



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Issued: 26 February 2007

Chair: Alby Schultz MP  
Deputy Chair: Dick Adams MP

# Skilling Rural Australia

*- Rural Skills Report Tabled Today -*

The House of Representatives Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee will today table its report ***Skills: Rural Australia's Need***, addressing rural skills shortages in Australia. The report's key finding is that **more needs to be done by government and industry to overcome shortages of skilled labour in our rural industries.**

Committee chair, Alby Schultz (Hume, NSW), said "a highly skilled rural workforce is vital to the economic future of Australia". He said currently there are 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.

The report's 29 recommendations include:

- Making the regulatory framework surrounding vocational education and training more flexible and responsive to industry needs;
- Rationalising training providers and reinvigorating vocational education and higher education in agriculture and forestry;
- Revitalising agricultural colleges across Australia;
- Providing agriculture and forestry courses at Australian Technical Colleges;
- Promoting the role of agriculture and forestry in Australian society, and promoting rural skills training in schools;
- Developing a national extension framework to revitalise extension services;
- Linking research funding to the provision of extension services;
- Extending the FarmBis program and renewing it beyond 2008;
- Creating a Cooperative Research Centre for the honeybee industry and a permanent quarantine facility for honey bees;
- Providing greater security of funding for rural industry related Cooperative Research Centres; and
- Developing a 'skills passport' to encourage the transfer of skills within and between rural industries.

Copies of the report can be obtained from the committee's website at:

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

**Media Conference** – will be webcast live on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>  
Committee members will attend a media conference **today** in Committee Room **2S3** at **1.30pm**  
**For further media comment:** please contact the committee chair, Alby Schultz MP, on (02) 6277 4386 or email [Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au).