

*Weighing in to the meat of the matter:  
an industry specific approach to workforce development*

Attraction and retention of labour in the  
South Australian Meat Industry

Food Tourism and Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Council SA Inc



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## Executive Summary

The *Attraction and Retention of Labour in the South Australian Meat Industry* Workforce Development Project began in January 2006 – as an 18 month project which forms phase one of a two phase initiative.

The project was underpinned by good change management practice, with the overriding objective to significantly alter the nature of the South Australian Meat Industry – to develop and implement strategies which re-shaped the way people relate to the industry and the way the industry relates to those who work within it.

The structured change management process was anchored in a workforce development framework built around a combination of:

- Attraction Pathways
- Retention Strategies
- Industry Growth Phases.

The underlying principle of the project was to remove barriers which had been identified by targeted research as limiting current performance and restricting growth. This was to be achieved by enabling the industry to:

- attract suitable personnel
- retain current and new staff
- access appropriate entry level and on-the-job training
- provide accurate career advice
- promote multi-skilling
- further develop the skills of managers within the industry.

To achieve all this, the project designed, developed and piloted a range of activities specifically relevant to the South Australian Meat Industry. Most importantly, the activities were driven by the industry from within – so that the project outcomes will be the means of the industry creating the workforce it requires in order to achieve its identified potential.

## Workforce development framework adapted for (and by) the industry

A framework was developed initially consisting of a range of generic strategies, models and tools which could be used to instigate industry change and provide specific practical support to individual enterprises.

This framework was adapted to match the vagaries of the industry, was further modified during the course of the project – and will undergo further change in subsequent phases to facilitate the transfer of successful models to other enterprises, sectors and even other industries.

## Retention Roadshow

A key focus of the project was the retention of employees already working in the industry. Workshops were held with regionally based retailers and processors in the South East during a joint industry/union *Training for Retention Professional Development Strategy*. Feedback from these forums was used to develop tools such as targeted workshops and written resources to support the uptake of improved management practices. Forums were also hosted for smaller processors in both metropolitan and northern Adelaide.

## Attraction Pathways

Attraction pathways aimed specifically at young people included a promotional *Butcher for a Day* program and the establishment of a *School Based New Apprenticeships Program* as a Pilot in the South East. This was supported by *Pre-Employment Workshops* to also include mature age workers and women in non-traditional trades – and a *Faces of the Meat Industry* promotional campaign to stimulate interest.

## Collaborative Employment Model

The project developed and piloted a framework to attract, engage, train and mentor participants suited to the meat industry. The framework was tested with a number of employers including a 'white meat' major employer north of Adelaide and a number of processors in the South East. The focus in this model was in attracting the right people to the industry initially – and supporting the training process in order to facilitate retention.

## Workforce Cultural Change Program

This program included a range of workshops and ongoing mentoring for management, Human Resources personnel, Supervisors, Leading Hands and existing employees. The program was tested with two major industry employers in the South East and included activities focussed on workforce planning; induction; supervisor selection and training; career development; age management training for team leaders and experienced workers; and cross-cultural communication.

## Development of Resources

Resources were developed to provide practical tools specifically for the South Australian Meat Industry. The published guides include an overall *Workforce Development Handbook* underpinned by a number of *Fact Sheets* on specific issues. The resources have been distributed widely within the industry and have been sought by a number of other industries as a reference. These initial documents were complemented by a *Career Progression booklet and poster* designed to promote opportunities within the South Australian Meat Industry to new and existing employees. A promotional strategy for the 'Careers' resources is currently being negotiated, so that their use and distribution in Phase 2 can have maximum benefits for the industry.

## Workforce Planning Workshop

In partnership with Meat & Livestock Australia, a workforce planning workshop was used to further engage South Australian processors to address this key management issue. Processors from Western Australia were included in this activity. As a direct result of this workshop, field trips were initiated in a case management approach which led to the foundations of site-specific workforce plans.

## Case Management and Collaborative Approach

Throughout the project, a case management approach was used to tailor strategies, models and tools to specifically meet the needs of clients. Continual consultation and collaboration across the industry ensured project outputs were pragmatic rather than academic.

## Key achievements

The single overriding achievement of this project has been to bring key players in the South Australian Meat Industry to a point where they could recognise – and then work collaboratively to address – long-standing and increasingly urgent workforce development issues.

The commitment of both employer and employee peak bodies, Government representatives, employers, the FTH Skills Council Meat Industry Workforce Development team – and even employees – to engage with each other and work toward common goals has been instrumental to the success of the project.

In addition, the partnership approach which has been undertaken – particularly with Meat and Livestock Australia, but also with other organisations – augers well for long term outcomes.

Many of the outputs from the project – such as the Collaborative Employment Model and the published workforce development resources – have attracted widespread interest from other industries and are serving as templates for related activities.

## Findings/learnings/issues

Additional issues for the South Australia meat industry identified during the development and implementation of the project include:

- **The perpetuating nature of recruitment/retention issues due to employers engaging in incentive auctions** to attract or retain people with key skills (such as managers or production personnel in intensive processing sectors). The resultant rise in labour costs leaves employers financially restricted in terms of implementing workforce development which could alleviate future issues. This is exacerbated by increasing consumer demands for specialised skills in terms of the type of end-product produced and in food safety process methodologies.
- **Infrastructure issues in rural communities where appropriate accommodation is not available** for transient, single-permanent or family-based employees that could otherwise be attracted to the region. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of child-care facilities for unemployed or underemployed women that could otherwise be attracted to the industry and the fact that many of the industry's major processors are located in these remote regional areas.
- **Access to under-employed appears to be restricted** by an inability to access wage subsidies because of 'unemployed' classifications which consider one hour paid/unpaid work and financial assessments as an ineligibility criteria
- **The inaccessibility of current Migrant visas** to provide a 'workforce top-up' during peak demand seasonal periods
- **Industry terminology** which continues to present a poor public image of the industry and is particularly unattractive to school-leavers.

## Planned future activities

The FTH Skills Council has sought funding to progress to Phase 2 of this project to build on the successful pilot program and to continue with a number of the strategies already actioned, in order to maximise their impact.

The two streams of Phase 2 would include:

- working collaboratively with domestic labour markets and employers to support their efforts to develop the workforce in a way which will attract and retain local employees
- continuing to explore options to access migrant employees – particularly to address the seasonal imbalance of production and labour availability.

## Working with domestic labour markets and employers

Activities planned for Phase 2 focus on:

- **Workforce Development Case Management**, which includes expansion of the Workforce Cultural Change Program, Collaborative Employment Program, Workforce Planning Workshops and Retention Forums into other South Australian regions

Producing a further five Fact Sheets – which respond to industry feedback and needs identified during interaction – to support the Workforce Development Resources published in Phase 1.

- **Meat Industry Skills Ecosystem**, which captures the specific knowledge and skills of the Meat Industry and allows crucial testing of attraction pathways for new entrants into the industry, while further developing Supervisors to better manage and retain these new people.

This component will specifically address Supervisor behaviour and knowledge; the industry's poor level of trainee completion rates; and public perceptions about lack of job choice.

A key feature of Skills Ecosystem activity will be the development of a *Whole of Meat Industry Traineeship Program* which will coordinate placement and rotation of participants across the production, processing and retailing sectors. Skills acquired during the rotations which are additional to the formal accreditation certificate will be documented in a *Skills Passport*.

- **Flexible learning methodologies** will identify and facilitate e-learning opportunities and web-based training and concurrently provide regional employees with opportunities to train with computer aided management and automated processing technologies. An E-Learning component will specifically involve students in using contemporary technologies to investigate and debunk mythologies about the meat industry.
- **The MLA Partnership Program** will continue in Phase 2 with a number of projects aimed at progressing and broadening activities in workforce planning, Supervisor training and the Skills Ecosystem/Skills Passport.
- **Opportunities for input to State & National Policy** will increase in Phase 2 through interaction with industry and individual businesses to gather intelligence on those policies and programs with direct relevance to workforce development.

## Investigating supplementary labour through migration

This stream of Phase 2 will employ a Project Officer for 12 months specifically to work with a Reference Committee and develop a framework under which Working Holiday Visas (subclass 417) might be used to access appropriate employees for relevant periods to address seasonal imbalances between production needs and workforce availability.

The intention is to Pilot the program with a limited number of companies, evaluate its potential and then develop strategies to expand the program more broadly across South Australia.

## A need to maintain the momentum

This project has taken a holistic approach to workforce development – so that strategies not only addressed planning; attraction; development; and retention; but also a wide range of potential labour pools (unemployed; under-employed; school leavers; mature-age; domestic and international migrants).

Because of its collaborative approach, the project has been extremely successful in bringing the South Australian Meat Industry together and generating a commitment among a number of employers to implement workforce development as a means of addressing current and future skills and labour shortages.

However, significant structural, systemic and cultural change will be required for the South Australian Meat Industry to achieve the workforce it requires to meet its projected growth patterns.

It is therefore critical that this momentum is sustained through a smooth transition into the second phase of the project. Any delay will severely impact on the significant credibility Phase 1 has been able to achieve through its pragmatic and 'active' approach.

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## Section 1: Introduction to the Project

### 1.1 The Food Tourism & Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Council

The Food Tourism and Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Council SA Inc, trading as FTH Skills Council, is one of nine Industry Skills Boards established by the South Australian Government to work with industry, community, and government developing partnership networks which will broaden the focus of advice and dialogue between the groups – and to be leaders within industry to provide workforce information and planning advice.

Specifically, the organisation is tasked with providing industry advice to government and, in doing so, to develop industry specific work plans; identify workforce trends and emerging skill needs; and consider issues relating to career advice and the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce.

The overriding purpose of the FTH Skills Council is to foster the development of a flexible, skilled and motivated workforce that will create in the long term a profitable and sustainable industry for the food and beverage processing and manufacturing; tourism; and hospitality sectors.

Key functions include:

- Providing industry intelligence and strategic advice on current and emerging skill and workforce development needs – from employer and employee perspectives
- Promoting the importance of integrating skill development and business development
- Serving as an advocate for industry views on the development, implementation and review of nationally recognised training products and services
- Promoting the advantages to be gained from education, recognised training and lifelong learning for all South Australians
- Providing advice on the recognition of skills and qualifications gained overseas.

The FTH Skills Council has developed a focus of identifying and implementing practical actions to facilitate the development of the existing workforce and improve workforce participation.

The Board of Directors comprises three employer organisations and three employee organisations and is underpinned by the:

- Tourism and Hospitality Standing Committee
- Food and Beverage Standing Committee.

At the time of this report, the Executive Officer is supported by an Office Manager and:

- Project Manager - South Australian Meat Industry
- Project Manager - South Australian Wine Industry.

During the period of the South Australian Meat Industry Workforce Development Project, the FTH Skills Council was active in a number of other workforce development projects involving the Food and Beverage Sectors including jointly leading a number of training, trade and skills recognition initiatives.

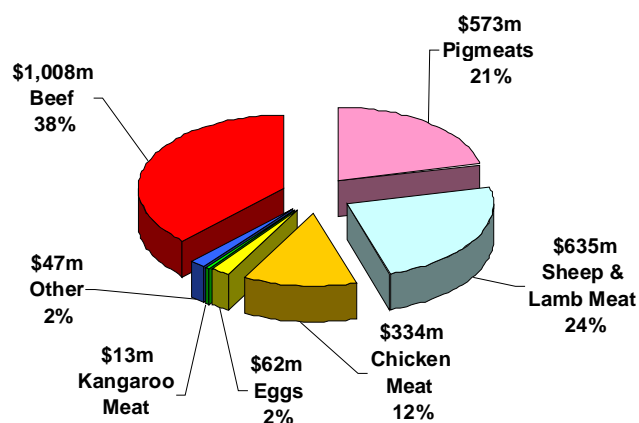


## 1.2 The South Australian Meat Industry

Collectively, the pork, poultry, beef and sheep meat industries employ approximately 4500 people and contribute more than \$2.5 billion to South Australia's Gross Food Revenue<sup>1</sup> (2005/2006). This has increased from a value of \$1.8 billion in 2000/2001.

While Beef and Sheep are currently the largest contributors, significant growth has occurred in both the pork and poultry sectors and this growth is expected to continue and/or escalate.

Livestock Gross Food Revenue 2005-2006 (PIRSA Food Scorecard)



Each of the major livestock industries has developed strategic plans to encourage that growth, based on the directions of major businesses within each value chain.

### Poultry Meat

The South Australian poultry meat industry is on the cusp of significant expansion. The industry has set itself the target of almost tripling its Gross Food Revenue by the year 2015. In particular it aims to:

- Increase the value of interstate exports from \$40 million to \$500 million
- Increase number of birds processed from 42 million birds to 90 million birds per annum
- Increase SA's contribution to national production from 9% to greater than 20%
- Increase employees from approximately 2000 to 3200.

<sup>1</sup> GFR is a measure of the economic contribution of the food industries developed by *Food South Australia* of the South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Resources (PIRSA)

## Beef

The South Australian beef industry is seeking to increase its \$792 million industry (02/03) to \$1.2 billion by 2015. The industry aims to have South Australia become a net interstate exporter of domestic product, with key targets to underpin the growth including:

- 15% increase in production off 10% reduced land base (28% increase in efficiency)
- 40% increase in total processing
- 30% increase in exports (with a 10% increase in average price)
- 5% increase in apparent domestic per capita consumption.

