



Australian Government

**Department of Education,
Science and Training**

**The House of Representatives
Standing Committee on
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Inquiry into Rural Skills Training
and Research**

**Answers to Questions on Notice
September 2006**



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

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**Answers to Questions on Notice
required following Public Hearing on 16 August 2006**

Question 1.

Response to request from Chair, Mr Schultz.

Copy of Rural Skills Report.

National Farmers' Federation Final Report June 2006, Education & Training Advisers Project –
Produced by Rural Skills Australia

Provided electronically to the Secretariat.

Question 2.

Response to Mr Martin Ferguson asked on 16 August 2006, AFF page 6

Copy of MODL list is available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/skilled-occupations/occupations-in-demand.htm>

Question 3.

Response to Mr Adams asked on 16 August 2006, AFF page 7

You also mentioned extra funding that gave extra support to apprentices and to employers. Can you elaborate on that?

Please refer to the answer to Q1. - *Additional Information required following Public Hearing on the 16 August.*

Question 4.

Response to Mr Martin Ferguson asked on 16 August 2006, AFF page 8

Do you have any specific recommendations which we should be thinking about in terms of training older workers?

Copy of the following documents:

Skilling & Mature Age Workers, Initial Paper, November 2005, Australian Industry Group (AiG)

Fact Sheet 1 - Employing Mature Age Workers

Fact Sheet 2 – Group Training – an alternative for employing Mature Age apprentices & trainees

Fact Sheet 3 – Signing –up a Mature Age Apprentice or Trainee

Fact Sheet 4 – Getting skills recognized before training starts

Fact Sheet 5 – Addressing OH&S Issues for Mature Age Workers

2005/06 Australian Industry Group (AiG) Focus Activity Proposal – Special Project

Skilling & Mature Age Workers, Final Report.

All provided electronically to the Secretariat.

Question 5.

Response to Mr Martin Ferguson asked on 16 August 2006, AFF page 9

- **How many training Places are currently in place in each college (ATC)?**
- **How many of those training colleges are rural schools related?**

See attachment: A

Attachment A

AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL COLLEGES – as at 19 September 2006

Opening 2006

Region	State	Start	Progress	Trades
Port Macquarie (Port Macquarie & Taree)	NSW	2006	Open Likely to offer Certificate 3 from 2007 year following COAG negotiations.	Port Macquarie campus - metals and engineering, hospitality operations, construction, automotive and furniture making, expanding to electrotechnology in 2007. Manning Valley campus - metals and engineering, and furniture making, expanding to hospitality operations and electrotechnology in 2007.
Eastern Melbourne (Ringwood & Ferntree Gully)	VIC	2006	Open	2006 Automotive, cabinet making, electrotechnology. Future: Engineering, Building & construction, commercial cookery, manufacturing & warehouse distribution.
Gladstone	QLD	2006	Open	2006 Metals and Engineering, electro-technology, automotive. Future - building and construction, mining and process plant operations.
Gold Coast	QLD	2006	Open	2006 Construction, Commercial cookery 2008 - engineering & automotive
Northern Tasmania (Launceston & Burnie)	TAS	2006	Opened on 31 July 2006 in Launceston. Second campus opened in Burnie on 28 August 2006.	2006 - Building & construction, metal & engineering. 2008 – automotive, electro technology, commercial cookery, rural industry

AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL COLLEGES – as at 19 September 2006

Attachment A

Opening 2007

Region	State	Start	Progress	Trades
North Brisbane	QLD	2007	Scarborough with satellite campus in Fortitude Valley.	Building & construction, metal & engineering, automotive, electro technology, commercial cookery.
North Queensland	QLD	2007	Will be located in Townsville	Metal & engineering, automotive, building & construction, electro technology.
Adelaide South	SA	2007	Main campus at Christie Downs. Second campus planned for Ottoway in 2009	Building & construction, metal & engineering, electro technology.
Northern Adelaide-	SA	2007	Elizabeth West	Building & construction, metals & engineering, automotive, commercial cookery, electrotechnology
Bendigo	VIC	2007	Will be located in Bendigo.	Engineering & construction. Future- automotive, commercial cookery, electro technology.
Geelong	VIC	2007	East Geelong.	Building & construction, metals & engineering, automotive.
Gippsland	VIC	2007	Located in Bairnsdale with satellite campus in Sale.	Building & construction, metals & engineering, automotive, commercial cookery and electrotechnology and hairdressing.
Sunshine	VIC	2007	North Sunshine	Metals and engineering, and automotive in 2007; with building and construction, and electrotechnology added in 2008.
Perth South	WA	2007	Maddington and Armadale.	Automotive, building & construction in 2007/08 2009 – electrotechnology, metal & engineering.
Hunter	NSW	2007	Campuses in Maitland, Singleton and Newcastle	Electrotechnology, building and construction, metals and engineering, automotive. Expanding to commercial cookery in 2009.
Illawarra	NSW	2007	Wollongong	Building & construction, metals & engineering, commercial cookery and electrotechnology

AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Attachment A

Funding Agreements under negotiation:

Region	State
Dubbo	NSW
Central Coast	NSW
Western Sydney	NSW
Darwin	NT
Warrnambool	VIC
Whyalla/Port Augusta	SA
Pilbara	WA

Still to be announced:

Region	State
Lismore/Ballina	NSW
Queanbeyan	NSW

Each college will cater for up to 300 students.

Information is regularly updated on the website www.australiantechnicalcolleges.gov.au

Question 6.

Response to the updated and latest (March 2006) statistics from NCVET for Australian Apprenticeships for Appendix E of the Rural Skills Inquiry.

Australian Apprentices in training in Rural and Regional areas (workplace region) by State and by Certificate level

By State

March quarter	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Total
1995	30,400	12,800	20,500	2,990	5,650	2,950	830	30	76,100
1996	33,800	15,800	24,100	3,650	5,990	3,210	1,020	30	87,600
1997	35,500	18,100	27,900	5,200	6,700	3,570	1,290	30	98,300
1998	37,800	20,600	37,200	7,690	7,770	3,980	1,640	40	116,700
1999	38,500	26,000	44,900	29,300	8,520	9,290	1,650	90	158,200
2000	49,500	32,400	41,900	30,800	8,450	8,300	1,380	120	172,800
2001	56,600	40,500	42,100	24,000	7,740	8,190	1,460	120	180,700
2002	64,000	48,800	47,400	16,600	8,560	9,240	1,590	80	196,300
2003	72,000	56,300	54,100	12,600	9,680	9,880	1,810	60	216,400
2004	72,900	54,600	57,100	11,500	11,100	10,400	1,930	50	219,500
2005	70,800	51,800	59,000	12,100	12,500	10,100	2,110	60	218,400
2006	72,900	50,900	63,100	12,600	14,300	9,870	2,080	80	225,900
% increase 95 - 06	140%	298%	208%	321%	153%	235%	151%	167%	197%
% increase 05 - 06	3%	-2%	7%	4%	14%	-2%	-1%	33%	3%

By certificate

March quarter	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma/ Advanced Diploma
1996	350	9,210	49,400	80	(a)
1997	270	16,800	51,700	240	30
1998	280	24,500	56,300	770	50
1999	810	33,200	73,200	3,180	80
2000	130	29,700	85,600	4,480	110
2001	20	29,300	92,800	7,440	170
2002	20	30,500	97,900	10,300	150
2003	10	32,600	108,000	11,800	290
2004	60	27,900	115,200	13,400	320
2005	50	24,300	118,000	14,000	310
2006	30	22,300	119,500	15,000	410

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research March 2006 estimates

figures may not sum due to rounding

(a) represents figures in the range of 1-9

Australian Apprenticeships Commencements in Rural and Regional areas (Workplace region)

from the 12 months to March 1996 to the 12 months to March 2006

By State

12 months to March	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Total
1996	10,300	5,750	8,370	1,170	1,710	1,060	460	20	28,800
1997	12,300	8,260	11,900	1,780	2,370	1,420	780	10	38,800
1998	15,400	9,800	20,900	3,350	3,330	1,800	1,060	20	55,700
1999	14,900	13,800	27,400	15,900	3,910	5,420	860	40	82,200
2000	24,200	17,700	22,400	18,500	3,700	3,940	670	80	91,200
2001	26,200	21,100	20,700	11,800	3,170	4,370	820	60	88,300
2002	29,800	24,500	24,200	5,030	3,770	4,870	830	40	93,100
2003	32,900	29,100	27,400	5,110	4,900	5,090	1,000	20	105,500
2004	32,200	25,900	27,800	5,410	5,550	4,990	920	40	102,700
2005	28,500	24,200	28,600	6,230	6,510	4,600	1,050	20	99,700
2006	31,000	24,300	30,000	6,300	7,350	4,360	1,010	30	104,300
% increase 96 - 06	201%	323%	258%	438%	330%	311%	120%	50%	262%
% increase 05 - 06	9%	0%	5%	1%	13%	-5%	-4%	50%	5%

