers Day](#)
University of Melbourne (Dookie Campus)
- [Food Ladder](#)
- [Forest Education Foundation](#)
- [FreshSNAP](#)
- [Fresh Food Kids Discovery Tour](#)
Woolworths
- [From Paddock to Plate](#)
- [Future Farmers: Australian Agriculture](#)
ABC Education
- [Get Hooked... It's Fun to Fish](#)
NSW Department of Primary Industries
- [Get into AgSTEM](#)
Agriculture Victoria
- [George the Farmer](#)
- [GPS Cows](#)
CQUniversity, NSW Department of Education
- [Growing a Career in Horticulture](#)
AUSVEG
- [Hay Inc. Rural Education](#)
- [Hermitage Schools Plant Science Competition](#)
QLD Department of Primary Industries
- [Integrated STEM](#)
- [Invest Inya Farmer Ed](#)
- [Kidsgrow](#)
Greenlife Industry Australia

- [Let it Grow competition](#)
Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture
- [Lead Ag Teacher \(South Australia\)](#)
AgCommunicators
- [Lead Ag Youth](#)
Central Highlands Regional Resources Use Planning Cooperative (CHRRUP)
- [Murray-Darling Basin Authority school resources](#)
- [Mushrooms in Schools](#)
Australian Mushroom Growers
- [Next-Gen AgTeachers microcredentials](#)
CQUniversity
- [NSW Primary Industries Schools Program](#)
NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- [Pick a Career in the Citrus Industry](#)
Citrus Australia
- [Pick of the crop](#)
Health and wellbeing Queensland
- [PrimeZone](#)
PIEFA
- [Raising Aspirations in Careers and Education \(RACE\) – Gippsland](#)
CQUniversity
- [Raising Aspirations in Careers and Education \(RACE\) – Goulburn](#)
CQUniversity, Goulburn-Murray Local Learning and Employment network
- [Saltwater Schools – ocean lesson plans Australia](#)
Marine Stewardship Council
- [Shifting Gears](#)
National Centre for Farmer Health
- [Soils for Life](#)
- [STEM Professionals in Schools Program](#)
CSIRO
- [Stephanie Alexander School Program](#)
- [Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program resources](#)
PIEFA
- [Sunflower Competition](#)
Univeristy of Queensland
- [Technological and Applied Studies \(TAS\) Years 7-10 resources](#)
NSW Department of Education
- [Technological and Applied Studies \(TAS\) Year 11-12 resources](#)
NSW Department of Education
- [Taste & Learn](#)
CSIRO, Hort Innovation
- [Teach and learn about ocean sustainability](#)
Marine Stewardship Australia
- [This is My Job Series](#)
Food and Fibre Gippsland
- [This is Wood Work](#)
- [Farming Virtual Reality Experiences](#)
Think Digital
- [Women in Agri-Tech](#)
CQUniversity
- [Working on Water school program](#)
Seafood Jobs Tasmania
- [Y7 History – First Nations aquaculture](#)
Australians Together.

Appendix 2: Review questions

In the first year of the Strategy's delivery, an in-depth review of rural Research and Development Corporation programs and investments that support food and fibre education, including PIEFA activities, is proposed.

The review will aim to identify opportunities to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and collaboration and ensure alignment with the priorities of the Strategy. Key evaluation questions for the review are provided in Table A2-1.

Table A2-1: Key evaluation questions for the collaboration and effectiveness review

THEME	KEY EVALUATION QUESTION
Relevance	▪ To what extent do the current initiatives align with the outcomes, areas of change and collaborative areas of action outlined in this Strategy? ▪ How well do the programs reflect the diversity and modern realities of the food and fibre sector?
Effectiveness	▪ What evidence is available to show that rural Research and Development Corporation and PIEFA programs are improving engagement in food and fibre education? ▪ To what extent are rural Research and Development Corporation and PIEFA programs reaching the target audiences of this Strategy including: – Primary/secondary educators (including in-school VET trainers) – Careers advisors – Regional, remote and urban schools – Different states and territories.
Efficiency	▪ Are their overlapping or duplicated resources, programs or activities being developed and delivered by the rural Research and Development Corporations and PIEFA? If yes, please explain any overlap or duplication and why this is occurring. ▪ How cost-effective are the various initiatives in terms of reach and impact?
Collaboration	▪ What mechanisms currently exist to support collaboration, and how might these be strengthened? ▪ Are there opportunities to collaborate to improve the efficiency and impact of delivery? ▪ Are there opportunities to collaborate and leverage other investment e.g. peak industry, government, corporate and other complimentary industries? ▪ What barriers exist to greater collaboration, and how can they be addressed? ▪ What can we learn from rural Research and Development Corporation and PIEFA programs and initiatives that could be used to support the design of the projects and initiatives identified in the collaborative action section of the Strategy?

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