## Pork

The South Australian pork industry is also committed to growth, with key targets for 2010 including:

- Increase capital investment to result in weekly slaughter numbers growing from 18,000 to 27,000
- Increase the number of sows in production from 53,800 to 76,300
- Develop new product and value adding to increase dressed weight value from \$2.40 to \$2.70 kg.

## Sheep

The South Australian sheep industry is seeking to increase its contribution to \$1.5 billion by 2010. Key targets include:

- Increasing production to 160 million kgs of meat and 85 million kgs of wool.

## Immediate and future workforce needs

Existing and projected growth in each industry is accompanied by a current and future need to expand the workforce. A recent 'ballpark' audit of major processing works in South Australia identified an immediate need for more than 600 workers (both skilled and unskilled) and an additional 1800 employees within five years.

Company	Immediate Need	Need within 5 years
Inghams	350	800
Primo		200
Tey's	50	
T&R	50	350
Normanville	100	
Tatiara Meat Company	50	150
Retail Sector		200
Wholesale Sector		100
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>1800</b>

## Section 2: Background to the Project

### 2.1 Workforce issues nation-wide, state-wide and cross-industry

This project evolved at a time when Australia is enjoying almost one and a half decades of uninterrupted growth and historically strong labour market conditions.

With robust employment – the lowest unemployment rate for more than three decades – the nation is none-the-less confronted by a projected economic slowdown due to the impacts of population ageing.

Although this ‘ageing’ began long ago when people first acquired influence over fertility and mortality – there has more recently been rapid acceleration due to lifestyle and social influences. While impacts are being felt nationwide in all social structures, the burden on the Australian workforce is producing significant implications for business.

Faced with a growing shortage of skilled (and unskilled) workers, many industries are predicting difficulty in just continuing to produce at existing levels of output – let alone being able to grow to meet the consumption demands of Australian and export markets. All major industries and occupations across most Australian regions are expressing concern about an approaching crisis point.

In South Australia – which already has a higher proportion of older people than most other Australian States – the issue has been exacerbated by a tendency for migration patterns to disproportionately remove the State’s youth.

In the Australian Meat Industry – which has long been hampered by a poor public image and other workforce issues – the new fierceness of competition from other industries is being keenly felt. Other industries are developing and implementing innovative practices to adapt their workforce recruitment and retention practices to better compete in the employment marketplace and, in many ways, the Meat Industry has slipped even further behind.

#### The South Australian Meat Industry

For the South Australian Meat Industry, this has meant that attracting employees to meet current and future demands, particularly in the processing sector, is of great concern.

There is a shortage of both skilled and unskilled labour, which is exacerbated by the fact most processing facilities are located in regional areas. The retail sector, particularly butchery, also has difficulty in attracting and retaining staff and a problem unique to the sheep industry is the limited availability of shearers and shed hands.

The limited pool of available labour has resulted in a competitive demand for managers and staff of production facilities (particularly in the intensive industries) and the retail sector, which is consequently raising the cost of labour.

The South Australian Meat Industry, therefore, was rightfully considered to be ‘in trouble’ and in need of specific, structured assistance at the commencement of this project.

## 2.2 Genesis of the FTH Skills Council SA Meat Industry Project

In mid 2003, Food Training SA<sup>2</sup> was approached jointly by the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union (AMIEU) and the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) with concerns about significant workforce recruitment and retention issues within the South Australian Meat industry.

**Meat Retailers** were reporting difficulty in attracting and retaining apprentices, which was thought to be largely due to:

- A poor public perception of the industry
- Lack of guidance or support for those school-leavers who showed interest in becoming a tradesman Butcher
- Low wages
- Poorly articulated career pathways.

**Meat Processing Plants** were reporting risks to both sustainability and growth from:

- Very high levels of staff turnover
- Subsequent escalating recruitment costs
- Resultant cost-price pressures, which threatened the industry's capacity to compete in international markets
- The entry of countries with traditionally lower cost structures and less workforce turnover (through the imminent advent of free trade agreements with several key export partners).

Food Training SA responded by initially convening an industry based representative group to investigate the claims and, finding the concerns to be widespread, commissioned an independent field assessment with financial support from the Department of Primary Industries and Resources of South Australia (PIRSA).

This preliminary report<sup>3</sup> provided the basis for further analysis by Food Training SA and a report to the Meat Industry Development Board (MIDB)<sup>4</sup>, recommended the establishment of a broad reaching strategy for change across the South Australian Meat Industry.

Key principles of the recommendation called for stakeholder involvement from both the retailing and processing sectors and on-going commitment from employers, the union and the South Australian Government.

Upon the establishment of the Food Tourism and Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Council (FTH Skills Council) in 2005, this organisation took the helm to generate this commitment and effect the change.

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<sup>2</sup> *The SA Food and Beverage Industry Training Council Inc* (trading as Food Training SA) was at that time an industry training advisory body for the food and beverage processing and manufacturing industry in SA. Since the establishment of the FTH Skills Council, Food Training SA has evolved as an organisation providing more direct training support to individuals and organisations.

<sup>3</sup> Lilley, D (2003) *Recruitment & Labour Retention in the South Australian Meat Industry*

<sup>4</sup> Food Training SA (June 2004) *Summary Report on Recruitment & Labour Retention in the South Australian Meat Industry*

The FTH Skills Council worked with a cross-industry reference group to further explore the issues and develop appropriate response mechanisms.

In December 2005 a comprehensive proposal was presented to the South Australian Government as a joint initiative with the MIDB.

The proposal clearly identified several key workforce issues that required systemic change to sustain the industry and underpin its projected growth. These issues included:

- Attraction and retention of workers
- Cultural support for Migrant workers
- Improved management skills for middle managers including staff selection, induction, performance management and mentoring etc
- Wages and conditions
- Quality training system.

The proposal was successful in obtaining funding of \$280,000 to further develop and implement the range of identified strategies.

The bulk of this funding was provided through the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) under the SA Works program, supported by a cash contribution of \$80,000 from Food Training SA.

## Section 3: The Project

### 3.1 Project Management, Governance and Collaboration

A key feature of the project – and ultimately a key reason for its success – was the energy, drive and commitment contributed by people within the FTH Skills Council, within the meat industry and within stakeholder Government departments.

Teams were formed at various platforms to deal with issues collectively and individually - and at State, regional and local levels as appropriate.

#### 3.1.1 The Project Team

##### 3.1.1.1 The FTH Skills Council Board and Executive Officer

The FTH Skills Council Board and Executive Officer drew on previous experience in workforce development initiatives to guide the project. Some elements of the development framework were in fact predicated on the *Cooks Workforce Development Project* which had been funded by DFEEST in 2005 to significantly improve the retention of cooks in the Hospitality Industry.

Likewise, it is considered that the structure and focus of the *Meat Industry Workforce Development Project* will form a 'best practice' template for other industry sectors within the FTH Skills Council portfolio – and also to other industries.

##### 3.1.1.2 The Project Manager

A Project Manager was appointed to drive the project, with responsibility for strategic planning and managing governance and consultation aspects.

This included researching regional workforce issues and adapting identified Best Practice models from within the Meat Industry and other industries to develop the attraction, performance, retention and sustainability strategies. A key aspect of this role was liaison within the industry and with Governments and other stakeholder organisations to secure financial contributions and other support mechanisms for specific activities in Phase 1 – and to attract funding for Phase 2.

This role also had specific accountability for the establishment and support of forums, reference groups and a Ministerial Advisory Committee – together with supervision of the Change Management Agent and a team of external consultants engaged for specific functions such as workshops and development of resources.

##### 3.1.1.3 Industry Champion/Change Agent

This role operated for approximately two-thirds of the project. The early planning stages of the project had clearly identified a need to create a cooperative approach among employers within the meat processing and meat retailing sectors to provide unilateral commitment to industry change.

A Change Agent was therefore appointed to build trust and foster an environment where all parties worked together to address common issues. This role also coordinated focus groups to keep the project 'on track' in terms of meeting real industry needs.

### 3.1.2 The Governance Structure

During the conceptual stage of the project, it was clearly recognised that the complexity of implementing a number of linked strategies would require consistent and fluent interrelations between a range of government agencies, companies and individuals.

It was also acknowledged that gaining the confidence of the industry was paramount to success – that work undertaken during the project would need to be recognised as ‘real’ in terms of having practical applications.

The governance structure for the project was therefore developed to comprise a number of groups, each tasked with a range of operational and advisory roles – and each clustered to include representation across key stakeholder groups.

#### 3.1.2.1 The Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force

The initial reference group convened by Food Training SA provided the basis to form a Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force under the auspice of the FTH Skills Council.

The role of this group was to oversee the general direction of the project and its membership was drawn from industry employer and employee representatives; producers; and Government agencies.

The Task Force met regularly to endorse the project strategies and each member of this group contributed significant time and energy to ensure activities were relevant and prioritised according to the needs of the industry.

The team approach adopted by employer and employee representatives, together with the Government support representatives, was instrumental in producing successful project outcomes.

Membership comprised:

Graham Smith	State Secretary, Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)
Paul Sandercock	Executive Director, Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC)
Jack Langberg	Principal Policy Officer, SA Primary Industries & Resources (PIRSA)
Sue Wheal	Producer (Sheep,SE) & Meat Industry Development Board (MIDB)
Simon Gierke	Policy Officer, SA Primary Industries & Resources (PIRSA)
Bill Giles	Policy Officer, SA Primary Industries & Resources (PIRSA) [Retired]
John Cassebohm	Executive Officer, FTH Skills Council
Kerryn Smith	Project Manager, Meat Industry Workforce Development Project

Profiles of the Task Force members are provided at Appendix A.

### 3.1.2.3 The State-wide Meat Industry Steering Group

This group had a particular focus on the Growth Strategy component of the project, providing advice on the development of relevant elements and support during implementation phases.

Membership comprised a number of key employers and support agencies from Local and State Government. As the project progressed, key members of this group remained to support the growth of the industry through the Task Force.

### 3.1.2.4 The South East Local Workforce Development Group

This group was formed to ensure a localised focus on the implementation of project strategies within the South East region.

The group drew on local knowledge and engaged appropriate networks in planning processes to ensure the strategies were self-sustaining in the longer term.

The group comprised key employers; regional support organisations; and job support and placement agencies. Much of the ongoing consultation occurred through individual meetings and telephone discussion as required. Members of the group were also invited to relevant activities and events as the project progressed.

### 3.1.2.5 Ministerial Advisory Committee

A Ministerial Advisory Committee was initially identified as part of the governance structure to provide guidance to the Minister for Further Education and Employment on significant issues which were impacting on productivity; impeding predicted growth; or threatening the long term sustainability of the South Australian Meat Industry.

Issues relating to the Skilled Migration Program as it affects the Meat Industry in South Australia was expected to become a key focus for this group. However, in eventuality, the formal Advisory Committee was not formed because the Minister felt it would duplicate other existing activity.



### 3.1.3 Collaboration and Consultation

#### 3.1.3.1 Links to other Government Initiatives

Throughout the project strong linkages were maintained with a wide range of other stakeholder organisations.

These stakeholders were consulted on the objectives and progress of the overall project, but were also considered valuable collaboration partners on specific elements.

Key consultation stakeholders included:

- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- New Apprenticeship Centres
- Job Network Agencies
- Food Industry Development Officers (PIRSA)
- Local Government Association and District Councils in the South East
- Regional SA Works Coordinators
- Regional Development Boards
- Area Consultative Committees
- Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

#### 3.1.3.2 Consultation Network

Although the project called heavily on the *Meat Industry Workforce Development Project Task Force* [Section 3.1.2.1] the project management team developed an extensive consultation network that was used frequently throughout the project as a 'real world' sounding board.

Personnel from key industry employers such as Primo, Teys Bros, Tatiara Meat Company, Dalriada Meat Company and T&R Pastoral gave freely of their time for this process and participated in Pilot Programs to test strategies and tools developed as part of the project.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) partnered many components of the project, both financially and in terms of contributing to planning processes.

The National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council (MINTRAC) was also a valuable contributor, particularly during the development of resources. MINTRAC invited the Project Manager to present on the project's key activities at the *'Training in a Global Environment'* 2007 MINTRAC National Conference.

DFEEST Quality Directorate also invited project staff to present at the 2007 DFEEST Training Sector Forum *'Engaging in Excellence – A Commitment to Meeting Skills Development Needs'*.

## 3.2 The South East Pilot Program

### 3.2.1 'Butcher for a Day' Promotion

A 'Butcher for a Day' promotion was held in Mount Gambier on 3 March 2006 – principally as a means of attracting applicants for the School Based New Apprenticeships Program – but open to all ages.

The Naracoorte Lucindale Council and Mount Gambier TAFE College provided facilities for the event and more than 50 participants were given the opportunity to test their skills at making kebabs, sausages and hamburger patties. The event was promoted as a 'fun activity' with prizes and giveaways, but the emphasis was on promoting the Butcher Trade as 'a job with a future'.

### 3.2.2 School Based New Apprenticeships Program

In conjunction with the 'Butcher for a Day' program, major promotions were undertaken in Mount Gambier, Naracoorte and at the Lucindale Field days to attract applicants for School Based New Apprenticeships (SBNA) in meat retailing; and traineeships or general employment in meat processing.

*Maxima Group Training (Maxima)* and *Group Training Employment (GTE)* subsequently received 19 applications to participate in School Based New Apprenticeships in retail butchery. Twelve students across Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Grant and Millicent High Schools commenced the program in April 2006 and 11 remained with the program.

