



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 23 February 2007

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

Skilling Rural Australia

- Media Conference next Monday -

The House of Representatives Agriculture Committee will unveil proposals to reinvigorate rural skills training and research when it releases its report, **Skills: Rural Australia's Need**, next Monday (26 February).

The report addresses public concerns about access to rural skills training, the reduction of agricultural extension services, and a decline in research funding. **It also calls for recognition of the importance of agriculture and forestry to the national economy and the Australian way of life.**

Committee chair, Alby Schultz (Hume, NSW), said that "a highly skilled rural workforce is vital to the economic future of Australia". He noted that there are currently significant skill shortages in rural Australia and significant gaps in our capacity to respond to those shortages.

Mr Schultz emphasised that maintaining and enhancing our rural skills in a dynamic and highly competitive international environment requires investment in world class training, extension and research services. "Only by making such investment will our rural industries remain at the forefront of agriculture and forestry internationally," he said.

Members of the House of Representatives Agriculture Committee will hold a media conference at 1.30pm on 26 February in committee room 2S3, Parliament House, Canberra.

Embargoed copies of the report are available to the Canberra Press Gallery at **10am 26 February** from the House Agriculture Committee Secretariat in **R1.121**

The media conference will be broadcast live on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media comment please contact the office of committee chair, **Alby Schultz**, on **(02) 6277 4386** or mobile **0428 693 553** or email Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au.

For more detail on the inquiry and embargoed copies of the report, please contact:
The House Agriculture Committee Secretariat in **R1.121** or on (02) 6277 4500 or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/ruralskills/index.htm>

Members of the House of Representatives Agriculture Committee are: Chair - **Alby Schultz** (Hume, NSW), Deputy Chair - **Dick Adams** (Lyons, Tas), **Martin Ferguson** (Batman, Vic), **Michael Ferguson** (Bass, Tas), **John Forrest** (Mallee, Vic), **Gavan O'Connor** (Corio, Vic), **Patrick Secker** (Barker, SA), **Wilson Tuckey** (O'Connor, WA) and **Tony Windsor** (New England, NSW).