By certificate

12 months to March	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma/Advanced Diploma
1996	540	10,400	16,200	60	(a)
1997	300	19,100	18,300	170	30
1998	360	28,700	25,600	770	40
1999	680	35,200	42,900	3,410	40
2000	80	33,100	53,600	4,290	60
2001	20	31,500	50,600	6,150	100
2002	20	33,400	52,100	7,510	70
2003	10	35,700	61,400	8,160	250
2004	270	28,700	65,000	8,680	160
2005	230	25,400	65,000	8,990	150
2006	130	24,600	68,900	10,400	280

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research March 2006 estimates

figures may not sum due to rounding

(a) represents figures in the range of 1-9

**Australian Apprenticeships Completions in Rural and Regional areas
(workplace region)
from the 12 months to March 1996 to the 12 months to March 2006**

By state

12 months to March	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Total
1996	4,880	2,090	3,200	580	860	660	130	20	12,400
1997	6,470	3,560	4,640	1,020	1,020	760	170	(a)	17,600
1998	7,780	4,630	6,970	1,150	1,350	1,070	290	(a)	23,200
1999	9,090	4,220	10,200	4,400	1,630	1,480	400	(a)	31,400
2000	8,530	5,600	12,400	8,670	1,990	2,790	350	40	40,400
2001	10,400	7,100	10,100	6,170	2,100	2,900	430	30	39,200
2002	13,500	8,720	11,800	7,160	2,030	2,660	340	30	46,200
2003	15,300	11,500	13,400	5,350	2,260	2,960	470	20	51,400
2004	17,300	12,600	14,800	3,700	2,460	3,240	410	20	54,500
2005	17,200	13,300	14,800	2,740	2,860	2,850	400	10	54,100
2006	17,600	13,500	15,900	3,280	3,420	2,820	500	10	57,100
% increase 96 - 06	261%	546%	397%	466%	298%	327%	285%	-50%	360%
% increase 05 - 06	2%	2%	7%	20%	20%	-1%	25%	0%	6%

By certificate

12 months to March	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma/Advanced Diploma
1996	70	2360	8920	(a)	(a)
1997	230	6070	10800	40	(a)
1998	170	9380	13200	110	10
1999	450	14300	16200	490	(a)
2000	380	16000	22500	1,470	(a)
2001	80	14800	23000	1,230	20
2002	(a)	16500	27400	2,270	40
2003	10	16900	30800	3,630	40
2004	80	17100	33600	3,720	60
2005	90	14200	35200	4,540	70
2006	70	13000	38600	5,280	80

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research March 2006 estimates

figures may not sum due to rounding

(a) represents figures in the range of 1-9

Question 7.

Response to Mr Martin Ferguson asked on 16 August 2006, AFF page 10

If I remember correctly, the visa is being extended from three to 12 months in this sector and from three to six months in hospitality.

VISA OVERVIEW

To address seasonal labour shortages in regional Australia, the Government has also expanded the *Working Holiday Maker Programme*. From 1 November 2005 Working Holiday Makers who have worked at least three months doing seasonal harvest work in regional Australia are eligible for a second 12 month Working Holiday Maker visa.

Senator Vanstone - Media Release – 3 May 2006

“From July, working holiday makers who spend three months employed in the region’s primary industries – such as cropping, fishing, shearing and tending livestock – can apply for a second visa,” Senator Vanstone said.

“All working holiday makers will also be allowed to work for the same employer for an extra three months. And they can study in Australia for four months instead of the current three months.

VISA DETAILS

An extract from the DIMA website is below:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/visitors/working-holiday/417/index.htm>

This visa is for people aged 18 to 30 years of age, who are interested in a working holiday of up to 12 months in Australia. This visa allows you to supplement the cost of your holiday through incidental employment.

Important: Applicants must have turned 18, but not turned 31, at the time of visa application.

You may apply for this visa if you hold a passport for one of the countries or regions participating with Australia in the Working Holiday Maker Programme.

People who have worked as a seasonal worker in regional Australia for a minimum of three months while on their first Working Holiday visa, may be eligible to apply for a second Working Holiday visa.

The table below lists the countries and regions involved in the Working Holiday Maker Programme with Australia. If you hold a passport for one of these countries, you may be eligible to apply for this visa.