TAFE SA Regency Meat Studies Section was responsible for the training delivery and work based assessment through the Mount Gambier TAFE Industrial Kitchen facility and the training was supported by work placements under the auspice of GTE and Maxima.

The students worked one day a week with a range of host employers including large and small retailers from Naracoorte, Penola, Mt Gambier and Millicent.

Despite the fact the training venue at Mount Gambier TAFE presented travel challenges for more remote participants, it was identified as the most appropriate venue for the Meat Retailing Apprenticeships because of its proximity to the two group employers (Maxima and GTE); host employers; and the majority of students. Transport difficulties for two students were overcome by arranging support through the *Limestone Coast Regional Development Board* and the local branch of the *Australian Red Cross*.

The industry felt a *Flexible Learning Facility* on site at a processing plant was a more appropriate training venue for those entering the meat processing industry and this is likely to be used for future intakes.

The South East Pilot SBNA was based on a similar program which had been hosted by Maxima in the Adelaide CBD and retained 18 of 20 initial participants; so long term successful outcomes are expected from this program.

Eight participants have moved into Year 2 of the program and another six are currently in Year 1.

TAFESA will continue the meat industry SBNA program in this region in 2008.

### 3.2.3 Retention Forums

Retention of existing workers was a key focus of the Workforce Development Project and initial planning identified the need for a joint industry/union *Training for Retention Roadshow* which could assist regionally based processors and retailers with Professional Development strategies.

More specifically, this component of the project was designed to encourage the uptake of management practices and support mechanisms which would allow the industry to 'keep its good workers'. [The Retention Roadshow Program is further discussed at Section 3.3]

The initial design of the roadshow was based on collaborative planning by the FTH Skills Council, MLA and the Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force.

The South East region was used to pilot the program in two forums:

- at Naracoorte on 13 September 2006 (and)
- at Mount Gambier on 14 September 2006.

The forums were co-hosted by the FTH Skills Council, MLA, AMIC, AMIEU, PIRSA and a producer from the region who was also a member of the Project Task Force and representative of the MIDB.

A total of 33 people participated in the forums, representing:

- 4 meat processing plants
- 18 meat retailers (supermarkets and butchers)

together with Job Network and Group Training Agencies; Registered Training Organisations; Local Government and Community Development organisations; stakeholder State Government departments and local media.

Feedback from participants was used to further develop the roadshow format, plan practical resources useful to the industry and develop other strategies for future implementation.

In particular, the forums provided industry perspectives about how to:

- promote the meat industry to improve its image in the community
- attract labour
- retain staff
- develop capability in employees and middle management
- build a better workplace culture
- better support employers in workforce development.

The discussion period was valuable in confirming that the project was 'on track' to address the issues recognised as having highest priority within the industry.

The first of the *SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Resources* [see Section 3.9] was launched during the forum and participants were invited to nominate priority needs for further publications.

## 3.3 Training-for-Retention Roadshow

One of the five key performance indicators for the project called for the use of focus groups to develop appropriate *tools to assist management within the industry to embrace and lead change through improved management practices*.

The *Training for Retention Roadshow* was developed as one of those tools – using input from focus groups to design an initial program and feedback from pilot forums in the South East to adapt the program where required.

### 3.3.1 Program Design

#### 3.3.1.1 Highlighted issues

Issues identified as priorities for attention during the Roadshow were:

- The industry was considered not to have a strong training ethic and didn't really understand the need for change
- Employers generally didn't fully appreciate or utilise the skills of an Apprentice
- There was a need to create an environment where newly trained entrants were encouraged to further develop their career pathways
- Basic management skills within the industry required development.

#### 3.3.1.2 Strategic Approach

Further consultation about the identified issues led to the development of strategic pathways that addressed the need to:

- Stimulate recognition within the industry that the general image of the industry, skill shortages and labour availability had to be addressed – and that they needed to be the agents for change (with the project facilitating and guiding, rather than actioning)
- Work at the right level to ensure the industry understood the project and the retention program
- Promote the benefits of training (and what trainees are being taught) so that employers could use the full range of skills available to them
- Promote the Industry Recognition process as a way to acknowledge the trade skills and knowledge of existing employees who have been in the industry for a long time
- Assist in diagnosing the business needs of the industry and be able to provide pathways to assistance for business owners, managers and staff
- Identify and establish a suitable mentoring process for the industry
- Research and profile 'Best Practice' examples of 'retention strategies' from within the industry
- Promote a greater inclusiveness across the whole industry.

## 3.3.2 Program Format

### 3.3.2.1 The Agenda

1. Meat Industry Workforce Development Project Presentation  
*Kerryn Smith, Project Manager, FTH Skills Council*
2. Snapshot of the Australian Meat Industry  
*Kerrie Abba, Meat & Livestock Australia*
3. Book Launch: How to become an employer of choice in an industry of choice  
*Graham Smith, AMIEU*
4. Opportunities for You – Implementing Change in the SA Meat Industry  
*Graeme Elliott, Project Officer, FTH Skills Council*
5. General Discussion and Feedback  
*Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force*
6. Take Pride in Your Industry!  
*Paul Sandercock, AMIC*

### 3.3.2.2 Snapshot of the Australian Meat Industry

The *Snapshot of the Australian Meat Industry* presented by the MLA centred on the findings of a series of national forums that identified a need to look at measuring and costing staff turnover within the Meat Industry.

The presentation included advice and guidance on:

- How to measure staff turnover
- The cost and impact of staff turnover
- A draft strategy for maintaining an effective skilled workforce.

The presentation also included a description of a series of *Plant Initiated Projects* supported by the MLA in a range of meat processing plants across Australia. The aggregated outcomes of these projects generated a *Guiding Framework for Job Embeddedness* which includes generic strategies for:

- Improving a person's fit within a job, an organisation or community
- Building links that better connect a person to their work and location
- Intensifying the sacrifices a person would need to make if they were to leave their job or locality.

Key recommendations delivered by the MLA during the presentation involved:

- Improving collection and analysis of turnover data
- Modifying use of exit interviews
- Setting targets and establishing managerial accountabilities in regard to retention
- Developing and communicating an 'employee value proposition'

- Increasing community-based activities in relevant labour markets
- Selecting more rigorously, based on 'fit' to the organisation
- Emphasising teamwork and employee engagement
- Training more intensively and broadly
- Increasing organisational communication
- Offering employment security guarantees
- Rewarding based on organisational performance
- Improving job design and working environments.

### 3.3.2.3 Opportunities for you: Implementing change in the SA Meat Industry

This presentation outlined a range of development opportunities available to new and existing employees in the SA Meat Industry and encouraged participants to consider accessing the opportunities – either for themselves or others.

Opportunities discussed included:

- *Supervisor Training* (including mentoring on the job)
- *Induction Team Workshop* (to train key people in effective processes)
- *Career Development Workshop* (to train key people in effective management of staff career progression)
- *2007 Young Leaders Program* (a leadership/management program for emerging young leaders)
- *2007 Australian School Based New Apprenticeships Program* (calling for students and host employers for the program in the South East region).

### 3.3.2.4 General discussion and Forum Feedback

This session provided opportunities for participants to discuss specific issues and barriers to the attraction and retention of an appropriate workforce.

Information gained during the discussion period was used to enhance the content for subsequent forums – but also to assist in planning for the second phase of the project (expected to be implemented in later 2007 and 2008) and to better inform advice to the Minister on widespread issues which may more appropriately fall within the Government sphere of control.

### 3.3.2.5 Distribution of Resources

Resources developed during the project [see Section 3.9] were distributed as part of the presentations and, importantly, the forum approach provided an opportunity to guide their use.

The resources drew highly positive feedback and early forums were instrumental in developing topics for the subsequent suite of documents.

### 3.3.3 Ongoing Development

The 'Training for Retention' Roadshows are continuing to evolve in response to industry feedback. Key adaptations have included or will include:

- A suggested Roadshow plan aimed at providing a range of information and support for Business Health and Support, staff development and the management of different cultures. This plan includes advice on key retention pathways which link to a range of resources that are easy to understand and use.
- Liaison with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) and Immigration SA to discuss the most appropriate management strategies regarding Skilled Migrants
- National involvement by the MLA and AMIC in delivering the Retention Roadshow
- Ongoing consultation with the MLA and MINTRAC about the development of an in-house *Supervisors Training Program*, with pilot workshops delivered in the South East.

## 3.4 Collaborative Employment Model

Many plants in the South Australian Meat Industry have reported extraordinarily high turnover rates in the very early stages of employment.

In particular, recent analysis by the MLA of 2006 research<sup>5</sup> found completion rates for traineeships across the national Meat Industry were declining, even though commencement rates were much higher than in recent years.

Some plants in South Australia have reported figures as high as one in every two new employees quitting in the first 13 weeks on the job<sup>6</sup> and general national research in 2005<sup>7</sup> found turnover rates from 35% to 90% (average 56.5%) and an annual turnover bill for an average plant ranging from \$650,000 to \$1.3 million!

The need for collaborative arrangements that attract and support people in new jobs in new locations is significant across most regions of South Australia.

### 3.4.1 Developing the model

An *Employers Forum* was held in Northern Adelaide on 1 March 2006, hosted jointly by the FTH Skills Council, PIRSA, TAFESA and the Yorke Peninsula Regional Development Board. The forum clearly articulated significant employment demands for existing operations and planned growth.

More specifically, the (then) requirement of Primo Smallgoods for 150 new employees provided the project with the opportunity to develop and implement a *Collaborative Employment Model* which would attract, engage, train and mentor a group of people who were suitable to work in the South Australian Meat industry.

Initial planning involved extensive discussion with local development agencies and the meat processing plants which resulted in a strategic approach to:

- Engage national representatives from AMIC, DEWR and Teys Brothers Rockhampton in the planning and development processes
- Identify the most appropriate strategies through liaising with the Regional Development Board
- Identify the extent of the immediate employment needs of meat processing plants
- Discuss opportunities for flexibility in working arrangements for new workers
- Establish a *Flexible Learning Facility* at Dalriada Meat
- Provide a two-week *Pre-Skilling Residential Program* for potential employees
- Identify an appropriate agent to regionally manage the recruitment, selection and placement processes
- Consider the accommodation and travel needs of people who chose to take up employment within the region.

<sup>5</sup> Source data: NCVET 2006

<sup>6</sup> Fact Sheet: *How to keep employees through the first 3 months* FTH Skills Council 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Industry Statistics MLA 2007



### 3.4.2 Key elements of the Collaborative Employment Model

The *Collaborative Employment Model* is so named because it relies upon the combined commitment of:

- Employers
- Employment Services
- A managing agent
- Registered Training Organisations and Training Facilities
- Jobseekers.

Initially at least, it also required Government funding bodies to be part of the model, but has been designed to be self-sustaining in the long term.

The model (as shown on page 27) is based on a principle of staging the recruitment-to-employment process, so that at each stage only employees with the motivation, aptitude and skills capability progress to the next stage.

#### 3.4.2.1 Candidate Nomination

The first step in the process is the nomination of candidates who are considered potentially suitable for the program. This involves organisations such as:

- Job Network Agencies
- English Language Services (ELS)
- LM Training Specialists Ltd (LM)
- Department of Employment Services (DOES)
- Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).

The nominating organisations provide details about candidates and assist with the preparation of Résumés to submit to the managing regional agent.

#### 3.4.2.2 Candidate Referrals

The managing agent assumes a valuable 'gatekeeper' role, coordinating the pre-screening of candidates' applications and only forwarding prospective candidates to progress to the next stage of the selection process.

The number and timing of these referrals to staggered intakes is dependent on the regional demand for new employees.

It should be noted that any job placement fees eventually applicable to candidates are applied to the originating agency, rather than to the managing agent.

### 3.4.2.3 Two-day Industry Awareness Program

To ensure that jobseekers fully appreciate the nature of employment opportunities and working conditions in the Meat Industry, all referred candidates are required to attend a *Two-Day Industry Awareness Program* prior to entry to the next stage

This curtails the investment in people who are clearly not suited to the industry – or find that the industry is not suitable for them – prior to more comprehensive training or the expense of commencing employment.

The Two-Day Industry Awareness Program involves:

- Introduction to the Industry (includes an industry promotional video)
- An informal 10-minute interview to confirm each candidate's place in the two-day program
- A field trip to a specific processing plant to gain an appreciation of workplace requirements and learn more about the specific company
- *Introductory Meat Industry* and *Multicultural Work Site* sessions
- A tour of the *Meat Training Facility* at TAFESA Regency Campus
- A feedback session and processing of participants who will progress to the next phase, including fittings for personal protective equipment provided 'on loan'.

There is no fee to participants for the awareness program and transport for the field visits is arranged by the managing agent.

Medical clearances required by employers are funded by individual companies.

### 3.4.2.4 Two-Week Pre-Skilling Workshop

Participants who continue to show aptitude and interest in employment in the meat industry then progress to a Two-Week Pre-Skilling Workshop.

This pre-employment training is designed to provide an appropriate underpinning of soft (interpersonal) and hard (practical) skills to ensure those entering the industry have the necessary skills and attributes to succeed in the industry.

The training concentrates heavily on 'hands on' learning and, wherever possible, soft skills are integrated with this.

The training during this workshop is more formal and conducted by the Meat Studies team at TAFESA Regency Campus.

