

Submission to the 2005 Inquiry into Rural Skills Training and Research

Rimfire Resources Pty Ltd

In this submission we will not examine in detail the terms of reference, but have some comments relating to aspects of education and career development in the rural sector.

The agricultural sector is one of the most progressive in the Australian economy and makes a very significant contribution to Australia's economic prosperity. It is important to maintain high quality education, training and career development to support a skilled agricultural workforce.

As an export orientated industry, agribusiness operates in a rapidly changing international trade environment. Agribusinesses have to operate in world's best practice in order to be competitive and that means having a talent pool of well educated young people who have the commitment to build a career in the sector. With Australian agribusiness pursuing expanding opportunities in domestic and world markets, the need for an influx of talented graduates into the sector to support the expansion is critical.

Rimfire Resources Pty Ltd is an Australian company providing people and information solutions to Agribusiness. Our commitment to the continual development and competitiveness of agricultural industries in Australia has resulted in an initiative to promote Agribusiness as a worthwhile and rewarding career path for students and graduates. We would like to bring this initiative to the Committee's attention. The initiative is a programme, recognised as Agribusiness Grad-Link, which:

- promotes agribusiness as a worthwhile and rewarding career path for students,
- educates agribusiness graduates on career paths available in agribusiness
- provides graduates with an overall understanding of companies and their operations within the agribusiness value chain
- offers Agribusiness companies a forum to develop closer relationships with education providers specialising in agribusiness.

The Grad-Link Programme is a compelling story for agribusiness which has significant implications for the continual development and competitiveness of agricultural industries in Australia. It involves;

- opportunities for young people, especially country kids, to stay with agriculture/agribusiness, often without leaving a country base,
- the promotion of agriculture/agribusiness as an attractive career,
- support for universities that have agriculture/agribusiness courses.

The strategic alliances formed for Grad-Link between Rimfire Resources, Agribusiness Companies and Universities creates, supports and markets a strong future for agribusiness graduates. This brings real benefits to graduates and Universities by assisting in the development of graduate careers and allowing companies to provide graduates with an insight into future job roles.

The initiative is supported by Australia's leading agribusiness companies interested in sustaining the industry by assisting in the development of graduate careers.

Agribusiness Grad-Link offers significant value for the key stakeholders involved;

- companies have a new, highly valued means to access graduates,
- universities can witness the practical application of their programmes,
- graduates have a new option for career development.

Rimfire Resources has future plans to deliver further linked ag-education products.