A-F	G-L	M-Z
Belgium Canada Cyprus, Republic of Denmark Estonia Finland France	Germany HKSAR* Ireland, Republic of Italy Japan Korea, Republic of	Malta Netherlands Norway Sweden Taiwan United Kingdom

*Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (includes British National Overseas passport holders).

Question 8.

Response to Mr Gavan O'Connor asked on 16 August 2006, AFF page 12

You are assuming responsibility for ANTA, and there has been some criticism about the time it has taken to accredit courses.

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) does not accredit courses. This is a State and Territory function. In respect of the endorsement of national qualifications in Training Packages DEST can confirm that formal Training Package processes are not prolonging endorsement of Training Packages. The Agri-food Industry Skills Council is responsible for a large number of Training Packages and some slippage in finalising the review of some Training Packages has occurred.

The Agri-food Industry Skills Council coverage includes the food processing industry. The Services Industry Skills Council coverage includes the tourism and hospitality industries.

Question 9.

Response to Mr Secker asked on 16 August 2006, AFF page 12 / 13

Are you addressing this decline? How are you addressing this decline? (Food Processing VTE in schools).

Industry Pathfinder Projects

DEST funds Industry Pathfinders to help industry find pathways to quality vocational and technical education (VTE) solutions to their workforce planning and skills development needs. Industry Pathfinders provide a range of services, including advice, assistance and research, and promotional activities that support Australian Apprenticeship Centres (AACs) and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) with the implementation of Australian Apprenticeships and Training Packages. Industry Pathfinders projects also engage with industry associations and other stakeholders to support the achievement of programme aims.

Since 2005, Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) have been funded to provide Industry Pathfinder services. ISCs consult with their industry sectors to determine VTE and Australian Apprenticeship impediments and priorities. Industry Pathfinders proposals are developed following these consultations to ensure that the needs and priorities of each industry sector are met.

A number of Industry Pathfinders Projects were undertaken during 2005-06 that identified more flexible training delivery models for thin markets and that focussed on fast-tracking skills assessment and recognition of prior learning processes.

For example, the Government and Community Safety Industry Skills Council (Australian Local Government and Training) undertook a project to develop Learning Guides and Assessment Instruments to Support a Thin Market. The project has developed 16 high quality Learning Guides and 16 Assessment Instruments in consultation with industry, government and training providers. The material supports:

- Registered Training Organisations who cannot cost-justify developing resources for this thin market, and
- self managed and self paced learning outcomes for para-professional planners.

More broadly, the project is expected to lead to an increase in the take-up of local government qualifications, including Australian Apprenticeships which will assist in addressing a critical skill shortage in Councils.

Another project undertaken by Service Skills Australia, Service Industry Skills Council developed an Australian Apprenticeship model in conjunction with industry to allow for the fast tracking or acceleration of candidates to a national Certificate III qualification in commercial cookery. There are significant skills shortages within the commercial cookery industry that this project has sought to address.

Question 10.

In support of Ms Cross' comment on page 16

We are happy to give you advice on the work on overseas skills recognition.

To further assist in meeting skills shortages, the Council of Australian Governments' Meeting (COAG) 10 February 2006, has agreed to new arrangements to make it easier for migrants with skills to Australian standards to work as soon as they reach Australia. It does not involve any change to the migration policy.

A new streamlined and robust off-shore skills assessment process, to Australian standards, will be put in place in the five main source countries for our skilled migrants by December 2008, initially for skills shortage trades and later for other occupations in the skilled migration program. The overseas assessments will be conducted under the auspices of Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) by accredited organisations or individuals with a proven record in delivering high-quality skills assessments. The TRA will be resourced to guarantee the quality of assessments and protect Australian standards.

This will be mirrored by a parallel on-shore assessment arrangement for those who are living in Australia and want skills achieved overseas recognized, and provisional licensing so that people with recognised overseas qualifications can work under supervision for short periods, while they complete licensing requirements.

At present skills assessments for skilled migration involving VTE type occupations are undertaken by two agencies:

1. Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) undertakes skills assessments of 'trade' occupations that come under their jurisdiction. They also undertake skills assessments of other occupations under direction from DIMA. These include occupations such as cooks and hairdressers. The complete list is on their website: www.workplace.gov.au/TradesRecognitionAustralia
2. VetAssess, which is contracted by DIMA, undertakes skills assessments for other occupations which require AQF Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications. These skills assessments are based solely on educational qualifications. VetAssess uses the assessment guidelines in our Country Education Profiles. VetAssess is also able to seek advice from us if qualifications are not covered in the guidelines: www.vetassess.com.au

The Department of Education, Science and Training, Australian Education International – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) section, does not assess VTE qualifications for migration purposes.