During training, participants gain an overview of the industry and skills in:

- Hygiene & Sanitation Practices, Occupational Health & Safety procedures
- Care of personal equipment
- Sharpening knives, and
- Specific skills such as 'Boning small stock carcasses (pork)'.

It is only on successful completion of this two week course that jobseekers will be placed with a company.

### 3.4.2.5 Job Placement Support

When participants are placed into a job, the induction process includes 'buddying' with a work-site mentor – in addition to the intensive post placement support they receive through a *Settlement Support* person provided by the managing agent.

After 4 weeks probation, all new employees are evaluated and those found to be suitable and willing, are offered ongoing development through a *Meat Industry Traineeship* program.

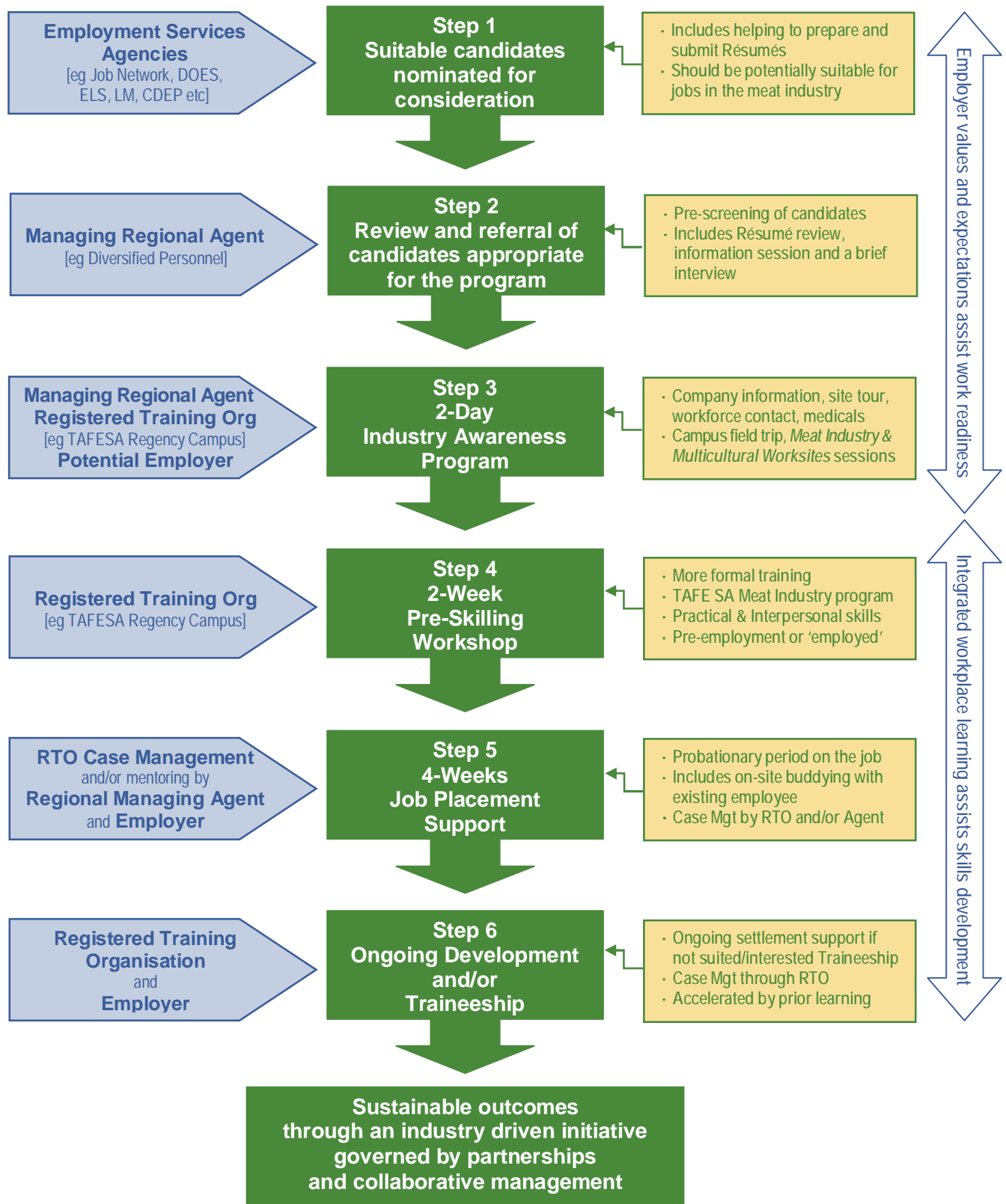
People who are found at this stage not to be suited to a Traineeship – or choose not to take up the offer – are entitled to seek further Settlement Support. This is conditional upon their Job Network provider being willing to negotiate and pay for personnel of the managing agent to provide this service on their behalf.

### 3.4 2.6 Ongoing Learning Support

New employees engaged in a Traineeship through TAFESA are managed, tracked and reported on through TAFESA's *Case Management* approach.

This service oversees the technical development, stakeholder management and personal and professional development of each learner.

Figure 3.4.2 Collaborative Employment Model



## 3.5 Collaborative Employment Program in the Workplace

### 3.5.1 Primo Smallgoods

The Primo Smallgoods processing plant at Port Wakefield provided the first opportunity to apply the *Collaborative Employment Model*. The model had, in fact, been specifically designed around Primo's need to recruit 150 employees within an 18 month period to accommodate a planned expansion at the facility. There was an immediate need to recruit at least 50 employees.

During March and April 2006 the FTH Skills Council Executive Officer and Meat Industry Workforce Development Project Manager were involved in intensive negotiations with Primo and with Job Network Agencies; other employment service providers; training providers; Government agencies; and regional development stakeholders.

By May 2006, the model was ready to be trialled and candidate nominations were called for a 24 May closing date.

*Diversified Personnel Pty Ltd* was appointed as the managing agent. This company had a successful track record in the placement of employees in the meat industry, particularly in rural and remote areas of South Australia.

*Diversified Personnel* screened the initial nominations against the specific selection criteria nominated by Primo and selected more than 50 people to be referred to the next stage. Candidates were referred to two separate intakes for the *Two-Day Industry Awareness Program*:

- |                  |         |                    |
|------------------|---------|--------------------|
| • First Intake:  | 12 June | Primo visit        |
|                  | 14 June | Medical            |
|                  | 15 June | Regency TAFE Tour  |
| • Second Intake: | 26 June | Primo visit        |
|                  | 28 June | Medical            |
|                  | 29 June | Regency TAFE Tour. |

Medicals were provided by Primo; the initial information session included a supplied video about the Primo Smallgoods company; and the site tour was conducted by appropriate Primo personnel, with *Diversified* responsible for transport arrangements.

The *Two-Week Pre-Skilling Workshop for Meat Processing Training* was conducted for two separate groups:

- 2 groups of 16      Week commencing 19 and 26 June 2006
- 2 groups of 16      Week commencing 03 and 14 July 2006

Of the two groups commencing on 19 June 2006, one had already received funding from *SA Works*, so that group did not participate in the initial screening process and were not available exclusively to Primo (although it was accepted the company would likely secure employees from that group).

The cost per participant in programs not funded by *SA Works* was \$750. DFEEST had provided \$21,600 to TAFESA to underwrite the cost of the training, with the balance being met through the Job Network's jobseeker account. Primo funded the screening and mentoring provided by *Diversified Personnel*.

### 3.5.1.1 Primo Outcomes

Of the first group of 15, 13 remained to the end of training – and of that number 8 secured and remained in employment.

Of the second group of 16, all 16 remained to the end of the course – and 8 were placed in jobs with Primo. Placement of the remaining 8 was delayed because of internal issues at Primo (the company had engaged 12 staff who were displaced by the closure of Conroy's Smallgoods at Port Pirie and there was a concurrent reduction of stock coming into the plant for processing).

A third group of 20 was delayed from entering the program until the 8 pre-skilled jobseekers were placed. Negotiations were undertaken with T&R Pastoral at Murray Bridge and most of the program graduates were employed.

### 3.5.2 Planned South East Pilot

The FTH Skills Council undertook an extensive planning and consultation process in an attempt to recreate the *Collaborative Employment Model* in the South East, using *Group Training South East* (GTE) as the managing agent and TAFESA as the registered training organisation, operating out of a *Dalriada Flexible Learning Centre* at Keith.

The model was adapted to accommodate the specific issues of the region:

- Job Network Providers were to be given a tour of processing plants in the region (*Dalriada, Teys Bros* and *Tatiara*) to gain an enhanced understanding of the operations, jobs profiles and required skills in order to better identify appropriate people to nominate for the program.
- Because of the regional profile and exceptional retention issues, early nomination of candidates would focus on under-employed people or people with a recent work history rather than long-term unemployed people who would be targeted in later stages of the program.
- An *Industry Awareness Day* would include more interaction with meat industry employees during the site visit – who would not only provide better insight to the benefits of the industry, but also gain additional pride in their workplace and job through the exchange.
- Employers would be asked to commit to employment of jobseekers assessed as appropriate to progress to the *Two-Week Pre-Skilling Training* – who would actually be employed during this training process as part of their probationary period.
- The *Two-Week Pre-Skilling Training* at Dalriada would include a series of short placements in the plant, working for two or four hour periods alongside a skilled worker who would have considerable input to the training process.
- Each internal work rotation would be followed by integrated formal training – practicing skills seen in action and supported by theory in related topics such as *Overview the Meat Industry; Follow Safe Work Policies & Procedures; Apply Hygiene & Sanitation Practices; Maintain Personal Equipment; Sharpen Knives*.

- People who successfully completed the Pre-Skilling Workshop and progressed to a Traineeship would have their training schedule for the *Certificate III in Meat Processing* accelerated by acknowledging the pre-training achievements.
- GTE's role as managing agent would be restricted to the earlier stages of the program with TAFESA responsible for the ongoing training and retention support through its *Case Management* approach.
- Staff previously involved in the work experience rotations would 'buddy' and mentor the new employees to facilitate retention.
- On completion of the Two-Week Pre-Skilling Workshop and transfer to Traineeships, an *Evaluation Forum* would enable all involved staff and participants to provide feedback which could be used to tailor future intakes.

### 3.5.2.1 Outcomes of the Planned South East Pilot

5000 under-employed and unemployed people throughout the South East of South Australia and Victoria were contacted to draw more than 200 Expressions of Interest in the program.

More than 50 of these people were initially felt to be suitable candidates. However, further processing – including interview, participation in Industry Awareness and Medical Review – reduced this number to 25 candidates suitable for Pre-Skilling Training.

The majority of these people (20) wanted to work at Teyes Bros at Naracoorte; three at Tatiara Meat Company at Bordertown and two at Dalriada Meat Works at Keith.

Due to the limited numbers for placement, it was decided not to proceed with the training at a Flexible Learning Centre at Dalriada, but to immediately place those wanting to work at Keith and Bordertown and seek alternative arrangements for those seeking employment in Naracoorte.

TAFESA assessed the small number of participants to be below the intake required for financial viability of the training course and case management support. The program was therefore delayed, pending a major recruitment drive in the South East for new candidates.

This (as yet) unsuccessful attempt to recreate the Collaborative Employment Model in the South East clearly identified specific issues [discussed at Section 5.2] such as the lack of:

- Appropriate accommodation for trainees during training
- Available housing for people interested in relocating to the region (from other Australian regions or overseas)
- Interest in relocating from people displaced from other processing plants (eg the closed Conroy's plant at Port Pirie).

The FTH Skills Council has committed to investigate these issues and to initiate surveys in conjunction with the AMIEU about retention issues and potential relocation incentives.

### 3.5.3 Limestone Coast 'Meat 20' Program

As part of the project's focus on designing specific strategies and programs for specific needs, the Collaborative Employment Model was adapted to form the '*Limestone Coast Meat 20 Program*'.

This program was designed to place 20 new recruits with appropriate aptitude and suitable entry-level skills into the Limestone Coast Meat Industry and required collaboration between:

- Employers
- Recruitment Agency
- Training Organisation (TAFE SA)
- South Australian Government (SA Works)
- Regional Development Board
- FTH Skills Council Meat industry Workforce Development Team.

As part of this program, 22 '*Faces in the Meat Industry*' posters will be produced to promote career options and job roles – as well as generate a sense of familiarity among potential recruits.

In order to participate, employers will be required to nominate 20 vacancies, including a profile of the role (and the tasks required) and provide a promotional pack with information about the company.

The positions will be listed through the *SA Works Career Development Centre* and recruitment agencies – and the promotional posters will be used to attract interest from potential candidates.

A pre-skilling program will be facilitated by the Mount Gambier TAFESA *Joint Food Program* and job placement (including on-the-job induction and settlement) will be coordinated through the Tatiara Meat Company and Tatiara Recruitment Service.

This program is currently being promoted and is due to run 23-27 July 2007.

Job Nominations	Program Promotion	Employability Program	Pre-skilling Program	Job Placement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers nominate 20 jobs and tasks required</li> <li>• Develop promotional information for potential employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posters: <i>Faces of the Meat Industry</i></li> <li>• 20 jobs promoted in the region</li> <li>• Registration day</li> <li>• Employer promotion kit distributed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on career competencies</li> <li>• Industry employer site visit</li> <li>• Presentation on employability skills &amp; expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hygiene &amp; sanitation principles &amp; practice</li> <li>• Generic knife handling skills</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Retail &amp; customer service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer interviews</li> <li>• Recruit selection</li> <li>• Job placement</li> <li>• On-the-job induction &amp; settlement</li> </ul>



### 3.5.4 T&R Pastoral Collaborative Employment Proposal

A proposal has been submitted to T&R Pastoral at Murray Bridge to recreate the collaborative employment model as developed for the planned pilot in the South East but using *Diversified Personnel Ltd* as the managing agent and for intensive post-placement support.

