



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Inquiry into rural skills training and research**

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 6 February 2006

*Chair: Alby Schultz MP
Deputy Chair: Dick Adams MP*

Rural training provider says higher skill levels will lead to higher pay

Committee Public Hearing in Parliament House, Canberra – 8 February 2006

The registered training provider **Rural Industries Skill Training (RIST)** will appear before the House of Representatives Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee on Wednesday (8 September) for its inquiry into rural skills training and research.

The public hearing will take place **from 5.00 pm in Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra.**

RIST's submission (no. 29 on the committee's website) points to a number of causes for the current skills crisis facing the rural sector, including: inconsistencies in education funding; the ageing population within agriculture; the lack of acknowledgement that farming is a skilled profession; and lack of accountability in agricultural research.

To address these and other issues, RIST argues that attention should focus on:

- school programs that encourage a positive image of agriculture
- direct federal funding to private non-government training providers
- the standardisation of criteria for the purchasing of training hours across Australia
- an integrated federal government approach to funding skill development, and
- research funding that is accountable to on-farm skill development and extension.

The committee chair, Alby Schultz (Member for Hume, NSW), said "the committee is interested in hearing from training providers on the barriers to rural skilling in Australia. We are very interested in hearing their opinions on what the federal government can do to help break down some of these barriers".

Further details about the inquiry, including terms of reference and submissions, can be obtained from the committee's website at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/ruralskills/> or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4500 or emailing Aff.reps@aph.gov.au.

For media comment: please contact the committee chair, Alby Schultz MP, on (02) 6277 4386 or email Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au.

For more information: please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4500.