AEI-NOOSR does provide **generic educational assessments** of overseas technical and vocational qualifications in terms of AQF qualifications for the purposes of general employment in Australia or for admission to further study. **These are provided after migrants have arrived in Australia.**

- AEI-NOOSR's assessment guidelines and assessments are **generic**; they do not compare overseas qualifications to AQF qualifications in a specific industry or community field. Those seeking an assessment in terms of meeting the specified competencies for an AQF qualification or those in an Australian Training Package, should consult the relevant Australian assessing authority.
- AEI-NOOSR's always state that our assessment guidelines and assessments are not trade skills assessments, and that the assessments refer to comparative levels of achievement only, and do not refer to specified competency requirements for AQF qualifications or Training Packages.

AEI-NOOSR does not assess below AQF Certificate IV level.

AEI-NOOSR's assess overseas technical and vocational qualifications in terms of AQF qualifications using the AQF generic descriptors. The level of the overseas program is considered (in terms of their own qualifications framework if they have one), structure and content, practical experience, quality assurance mechanisms, assessment methodology, and subsequent study pathways eg. admit to a qualification at a higher level, or employment levels upon graduation eg. technician, higher technician, middle manager. AEI-NOOSR also considers the views on particular qualifications held by other overseas assessing agencies such as those of the Europeans or Americans (and UK for other countries).

AEI-NOOSR's assessment guidelines and assessments are purely advisory. Employers and educational institutions in Australia are free to make up their own minds as to whether a person's qualifications, together with their work experience, are suitable for the purpose required.

As most countries do not have competency-based systems, AEI-NOOSR's has set out below some of the comparative quality indicators that they use when assessing time served or curriculum based qualifications in terms of AQF awards.

Extract from UK Comparative Quality Indicators:

The UK system of technical and vocational education is characterised by:

- having both competency-based and time served (curriculum) based qualifications;
- two qualifications frameworks - National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework;
- well-developed articulation processes to the higher education sector; and
- emphasis on the maintenance of standards through accreditation of awarding institutions and qualifications, or through external examinations or competency assessment

Comparability between the UK and Australia

While the UK economy may have somewhat different needs from Australia's, overall, the UK system has enough in common with the Australian system to make comparisons relatively straightforward. However, the following issues arise:

- difficulties in comparing a UK time served (curriculum) based qualification with Australian technical and vocational education system competency-based qualifications; and
- differences in structure and content which may be relevant when assessing UK qualifications for specific employment or educational purposes

Comparing UK Time served (Curriculum) Based Qualifications

The Australian technical and vocational education is a competency based, qualification specific system. This means that the outcomes of learning are expressed in terms of a qualification on the Australian Qualifications Framework which is defined by the things people can do relevant to individual industry or community needs. However, usually there is sufficient information available about a UK time served (curriculum) based qualification to identify the skills level (NQF or SCQF level) and expected level of subsequent employment to make a generic comparison using the AQF generic descriptors.

Differences in Structure and Content

Australian technical and vocational AQF qualifications usually have a number of components identified in the Training Packages developed by relevant business, industry and community bodies. It is unlikely that all of these will be met in any UK, or for that matter any overseas country, qualification. Therefore, some accommodation is required in making generic comparisons. AEI-NOOSR has observed the following:

- UK qualifications tend to be very specialised in a particular field, and may not have the administrative, management or analytical skills built into AQF qualifications
- The length of programs can vary significantly, with some programs particularly short in comparison with an AQF qualification, even though they may be at a high NQF or SCQF level.
- The balance of academic study and applied learning varies even for qualifications at the same level on the NQF.
 - For example, the BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) has 16 units and is a 2-year full-time program, whereas the BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC) has 10 units and is a 2-year part-time program usually while in relevant employment. They are both at NQF Level 5 - the HNC and the HND have similar outcomes for employment purposes but the HNC has significantly less theoretical content than the HND which may be an issue for further academic study.
- Many programs are undertaken as a requirement of employment, and the length of the program may appear to be deceptively short when based on the number of guided learning hours listed on the relevant databases. The guided learning hours generally do not include individual study or on-the-job training.