*Diversified Personnel* have a previous recruitment history with T&R and also have demonstrated they are capable of selecting appropriate candidates for the program through their association with the model in the Primo Pilot.

The proposal included 48 people (in 3 groups of 16) and was submitted as part of a more broad workforce development strategy proposed to the company.

This has not proceeded to date of this report, due to drought conditions and the subsequent unavailability of livestock.

## 3.6 Workforce Cultural Change Program

A key component of the Meat Industry Workforce Development Project was the development of a *Growth Strategy* that could support the industry's need for significantly increased employment over a five year period.

Change in *Workplace Culture* had been identified very early in the project as a critical success factor for ensuring the industry was able to acquire the workforce it required – both for current needs and predicted growth.

The FTH Skills Council initiated an extensive consultation program with both *T&R* at Murray Bridge and *Teys Bros* at Naracoorte to support the design of a *Workforce Cultural Change Program* that could assist the companies in attracting, retaining and developing staff.

The model needed to address all levels of the workforce and initiate activities across a range of functions including:

- Workforce Planning
- Induction
- Supervisor Training
- Career Development
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Age Management.

To successfully change organisational culture, the program needed to be based on a collaborative approach. In early 2007, the FTH Skills Council successfully negotiated with T&R, Teys Bros, Tatiara Meat Company, Primo Smallgoods and Inghams Enterprises to participate in the developed program.

It included a range of workshops, supported by mentoring for management; people working in Human Resources functions; Supervisors; leading hands; and other existing staff. The FTH Skills Council committed – not only to the design of the program – but also to delivery and evaluation.

### 3.6.1 The Cultural Change Workshops

#### For Management:

##### *Workforce Planning for Plant & HR Managers*

- Workshop delivered by the FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Team in conjunction with MLA
- This workshop guides managers through the essential steps for gathering data, identifying future workforce needs, profiling the existing workforce, and targeting talent to fill the gaps.

#### For the Induction Team

##### *Induction training for new employees in meat processing companies*

- A one day workshop by the FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Team
- Provides advice on how to set up an appropriate Induction Process.

## For Leading Hands

### *Supervisors Development Program*

- A one day workshop by the FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Team aimed at providing elementary skills for effective supervision and mentoring functions
- Designed to support further Supervisor Training and includes action learning processes
- Participants are supported by a Mentor through follow-up sessions to review and reflect on learnings.

## For Supervisors

### *Career Development Program for personnel wanting to plan a career pathway in the meat industry*

- A one day workshop by the FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Team aimed at Supervisors and other appropriate staff
- Designed to provide essential knowledge and skills required to support further in-house Career Development for staff.

## For Staff

### *Cross-Cultural Communication Training*

- The FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Team will assist sites to develop a Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) application to seek funding to provide training for selected staff on how to better communicate with other cultures in the workplace.

## 3.6.2 Age Management Training: Team Leaders & Experienced Workers

In a separate, but linked, component of the Workforce Cultural Change Program, the project developed a specific focus on addressing issues associated with the ageing workforce.

This had been identified as a significant issue for the Australian Meat Industry – given its traditional propensity toward a workforce dominated by young, fit males. Attention was directed at both the experienced more mature workers and the team leaders who managed them.

The ‘Age Management Training Program’ was designed to assist:

- **Team Leaders** to develop their skills in managing a multigenerational workforce through practical solutions and a working framework to retain experienced workers longer
- **Mature age workers, job seekers** and **retirees** by providing practical help to review their life goals, plan their retirement and work with employers to make the best use of their knowledge and experience.

Having successfully completed the training program through the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) on behalf of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) the Project Manager for the FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Project is accredited to run the following two workshops:

### Team Leader Program:

This one day program is designed to workshop the following components:

- Experienced employees provide a competitive advantage
- Workforce demographics in Australia
- Valuing talent of all ages
- Recruitment issues
- Retention and retirement options
- Creating a multigenerational workforce
- Embracing workplace flexibility
- Leveraging leadership
- Action planning and implementation.

### Experienced Worker Program:

This one day program is designed to workshop the following components:

- Workplace demographics in Australia
- The value of age diversity
- Employers of choice
- The benefits of working on, and a planned retirement
- Creating a personal career/life plan
- Embracing flexible working relationships
- Action planning and implementation.

## 3.6.3 Cross-Cultural Communication Strategy

In its efforts to address labour and skills shortages, the South Australian Meat Industry has increasingly turned to people with a Non-English Speaking Background – either through migrant visas or by drawing applications from within their own or surrounding communities.

While basic Workplace English Literacy and Numeracy programs are sometimes in place to support these employees, there is a clear need in the industry to address issues of cross-cultural communication – for the general workforce and, specifically, for front-line management.

Building cohesive work teams is paramount to addressing current recruitment and retention issues and the FTH Skills Council Meat Industry Workforce Development team has been working with a number of sites to facilitate access to this type of training.

As part of the Workforce Cultural Change Program, the Project Manager has discussed with a number of sites the opportunity to access *Workplace English Language Literacy (WELL)* funding grants to train staff in cross-cultural awareness and communication in order to create and maintain a cohesive and productive workforce in a diverse and multicultural environment.

### 3.6.4 Promotional Strategy

As part of the Workforce Cultural Change Program, the FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Team worked with the Communications and Marketing team at PIRSA to develop an appropriate promotional strategy for the program.

Key messages included:

- Plant export capabilities
- Inclusive employment strategies
- Diversity in the workplace
- Adoption of new organisational development plan.

#### 3.6.4.1 Career Pathways Promotional Strategy

Promoting career pathways for new and existing employees was clearly identified as a key element in effecting workplace cultural change throughout the South Australian Meat Industry and the project developed specific resources to facilitate this.

The resources included a booklet for employees; a multi-pathways promotional poster; and a Fact Sheet aimed at assisting employers to encourage and support the development of their workforce [see Section 3.9].

However, it was also recognised that a specific marketing campaign was required to guide the distribution and use of the resources in order to ensure they reached their intended audience.

The FTH Skills Council has commenced negotiations with the South Australian Government's Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) through personnel attached to the *Futures Connect* program to identify appropriate strategies for the distribution and use of the resources [this is further discussed in Section 6.1.5].

## 3.7 Workforce Cultural Change Program in the Workplace

### 3.7.1 Workforce Planning Workshop

In order to facilitate the implementation of workforce planning and cultural change initiatives, the FTH Skills Council worked in partnership with MLA to offer processors from South Australia and Western Australia a free Workforce Planning Workshop.

The workshop was led by a highly experienced and skilled consultant on 28 March 2007 and was attended by representatives from TEYS Bros, T&R Pastoral, Dalriada Meats, Tatiara Meat Company, Ingham's Enterprises and Harvey Beef – together with key personnel from DFEEST and PIRSA.

Topics covered during the day included:

- Workforce planning – what is it? What does it mean for the Meat Industry? What do I need to do?
- What is attraction and retention? What do I need to do to attract and retain good staff?
- What does it mean to be an 'employer of choice'?
- What mistakes does my organisation need to avoid which impact on attraction and retention?
- Why do some staff go and some stay? Exploration of individual differences and what you can do to influence good workers to stay
- Characteristics of managers that impact on retention
- Spotting scary times when staff quit – and knowing how to 'head it off at the pass'

Throughout the day participants took the first steps in developing their organisation's own workforce plan and collective feedback provided strong indications that these plans would be further developed on site.

In particular, participants agreed the workshop would provide an ideal framework and point of reference for them to review:

- Existing methods of attracting and recruiting staff
- Existing systems and policies used with current employees – to identify what encouraged people to stay and what prompted people to leave – so that appropriate improvements could be made
- Induction processes, communication techniques and other retention strategies
- Personal and professional development for supervisors and managers, with a specific training component.

Participants were strongly of the view that the type of planning support offered in the workshop was essential to the industry's future and that management had a significant role to play in effective workforce planning.

### 3.7.2 Case Management Workforce Planning

For many sites, the Workforce Planning Workshop hosted by the FTH Skills Council and MLA on 28 March 2007 proved to be catalyst for at least preliminary activity on developing site-specific workforce plans.

As a direct outcome of the workshop, the Project Manager of the FTH Skills Council's Meat Industry Workforce Development Project was invited to work directly with the HR Manager at Tatiara Meat Company (TMC) to review workforce issues and facilitate the design of an appropriate plan to address them.

This resulted in a two day field trip on 8-9 May 2007 which identified specific strategies that could be activated to develop an appropriate Human Resources Plan aligned with business and operational plans.

Review, discussion and strategy development focussed on 'the gap' between the company's current capability and future needs – giving consideration to:

- Staff turnover and absenteeism
- Employee work practices
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Induction processes
- Workplace communication
- Career pathways
- Attraction of new staff.

Toward the end of the field trip, identified issues and strategies were presented to Plant and Operational Managers, who agreed to support consideration and prioritisation of the strategies by the Management Team.

This section of the field trip was also attended by the Principal Policy Officer, Sheep and Beef, attached to PIRSA and the Food Industry Development Officer attached to the Limestone Coast Regional Development Board – who both agreed to also support the plan from a State and Regional perspective.

As a first step, TMC committed to participating in the '*Secrets to Supervisor Success*' workshop discussed in the next section [Section 3.7.3].

TMC and FTH Skills Council representatives have agreed to continue to work together to coordinate the resources required to further design and implement the identified strategies.

Broadening this case management approach to include other companies and other regions in the South Australian Meat Industry is recommended as a key component of Phase 2 of the project.

### 3.7.3 Supervisors' Workshops

Three '*Secrets to Supervisor Success*' workshops have been held to date attended by a total of 66 participants:

- 20 April 2007 T&R Lobethal – attended by 12 Plant and Front Line Management and Supervisory personnel
- 12 May 2007 T&R Murray Bridge – attended by 41 Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders
- 25 May 2007 Tatiara Meat Company, Bordertown – attended by 13 Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders.

The one-day workshops were designed to support transfer of learning from workshop to workplace so – although they followed a generic content plan – they were very much site specific in terms of responding to interaction with participants.

#### Aims of the workshop were to:

- Build a shared understanding of key aspects of a Supervisor's role, particularly in relation to leadership and fostering learning and development
- Recognise the value of the group's considerable knowledge and experience and find ways to tap into, and build on it
- Introduce a set of powerful models and tools as practical strategies for continuous improvement.

#### Targeted outcomes were:

- Shared understanding of what specific site Supervisors agree to be effective supervisor behaviours
- Development of a site-specific '*Supervisors' Bible*' – a 'charter' of guiding principles and a tailored set of 'secrets of successful supervision'
- Simple, useful models and strategies to help Supervisors work out where their employees 'are at right now' and how they might 'move them along'
- Practical tools to improve communication in the company – up, down and across.

#### Workshop content included:

- Using the group's extensive supervisory experience and *Personal Practical Knowledge*
- Enhancing skills in *questioning, active listening, giving and receiving feedback*
- Identifying *supervisor characteristics* that the specific group valued
- Understanding the '*Novice to Expert*' and '*Learning Pit*' models
- Recognising and managing '*above-the-line*', '*on-the-line*' and '*below-the-line*' workers
- Developing the content for a site-specific *Supervisors' Bible* (or *Charter*)
- Identifying personal supervisory strengths and improvement opportunities
- Designing Action Learning plans to take workshop outputs to the workplace.



## The site-specific 'Supervisors' Bible' or 'Supervisors' Charter'

At each site a *Supervisors' Bible* or *Supervisors' Charter* was drafted during the workshop. This document aimed to provide a clear, agreed statement about what the specific site believed about being an effective Supervisor, and about what people at that site expected of Supervisors.

The design of the document was developed to capture the collective 'wisdom' of the site's leadership team and reflect their extensive PPK (Personal Practical Knowledge).

The document can then be used as the basis for:

- Developing a clear Role Statement/Job and Person Description for Supervisors
- Selecting and inducting new Supervisors
- Discussing Supervisor performance
- Identifying skill gaps and designing training needs.

It is designed to be dynamic – beginning with a Preliminary Draft in the workshop and further developed during review by Supervisors and Management team.

Although, again, the document is conceptually site-specific general content included:

- An overview of what an effective Supervisor believes and does
- A draft statement of the site's core values for leadership and examples of what these 'look like' in practice
- An outline of the Supervisor's major goals and roles
- Critical aspects of the Supervisor's two key roles – leader and manager
- Major skill areas required by all employees at the site and additional key skills that Supervisors need.

## Participant feedback and future activity

Participants at all workshops embraced the opportunity to focus on the role of Supervisor; to share knowledge; network across plant functions; and develop specific actions for the future – both collectively and individually.

The success of the workshops has led to the development of a broad Supervisor development strategy which will be implemented in partnership with MLA [discussed in this document at Section 6.3.3].

### 3.7.4 Induction Training Workshops

Induction of new employees into the South Australian Meat Industry – and into specific companies within the industry – was identified very early in the project as a critical success factor for cultural change management.

Some sites had moved to a process of outsourcing the Induction Program for their new employees, but consultation revealed that, even in these circumstances, there was a need to offer training and support mechanisms to people 'on-site' who were responsible for continuing the induction process.

On 2 April 2007, the FTH Skills Council Workforce Development Team successfully delivered a one-day workshop at the Naracoorte TAFE Campus to induction teams from meat processing plants within the Limestone Coast region.

Participants included Plant Managers, HR Managers and Training personnel from TEYS Bros, Tatiara Meat Company and Dalriada Meat Company.

#### Targeted Outcomes:

Targeted Outcomes for the day included:

- Facilitating clear agreement on goals and priorities for an Induction program tailored to company needs and circumstances
- Identifying existing strengths which could serve as a foundation for achieving goals and priorities
- Identifying critical issues and options to address those issues
- Accessing a small tool kit of concepts and models shared by the team (with applications wider than the Induction process).

#### Workshop Content:

This workshop content was designed to lay the foundation for an effective Induction process at a processing plant by:

- building local commitment to, and ownership of, a new Induction program
- building cohesion within the Induction team
- identifying goals, priorities and critical elements of an effective Induction process.

To achieve this, the workshop used a range of models, tools and activities including:

- 'Tapping into your PPK' (Personal Practical Knowledge)
- Edward DeBono's Six Thinking Hats Strategy (using Information, Emotion, Positive Views, Caution, Creativity and Big Picture processes to consider strengths and issues)
- From Novice to Expert (identifying the stages people negotiate from beginner to expert)
- The Pit (looking at what happens when people learn something new)
- The Action Learning Cycle (putting learning into actions and maintaining momentum).

## Participant Feedback

Collectively participants enjoyed the interactive activities and the opportunity to network with peers in other companies about common issues.

Key learnings from the workshop included an enhanced understanding of the importance of Induction and the use of effective Induction processes to benefit retention, the company and the industry as a whole.

## Outcomes

All three companies represented at the workshop committed to reviewing their existing Induction processes against frameworks discussed during the day. There was an overall sense that feedback would be sought from recent employees and that there was intention to modify existing programs.

The FTH Skills Council Workforce Development team will follow-up with these companies and offer practical guidance on how to plan, trial and implement the next steps using an action learning approach.

## 3.8 Broadening 'the reach'

Although intensive activity in the SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Project focussed on interaction with larger processors and in the Pilot Region in south east South Australia, the project has also constructed significant inroads into assisting other sectors and areas.

For example, the *Butcher-for-a-Day* promotion [Section 3.2.1], *School Based New Apprenticeship Program* [Section 3.2.2] and *Training for Retention Roadshow* [Section 3.3] included a specific focus on the Retail Sector – and the *Collaborative Employment Model* [Section 3.4] was initially developed specifically to meet the needs of a white meat processor in Northern Adelaide.

### 3.8.1 Small Processor Forums

As part of the overall retention strategy, the project also considered the needs of Small Processors and sought to understand and address this sector's specific issues through two forums held in April 2007 in conjunction with the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC):

1. A Metropolitan Forum for Smallgoods Manufacturers and Retailers on 30 April 2007
2. A Generic Forum in the Mid/Upper North on 15 May 2007 for employers from Wholesale, Smallgoods and Retail sectors.

#### Identified issues:

- Key requirements include the need to recruit good basic customer service skills
- The need to access Government support for training or introducing more flexible working arrangements
- Difficulty in attracting the right people with the right skills and the time taken to train/retrain recruits in the required skills
- Recruitment issues which were impacted by ineffective advertising and/or external agencies not presenting people appropriate to industry needs
- Specific communication issues with young people who were considered to have unrealistic expectations
- A need to better engage with schools and promote the opportunities in the industry
- A need to change 'old-school' industry ways and showcase emerging leaders
- A need to address both recruitment and retention issues by acknowledging/rewarding good workers and reviewing policies/procedures for Induction and addressing bullying/harassment
- Opportunities to cross-skill with other combined food industries with similar skills
- Opportunities to promote the industry through promoting quality products, complete meals, advice on cooking (eg wine and vegetables to accompany meats).

#### Outcomes

As a direct result of the Mid/Upper North forum, discussions have begun between the AMIEU, Statewide Group Training, FTH Skills Council, DECS *Futures Connect*, TAFESA and AMIC to identify a suitable framework to run an Australian School Based Apprenticeship program in the region.

Employers are keen to engage students at a younger age in the hope that they can then keep them longer. The FTH Skills Council will provide guidance and support on how to manage the program collaboratively.

## 3.9 Written Resources developed during the project

Initial planning for the project clearly identified the need for a *Meat Industry Resource* that could advise and support workforce development across both the retail and processing sectors of the industry. As the project developed, it became more obvious that the need was more widespread – and concurrently more specific – than had initially been anticipated.

By working in partnership with the MLA, the project was able to develop a series of publications that addressed the identified need, while using forums and positive industry feedback to plan future publications that could be developed in Phase 2 of the project.

All publications have been made available free-of-charge to the industry and are also available to download from the FTH Skills Council website.

### 3.9.1 The Flagship Booklet

*'How to become an Employer of Choice in an Industry of Choice'* is a practical guide to workforce development in the Australian Meat Industry.

The 42 page booklet was designed to help employers better manage, develop and retain their workforce – and is targeted at small, medium and large businesses; processors and retailers; owners and operators; HR Managers and Plant Managers.

The booklet is not prescriptive – there are no hard and fast rules employers must follow – it simply describes in easy-to-read language activities that have proven successful for other businesses and strategies which have been developed following research in the Meat Industry and in other industries faced by similar challenges.

Early sections foster a better understanding of workforce development by describing:

- Why meat industry employers need to focus on workforce development
- What workforce development involves
- How to go about basic workforce analysis and planning
- Basic steps to get started – such as identifying current and desired positions.

A key feature of the booklet is the *'What you can do'* sections which provide pragmatic advice on topics such as:

- *Recruitment* – includes where and how to find suitable applicants
- *Retention* – includes what makes people stay in their jobs and why they leave
- *Workplace Culture* – includes what makes a positive workplace culture
- *Migrant Recruitment* – includes tips for settling in the workplace and community
- *Managing a multi-cultural workplace* – includes cross-cultural communication tips
- *Building Capability* – through an Orientation/Induction/Settling/Training process
- *Community Perceptions* – how to influence image for recruitment and retention.

The content concludes by outlining where employers can find further help in the meat industry; employment and training support agencies; and business pathways.

The publication launch was held in the South East during *Retention Forums* on 13-14 September 2006 and received highly positive feedback. It has been widely distributed within the industry and the FTH Skills Council has also received significant requests for the publication from other industries nationally.

### 3.9.2 Supporting Fact Sheets

Five Fact Sheets were developed to support the content of the initial booklet. The content for the Fact Sheets was determined after widespread consultation within the industry – and to meet needs clearly identified during other components of the project.

The Fact Sheets therefore underpin each of the other strategies in the project.

#### *Fact Sheet 1: Community relations: How to get more 'bang for your buck'*

- Explains why it is necessary to have a community relations program and the benefits to the business in terms of recruitment and retention
- Gives practical advice on how to manage the program as a legitimate business cost item
- Provides practical non-cash examples of how community support can be provided
- Promotes the involvement of employees as a positive impact on workforce culture
- Outlines where further information and assistance can be obtained.

#### *Fact Sheet 2: Keeping employees through the first 3 months*

- Outlines why the first few weeks of employment are so critical to retention
- Provides advice about how employers can find out why people are leaving them
- Offers practical suggestions for ways to stop 'the revolving door'
- Invites consideration about what should actually be expected of new employees
- Shows how to apply a theoretical 'Novice to Expert' model in the workplace
- Outlines where further information and assistance can be obtained.

#### *Fact Sheet 3: Good workers are worth keeping! Ideas that can help!*

- Explains why employers should maintain a focus on good, stable workers rather than be constantly distracted by under-performers
- Provides theoretical models with practical applications for identifying 'good workers' and supporting them in career development
- Offers simple, practical suggestions about how to recognise good workers and provide non-financial rewards
- Uses 'real life' case studies from within the Australian Meat Industry
- Outlines where further information and assistance can be obtained.

#### Fact Sheet 4: *Career progression for employees – make it work for you too!*

- Explains why employers should facilitate career progression for employees (by describing benefits to the business)
- Offers guidance on communicating opportunities and motivating employees to participate in career progression
- Discusses ways employers can actively support employees to participate
- Outlines where further information and assistance can be obtained.

#### Fact Sheet 5: *Succession planning – What makes an effective Supervisor?*

- Discusses why effective Supervisors are so important to the recruitment and retention of employees
- Offers guidance about how to identify the type of employee who would make an effective Supervisor
- Suggests how to develop a pool of potential people ready for promotion when required
- Provides information about what stops a Supervisor from being effective
- Provides an example of how Supervisors' time can be used more effectively
- Outlines where further information and assistance can be obtained.

### 3.9.3 Career Progression Booklet and Promotional Poster

While other publications produced during the project were specifically aimed at employers, this 16-page booklet and poster targeted employees – and their influencers such as parents, schools, friends and community.

The flagship publication, *'How to become an employer of choice in an industry of choice: a practical guide to workforce development in the Australian Meat Industry'* highlighted employee development and 'career progression' as key issues in both attracting and retaining good employees.

This subsequent booklet was therefore designed to provide a guide to career progression – to help new and current employees identify and progress along pathways which would benefit individuals; the company they work for; and the industry as a whole.

*Career pathways in the Australian Meat Industry: A practical guide to career progression for new and current employees* was written specifically to show that the Australian Meat industry could be an employer of choice, so that:

- jobseekers could be persuaded there are realistic career opportunities in the industry, supported by formal training and nationally recognised accreditation
- existing employees could be persuaded to stay in the industry, by offering them realistic career pathways and indications of support along the way.

However, the booklet and poster are not considered to be stand-alone documents. It is expected school advisors would work through relevant sections with young students, while existing employees are encouraged to discuss their ambitions with site management or Human Resources personnel.

The booklet includes sections about:

- Why people would want a career in the Australian Meat Industry
- Vocational Qualifications – what they are, how to get them
- How to map a personal career pathway – the steps required
- How to go about each step in the planning process
- Examples of potential career pathways in *Meat Processing*, *Meat Retailing*, *Human Resources* and *Plant Maintenance* – with reference to other career pathways in the industry such as *Food Services*, *Smallgoods Manufacture* and *Animal Care & Management*.

An A2 sized poster also displays the planning model from the booklet, together with the career pathways examples in *Meat Processing*, *Meat Retailing*, *Human Resources* and *Plant Maintenance* and an explanatory panel advising on use of the poster and where to obtain further information.

The poster was printed on both sides, so sites could choose to display only the Meat Processing/Meat Retailing models or only the Human Resources/Plant Maintenance models – or use two posters to promote all options.

The FTH Skills Council is currently in negotiation with DECS *Futures Connect* personnel to identify the most appropriate strategies to educate careers advisers and coordinate distribution of these resources in order to maximise their impact.



## Section 4: Key achievements and KPIs

The single overriding achievement of this project has been to bring key players in the South Australian Meat Industry to a point where they could recognise – and then work collaboratively to address – long-standing and increasingly urgent workforce development issues.

The commitment of both employer and employee peak bodies, Government representatives, employers, the FTH Skills Council team – and even employees – to engage with each other and work toward common goals has been instrumental to the success of the project.

In addition, the partnership approach which has been undertaken – particularly with MLA, but also with other organisations – augers well for long term outcomes.

Many of the outputs from the project – such as the Collaborative Employment Model and the published workforce development resources – have attracted widespread interest from other industries and are serving as templates for related activities.

All key performance indicators identified in the initial funding proposal for this project have been met.

### 4.1 Development of clear career pathways that assist in changing public perception of the meat industry for new and existing workers [KPI 1]

#### Measurement:

- ü Uptake of students in the School Based New Apprenticeship program
- ü Uptake of participants in the pre-employment workshop
- ü The successful creation of partnerships with key industry, government and training support services in the region
- ü Identification of other funding sources to support subsequent stages

This key performance indicator was fully met through the:

- ‘Butcher for a Day’ promotion [Section 3.2.1] and School Based New Apprenticeship Program in the South East region [Section 3.2.2]
- Collaborative Employment Programs initiated with Primo Smallgoods and T&R pastoral [Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.4] and the Limestone Coast Meat 20 Program [Section 3.5.3]
- SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force [Section 3.1.2] and Consultation and collaboration throughout the project [Section 3.1.3]
- Strong funding partnership which was developed with Meat and Livestock Australia to produce workforce development resources [Sections 3.9.1 and 3.9.2] and Cultural Change Workshops [Section 3.6.1]
- Development of the Career Pathways Booklet and Promotional Poster [Section 3.9.3] and Fact Sheet No 4 [Section 3.9.2]
- Collaborative development with MISAC and Service Skills SA on a submission to Minister Caica for a *Skills Passport SA* program to coordinate better use of Commonwealth’s *Work Skills Voucher* through a Collaborative Employment arrangement
- Development of funding proposals to DFEEST *Employment & Skills Formation* for Phase 2 [Section 6.1] and Seasonal Worker Program [Section 6.2]; WELL Program for Cross Cultural Communication [Section 3.6.3]; E-Learning program for E-Learning project [Section 6.1.3.1]; AusIndustry for entrepreneurship in Meat Retail SMEs.

## 4.2 Coordination of Focus Groups involving employers, employees, registered training providers and other interested parties [KPI 2]

### Measurement:

- ü Development of a suitable Governance structure that includes representation from a broad cross-section of the industry on Focus Groups
- ü Feedback on improved industry image/attraction/retention by stakeholders engaged in focus groups and/or employer surveys

This key performance indicator was fully met through the:

- Project Governance Structure [Section 3.1.2]
- SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force [Section 3.1.2]
- Consultation and collaboration throughout the project [Section 3.1.3]
- Retention Roadshows [Section 3.2.3]

## 4.3 Development of tools to assist management within industry to embrace and lead change through improved management practice [KPI 3]

### Measurement:

- ü Dissemination of development strategies to employers via the industry 'roadshow'
- ü Analysis and prioritisation of strategies in response to employer feedback
- ü Development of a framework that supports the attraction, skills development, retention and career pathways of the SA Meat Industry Workforce
- ü Development of a Workforce Development Guide

This key performance indicator was fully met through the:

- Design and format of the Retention Roadshows [Section 3.3.1 and 3.3.2] and the South East region Retention Forums [Section 3.2.3]
- Development of the strategic framework and project components as outlined throughout Section 3
- Development of the 'Employer of Choice' booklet, Facts Sheets and Career Pathways resources [Section 3.9]
- Continuous analysis and amendment of project components in a case-managed approach to specifically meet the training and development needs of clients. This individualised approach encouraged employers to access the Workforce Development framework
- Workforce Cultural Change Program, which included models and processes for workforce planning, induction, and effective supervision [Section 3.6].

#### 4.4 Investigation, identification and reporting on the critical issues facing the industry to the South Australian Government [KPI 4]

##### Measurement:

- ü Reporting of key issues to the FTH Skills Council from Industry Focus Groups
- ü Coordination of monthly Ministerial Advisory Committee meetings through the FTH Skills Council to consider feedback
- ü Priority issues forwarded to the Minister

This key performance indicator was met through the:

- Preparation of regular progress reports throughout the implementation of the project
- Preparation of reports on specific components such as the Retention Roadshow Report
- Direct contact with the Minister and Minister's office on key issues such as the industry's difficulty in securing workforce requirements through existing migrant visas
- Preparation of a proposal to the Minister outlining an alternative use of the Commonwealth's Work Skills Voucher that has more relevance to the South Australian Meat Industry (and other industries)
- Preparation of a proposal to the Minister outlining the outcomes from Phase 1 of the project and recommending activities to form a Phase 2
- The Ministerial Advisory Committee in eventuality was not formed because the Minister felt it would duplicate existing activity.

#### 4.5 Identification of improvements to the delivery of a quality training system within the industry that is responsive & client focussed [KPI 5]

##### Measurement:

- ü Provision of individualised learning support through a Case Management approach
- ü Satisfaction of students, participants and employers with the training and professional support provided

This key performance indicator was fully met through the:

- Development of the Collaborative Employment Model [Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2]
- Collaborative Employment Programs initiated with Primo Smallgoods and T&R pastoral [Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.3] and the Limestone Coast Meat 20 Program [Section 3.5.3]
- Design, development and delivery of a Cultural Change Management program which include specific training programs for managers, supervisors, leading hands and personnel involved with inductions [Section 3.6]
- Recording of feedback/satisfaction from participants to better inform ongoing modification of program content and advocate further support through MLA programs.

## Section 5: Findings/learnings/issues

### 5.1 The perpetuating nature of recruitment/retention issues

Consultation within the South Australian Meat Industry throughout the implementation of this project has clearly identified the perpetuating nature of recruitment and retention issues.

One way that this occurs is directly related to the industry's reactive response to skill shortages. When employers feel ill-equipped to develop their workforce through proactive programs – or the urgency of the situation does not allow enough time to do that – they resort to 'head-hunting' from other employers within, or external to, their own region.

Because there is such a competitive demand for specific skills, employers offer extraordinary incentives to attract the skills they need – or to retain the employees being 'courted'.

Businesses therefore become embroiled in an 'auction' – with bids eventually raising the cost of labour to a point where the company feels unable to financially support the proactive workforce development programs that may alleviate their recruitment/retention issues for the future.

In the South Australian Meat Industry, this competitive demand is most obvious for managers and staff of production facilities, particularly in the intensive industries – and also in the retail sector where the limited pool of available labour is increasingly impacted by changing consumer demands in terms of gourmet meats and the type of product offered for sale.

In fact, the continuing rise of consumer expectations in terms of food management throughout the entire value chain is having a widespread impact on the technical capabilities required of employees, leading to an increased demand for more skilled employees – and so the cycle becomes self-perpetuating with ever-increasing urgency.

### 5.2 Infrastructure issues in rural communities

The majority of meat processing facilities are located in regional areas where the community infrastructure – accommodation in particular – is not available to support employment growth from business expansion.

Some areas have complained they are able to attract transient workers with appropriate skills but have been unable to retain the workers in the longer term because of the lack of suitable 'permanent' accommodation.

While employers in some regions have taken their own steps to provide this accommodation, they suggest stability can only be achieved when employees are able to purchase their own homes.

The lack of suitable accommodation is not only an issue for families, but also for single men who may be attracted to the industry by competitive wages.

Short term transitional accommodation is also lacking in these areas to accommodate people attracted to seasonal work from other centres where employment opportunities are lower.

Infrastructure issues also include the lack of availability of childcare in many rural areas where unemployed or underemployed women could provide a potential workforce pool if this were available to them. Employers claim it is not financially viable for them to provide this service.

## 5.3 Access to under-employed

Anecdotal evidence suggests there is a significant level of under-employment in the South Australian regions which host major meat processing facilities.

Industry experience has shown that people in at least partial employment adapt more readily to the meat industry environment and have the potential to acquire the required skills more easily than people who have been unemployed for long periods.

Employers are keen to access this pool of workers and are ready to provide the work experience and training necessary to bring jobseekers to the level of skill required for real vacancies.

However, employers say they are hampered in doing this because these people do not qualify for wage support following financial assessment and claim the criteria for existing employment being based on a minimum of one hour paid/unpaid work per week is too harsh.

## 5.4 Migrant visas

Many meat processing facilities have resorted to sourcing workforce requirements overseas and larger companies have developed a rotational system which is proving to be somewhat effective for individual operations.

However, the current system of long stay 457 visas is failing to address the industry's needs. Skilled employees imported under the visa are perceived to 'limit the promotional opportunities' of Australians wanted to progress along career pathways in the industry – which have been used as a key promotional tool to attract newcomers.

In addition, the long term commitments required under the 457 visa fail to address the seasonal nature of the meat processing sector (particularly red meat) and subsequently increases the difficulties businesses have in managing their workforce through the cycles of 'peak and low demands'.

A recommendation to establish a State Migrant Advisory Council to investigate this issue was rejected by the Minister on the grounds it would duplicate services already in existence, such as the South Australian Government Agency Settlement Network and Immigration SA – although further input involving issues surrounding visa sponsorship was invited.

The FTH Skills Council and the SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force have further discussed a number of options for attracting supplementary labour from overseas to meet the workforce shortfalls during peak periods.

One opportunity to secure seasonal workers to meet processing peaks and workforce imbalance is discussed in Section 6.2.

## 5.5 Industry terminology

The industry itself has recognised that the traditional terminology used to describe job roles and processes is working against the promotion of the industry as an attractive career pathway to potential recruits – especially school leavers.

Organisations such as MLA have been progressively working to change some terms (such as 'slaughterer' to 'processor' etc) but it remains an issue.

## 5.6 Workforce planning tool

Although the project has been able to produce a number of resources to facilitate workforce planning – providing the ‘why’ and ‘how to’ – it remains an issue for the industry that there is no simplified mechanism to make this a quick and easy process in the workplace.

A tool similar to that available for the mining industry is required for the meat industry. This tool should take into account job families and their required skills and include reporting of data that factors in likely promotions, transfers and retirements.

The FTH Skills Council is continuing to investigate opportunities to source or create such a tool.

## Section 6: Planned future activities

The workforce planning and development tools emerging from this project will, in the long term, provide the South Australian Meat Industry with the means of creating the workforce it requires to achieve its potential.

However, it will take some time to achieve the systemic and structural change necessary – and it is therefore important that the momentum gained as a result of this project is sustained.

The FTH Skills Council has sought funding to progress to a Phase 2 of this project and to continue with a number of the strategies already actioned, to maximise their impact.

These include:

- working collaboratively with employers to support their efforts to develop their workforce in a way which will attract and retain local employees
- continuing to explore options to access migrant employees – particularly to address the seasonal imbalance of production and labour availability.

### 6.1 Working with domestic labour markets and employers

#### 6.1.1 Workforce development case management

Phase 2 of the project would build on the successful pilot program developed during Phase 1 and work directly with employers in a case management approach which allows for the vagaries of the industry and the specific needs of individual employers.

This would ensure that individual and collective expansion within the South Australian Meat Industry is underpinned by appropriate workforce development practices.

##### 6.1.1.1 Expansion of the Workforce Cultural Change Program

Expansion of the workforce cultural change program to other regions under the principles of a case management approach would include:

- § Workforce planning for medium to large sized enterprises
- § Development of a competency framework that clearly identifies the job roles and tasks for each skill set within an organisation
- § Establishment of a performance-based review process for existing staff
- § Development of effective succession planning techniques.

### 6.1.1.2 Expansion of the Collaborative Employment Program

Expansion of the Collaborative Employment Program into other regions would specifically assist employers to access the pool of unemployed and under-employed jobseekers available locally to fill identified current and future vacancies as outlined in Section 1.2.

### 6.1.1.3 Expansion of Workforce Planning Workshops & Retention Forums

Following the success of the pilot workforce planning workshop and retention forums, it is intended to broaden the content to incorporate emerging issues and feedback/discussion points raised in the Phase 1 activities.

The broadened workshop and forums would subsequently be expanded to other regions in South Australia.

### 6.1.1.4 Expansion of Workforce Development Resources

An additional five Fact Sheets would be developed to further support the resources published in Phase 1 of the project.

The topics addressed in the new publications would respond to previous and ongoing consultation within the industry about the type of information employers are seeking and topics identified as relevant during case management interaction.

## 6.1.2 Meat Industry Skills Ecosystem

Skill ecosystems are concentrations of workforce skills and knowledge in an industry or a region. Each skill ecosystem is unique and reflects the interaction of factors such as the business environment, Government policy and industry practice.

The FTH Skills Council plans to establish a Meat Industry Skills Ecosystem in South Australia and New South Wales in partnership with Meat and Livestock Australia, supported financially through the NSW Department of Education and Training.

In particular, this strategy will allow crucial testing of attraction pathways for new entrants into the industry, while further developing Supervisors to better manage and retain these new people.

The Meat Industry Skills Ecosystem will address:

- § Supervisor behaviour and knowledge
- § Poor level of trainee completion rates
- § Perceived lack of job choice.

Traineeships are used by most meat industry employers when recruiting but recent statistics have shown high non-completion rates, with cancellations occurring predominantly in the first three months.



The poor completion rates have been attributed partly to poor induction processes and new-recruit management and partly to the fact recruits may not feel suited to their entry sector, but leave the industry without experiencing opportunities in another sector which they may have preferred.

It is also believed that potential recruits by-pass the Meat Industry as a career because they are unaware of the job possibility and variety of job opportunities in the industry.

The Meat Industry Skills Ecosystem will address these issues by including a *Whole of Meat Industry Traineeship Program* which will target new entrants to the meat industry from school and will coordinate placement and rotation of these participants across the production, processing and retailing sectors.

The program will include two days per week on-the-job training with a host employer (which may include some off-the-job training overseen by a registered training organisation if required) and usual school lessons for the remaining three days per week.

In addition to acquiring traditional accreditation (such as a Certificate II) participants will have additional skills acquired during their rotations documented in a *Skills Passport*.

### 6.1.3 Flexible learning methodologies

Phase 2 of the project plans to introduce more flexible learning methodologies to meat industry employees by identifying and facilitating e-learning opportunities and web-based training.

This exposure will support an increased uptake of individualised case-managed training and development – particularly for those employees (the majority) located in remote and rural areas.

Improved processing technologies through computer aided management and equipment automation within many workplaces continues to advance. Employees are often not given the opportunity to work with new technologies or are exposed to risk because they have no formal training in their use.

A specific focus, therefore, will be to increase employee access to competitive manufacturing techniques through training on automated equipment and machinery.

#### 6.1.3.1 E-Learning proposal

In partnership with DECS and Archer College, the FTH Skills Council is looking to use contemporary technology to better engage young people with the South Australian Meat Industry.

Archer College is an Australian based accredited Education, Learning and Development Organisation with outsourced training projects servicing individual learners and corporations in Australia, Asia and North America. The College uses blended and flexible delivery of training to maximise participation and increase the effectiveness of the workplace as a training location.

By working with Archer College and DECS, the FTH Skills Council project would use high school students to collate information from stakeholders within the South Australian Meat Industry and contrast the collected data with information which currently exists in Wikipedia – particularly to identify any misinformation or inaccuracies.

Key areas for investigation would include Hygiene; Sanitation; Quality; Best Practice; and any other areas of interest that emerged from the research.

Students would use a variety of contemporary communication tools such as podcasts; blogs; video; *Flickr*; and mobile phones. This would also facilitate professional development for teaching staff, who would necessarily become more involved with emerging media and Web 2.0 which facilitates participant interaction. Both students and teachers would benefit from increased information literacy and enhanced Meat Industry knowledge.

DECS *Futures Connect* and other information technology personnel would assist in scoping the project and participate in the steering group, with *Transition Brokers* in regions coordinating the involvement of students and teachers.

Archer College would provide – in conjunction with the Project Manager – expertise in emerging new media/Web 2.0 technologies and coaching for implementation, as well as develop proof of concept and identify risk management strategies.

Apart from training and professional development outcomes in the education sector, the project would generate a ‘better connection’ between young people and the industry and potential outcomes include development of a media wiki for the Meat Industry and Education.

#### 6.1.4 Increased opportunity for input to State & National Policy

A key feature of the South Australian Meat Industry Workforce Development Project has been the increased interaction with industry and individual businesses, which has afforded greater insight to the application of State and Federal policy and programs.

With the planned expansion of the project into Phase 2, ongoing collaboration would increase the opportunity to gather intelligence on those policies and programs with direct relevance to workforce development.

The second phase of the project would focus on capturing this knowledge in a form which will increase opportunity to provide input to future policy and program development.

This activity is expected to specifically relate, but not be limited, to the application of:

- § The Commonwealth’s Jobseeker account funds for skill development
- § The Commonwealth’s User Choice funding for skill development
- § South Australia’s FSI 500 public funding for skill development
- § The Commonwealth’s Skills Voucher for entry level skilling and support.

The increased collaboration and input to policy and programs will enhance the ‘whole-of-government’ response to industry needs.

### 6.1.5 SA Meat Industry Career Development Promotional Project

Another key component of the SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Project has been the development of the '*Career Pathways in the Australian Meat Industry: A practical guide to career progression for new and current employees*'. This booklet is also accompanied by a poster which displays several career pathways options [Section 3.9.3].

The booklet is designed to provide a guide to career progression – to help new and current employees identify and progress along pathways which will benefit individuals; the company they work for; and the industry as a whole.

Distribution of the booklet and poster in the most appropriate way is essential if the resources are to reach their intended audiences.

The FTH Skills Council is currently in negotiation with DECS *Futures Connect* personnel to identify the most appropriate strategies to:

- Educate careers advisers
- Coordinate distribution of the resources
- Create a greater awareness of the career opportunities in the SA Meat Industry.

These connections will also include liaison with:

- 17 *Futures Connect* Transition Brokers (district operational personnel)
- 16 representatives from DEST *Local Community Partnerships* (LCPs) who currently service Adopt-a-School Programs; Structured Work Placements; and Career and Transition guidance
- DEST Regional Industry Careers Advisors (5-6 across the state).

It is expected that recommendations from this collaboration will be implemented in Phase 2 of the project.

## 6.2 Investigating supplementary labour through migration

One of the issues clearly identified during Phase 1 of the SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Project was the seasonal nature of the industry – which caused a peak demand for workforce increases (particularly in Spring for the red meat industry) – and the inability of current migration visas to provide a solution to the shortfall of labour at crucial periods.

As part of the consultation and analysis process, the Task Force discussed various options of addressing the issue and recommended investigating opportunities to access migrant seasonal workers.

In a proposal to the South Australian Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, the FTH Skills Council has sought funding to employ a Project Officer for 12 months specifically to work with a Reference Committee and develop a framework under which Working Holiday Visas (subclass 417) might be used to access appropriate employees for relevant periods.

This visa allows people aged 18 to 30 years from countries such as Belgium, Canada, Republic of Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Taiwan and United Kingdom to undertake a *working holiday* of up to 12 months in Australia. In some cases, visa holders are able to apply for another 12-month visa if they can establish that they have undertaken more than three months seasonal work in regional South Australia.

The proposal seeks funding to investigate the feasibility and implement a pilot project that utilises this form of visa to provide supplementary labour for the South Australian meat industry.

If approved, the project would involve three distinct stages:

**Stage One** – Working with the reference committee to develop a framework that will service the needs of the meat industry while also providing an attractive package for 417 candidates. This would require the Project Officer to work closely with the appropriate State and Federal Government agencies.

**Stage Two** – Pilot the program with a limited number of companies. This would give the Reference Committee and other stakeholders key insights into the operation of the program, its advantages and its failings.

**Stage Three** – Evaluate the operation of the program, modify appropriately and develop strategies to expand the methodology across South Australia and into other industries.

The program would involve developing attractive packages for 417 candidates that included tourism and accommodation opportunities and would be restricted to appropriate candidates with eligibility criteria including occupational English skills; medical clearances; commitment to at least six months employment; and OH&S training pre-employment.

Employers would be required to commit to appropriate induction and social inclusion programs.

## 6.3 Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) Partnership Projects

One of the key strengths of this project has been the partnership approach which has developed between the FTH Skills Council Meat Industry Workforce Development Project and Meat & Livestock Australia.

Several sub-projects have been conducted with MLA financial support such as the Workforce Planning Workshop [Section 3.7.1] and the development of written resources [Sections 3.9.1 & 3.9.2].

This partnership will continue and a number of specific projects have been negotiated to be actioned in 2007-2008.

### 6.3.1 Skills Ecosystem – Whole-of-Industry Skills Passport

The South Australian Meat Industry Skills Ecosystem program proposed as Phase 2 of the project is discussed at Section 6.1.2.

The partnership project with MLA will target three new entrants to the meat industry from either school or job network agencies and coordinate placement and rotation of these participants across:

- **Farm Production** – including animal handling and welfare and the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS)
- **Meat Processing** – including livestock handling; packing & other processing; administration and observation of slaughtering and boning; and traceability
- **Meat Retailing** – including packing; cabinet display; meat deli sales in a supermarket environment; and retail butcher shop

Participants will complete 2 x 4 month placements in Production and Processing and 2 x 2 month placements in a Retail Supermarket and Butcher Shop – all within the same regional area.

At a minimum, participants will undertake a Certificate II in Food Services as well as other training identified by the sectors as crucial. By the end of the traineeship they will not only hold (a minimum) Certificate II, but also additional training documented in a Skills Passport.

The South Australian pilot will involve the Bordertown region which has a number of employers and access to all sectors of the meat industry including retail butchers, supermarkets, meat processing sites and producers. Following the pilot, the MLA intends to roll-out the program in a broader trial nationally across at least five regional areas.

#### Expected long term outcomes

- Improved retention of local people in a region by providing work choices in that region
- Improved mobility and choice of employment within the meat industry
- More people are attracted to the industry and stay in the industry
- Employees will have a broader knowledge of the meat industry supply chain
- Improved trainee completion rates.

### 6.3.2 Expansion of the Workforce Planning Action Learning program

Following the success of the MLA/FTH Skills Council Workshop Planning Workshop [Section 3.7.1] and the follow-up strategy development field trip undertaken by the FTH Skills Council Project Manager [Section 3.7.2], MLA is preparing to offer a similar process to all plants throughout Australia.

The program will offer planning workshops plus site-specific assistance in the development of clear workforce plans under MLA's *Planted Initiated Projects* (PIP) program.

The program will lead sites through the process of developing a clear understanding of their current workforce as well as mapping out the workforce that they will require in the future – that is, understanding the supply and demand of their human resource.

### 6.3.3 Managing up, down and across: Supporting Supervisors to Success

Following the success of the project's Supervisor Workshops [Section 3.7.3], MLA is proposing to offer the program nationally – initially involving 8-10 sites under the organisation's *Plant Initiated Projects* (PIP) program.

As discussed, these workshops are based on a generic content, but are very much site specific – in terms of responding to interaction with participants – and are designed to support transfer of learning from workshop to workplace.

The program also includes the development of a '*Supervisors Bible*' – with direct input from participants – which will assist in embedding effective strategies so that they become a part of general company culture and operations, not an 'add on'.

The program is designed to develop effective supervision across sites through a 'package' with three major aspects:

- A clear, consistent company message about the critical importance of leading and managing people and details of company expectations in this regard
- An individual Supervisor's leadership and management skill set
- A systematic approach to the on-going development of Supervisor knowledge and skills (e.g. through training, mentoring, delegating, formal succession planning).

Monitoring and evaluation processes are in-built through the program's action learning style to ensure that potential issues are identified and addressed quickly; key success factors captured and documented; and program goal and methodology redesigned as required to deliver optimum results.

A proposed outcome of the project is the development and refinement of a cost effective approach that can be applied in any plant across the industry.

## Section 7: Conclusion

This project has been extremely successful in bringing the South Australian Meat Industry together and generating a commitment among a number of employers to implementing workforce development as a means of addressing current and future skills and labour shortages.

A strong, industry led project task force has ensured that the strategies are relevant to industry and a committed team at the FTH Skills Council has ensured that the tactics and actions employed during implementation have occurred collaboratively.

A fundamental principle of the project has been to take a holistic approach to workforce development – so that strategies not only cover planning; attraction; development; and retention; but also a wide range of potential labour pools (unemployed; under-employed; school leavers; mature age; domestic; and international migrants).

Pilot programs have been reviewed, modified and expanded to form a suite of templates that not only has application for the wider South Australian Meat Industry, but also in other sectors associated with the Food Tourism and Hospitality industries – and in other entirely disparate industries such as retail and manufacturing.

Resources produced during the project and concepts such as the Collaborative Employment Model have been in demand and actively sought by other industries, employer associations and training organisations – and are lending themselves readily to adaptation for a number of applications.

However, it is reasonable to view the work completed to date as only 'a beginning'. The outcomes of the project in many ways are only pilot programs and the expansion of the project into other companies within the south-east region and into other regions across the State is critical for the project to have real impact on the South Australian Meat Industry.

Significant structural, systemic and cultural change will be required for the South Australian Meat Industry to achieve the workforce it requires to meet its projected growth patterns. The momentum generated by Phase 1 took significant effort to initiate, but showed positive signs of escalation during the latter stages of the project.

It is critical that this momentum is sustained through a smooth transition into the second phase of the project.

Any delay will severely impact on the significant credibility Phase 1 has been able to achieve through its pragmatic and 'active' approach.

## Section 8: Appendices

### 8.1: SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Task Force



**Graham Smith, State Secretary,  
Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)**

Graham has been in industry for over 30 years. He started working for Metro Meats in Noarlunga, became a slaughterman and representative for the workers prior to eventually entering into the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union SA Office.

The Metro Meats plant worked on a skills acquisition based seniority system which required workers to become multi-skilled. It is from this background in training that Graham sees the need for a broader approach to attraction, development and retention in the meat industry.

**Paul Sandercock, Executive Director, National Retail Coordinator  
Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC)**

AMIC is the Employer Association that looks after the post farm-gate meat industry. Paul's role is to provide advice and assistance on the issues of Business Management and Industrial Relations.

The council's philosophy is that they need to have people coming into the industry and being further trained – *'If we don't improve, we stay where we are'*. They realise that people must improve at all levels and develop further pride in their industry.



**Sue Wheal, Producer  
Limestone Coast**



Sue and her husband Guy are mixed farmers from Beachport in the Southeast of South Australia. As an elected representative from the SA Meat Industry Development Board (now the Sheep Industry Development Board), Sue had active involvement in the SA Meat Industry Workforce Development project as a Task Force member. Sue's background is in Human Resources and Nursing.

She recognises that; *'if we don't get the right people in the right places in supporting employers and employees with their ongoing development and attracting people to our industry, it will have a detrimental affect on the future of our industry'*.





**Jack Langberg, Principal Officer, Livestock Industries (Sheep/Beef)  
Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA)**

Jack is currently working as the Principal Officer for Sheep and Beef Industries within the Livestock Industries division of Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA). Within this role he is the Executive Officer of the SA Sheep and Beef Industry Development Boards.

Jack sees that to meet the targeted outcomes of the Sheep and Beef Industry Strategic plans, it is absolutely essential that SA has the full capacity to process all the sheep and beef meat that is produced in this state. To do so, he believes we must support all initiatives that lead to a sustainable workforce within the red meat industry.

**Simon Gierke, Principal Officer, Livestock Industries (Pork/Poultry),  
Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA)**

Simon Gierke works for Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA) as a Principal Officer - Livestock Industries. Much of his time is spent working with the livestock value chains, particularly pork and poultry, to identify and implement strategic directions.

While planning for these and the beef and sheep sectors, it quickly became apparent that workforce development was a significant rate limiter. To ensure ongoing development of the meat industries, Simon believes that ensuring an adequate available workforce is essential.



**John Cassebohm, Executive Officer,  
Food Tourism & Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Council SA Inc**



John has an extensive background in program and project management within government and the private sector, predominantly focused on education, training and employment initiatives.

Previous projects include the Adelaide Airport and Western Region Skills project, the Tourism and Hospitality Indigenous Employment project, the Cooks Retention project, the Australian Native Foods project, the SA Wine Industry Employment Strategy, the Front of House project etc.

The Meat Industry project represents the culmination of many of the attraction and retention elements that emerged from the previous projects.

**Kerryn Smith, Workforce Development Manager  
Project Manager SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Project**

Kerryn currently works with the Food Tourism & Hospitality Industry Skills Council as a Workforce Development Manager for several industries in South Australia.

She has gained a great deal of experience in both workforce planning and development through working with employers and employees from these industries and continues to liaise with many of the key stakeholders on a State and National level.

