

**Victorian Government Response to the
Education and Training Committee
Inquiry into Agricultural Education and
Training**

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BACKGROUND

On 10 February 2011, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Victoria resolved that the Education and Training Committee inquire into, consider and report no later than 31 January 2012 (extended to 16 November 2012) on Agriculture and Education Training in Victoria.

The Parliament of Victoria referred to the Education and Training Committee a reference for an inquiry on agricultural education in Victoria, and the Committee was asked to consider:

- (a) an evaluation of the current extent of agricultural-related courses delivered in Victoria;
- (b) an evaluation of the effectiveness of current agricultural programs;
- (c) whether the workforce training needs of agriculture are being met; and
- (d) an overview of well-regarded agricultural education in other Australian States and Territories, or other countries.

The Committee's Final Report on Agriculture Education and Training (the Report) was tabled in Parliament on 14 November 2012.

INTRODUCTION

The Government welcomes the Report from the Education and Training Committee of Parliament. The Report highlights the strengths of the agriculture industry in Victoria, as well as the opportunities that are available for Victorians who seek education and careers in agriculture.

Victoria is Australia's largest food and fibre exporting state. The value of food and fibre exported from Victorian ports increased 11 per cent in 2011-12 to reach a record \$9 billion, accounting for 29 per cent of all farm exports from Australia. Our food and fibre sector includes industries and services that support the agriculture, fishery and forestry sectors. It's about what we eat, what we drink, what we wear, what our homes are made of and all the people that help make this possible.

In total, the sector employs more than 141,900 Victorians, and accounts for one in six jobs in regional and rural Victoria. There are over 46,000 agricultural businesses spread throughout the state, reflecting the importance of the sector in maintaining thriving regional and rural communities.

This Government is committed to creating opportunities to access agricultural education and training in Victoria. From young people in schools who are able to learn firsthand about the importance of food production; to shearers who are participating in vocational training; or a scientist who is conducting research to make crops more resilient – opportunities must exist for all.

Both this Inquiry and the 2012 *Inquiry into the Capacity of the Farming Sector to Attract and Retain Young Farmers and Respond to an Ageing Workforce* (the young farmers inquiry) highlight significant opportunities for partnerships between stakeholders in the agriculture industry to ensure that the sector increases its competitiveness and productivity, supported by access to the skilled workforce that it needs.

The Government investment in education and training will continue to focus on areas that underpin the efficiency and competitiveness of export focused industry value chains and the broader agri-food sector. The Government works in collaboration with national and international agencies, industry organisations and value chain participants to analyse and address key factors and impediments affecting the competitiveness of Victorian agri-food industries. By improving the global competitiveness of industry and working to improve sector capability, Victoria is able to realise market opportunities and maintain key export markets.

The Government investment in education and training is provided through schools and the vocational training sector via the *Victorian Training Guarantee*. In recent years, enrolments in agriculture related courses have increased, however, with over half of the agricultural workforce having no post-school qualifications and heavy reliance on an older workforce, the Report identifies some very real challenges in ensuring future skills needs are met.

The Government believes the findings in this Report will serve to strengthen Victoria's agriculture sector through robust education and training opportunities and increased industry leadership. The recommendations' themes and government responses are discussed in greater detail below.

RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS – SUMMARY

The following table summarises the Government response to the 45 recommendations presented in the Report.

Category	Count
Support	11
Support in principle	24
Support in part	3
Do not support	7

The Government response uses the themes identified in the Report to address the recommendations.

Attracting people to agricultural careers and agricultural education and training

Agriculture is a diverse sector with opportunities not only for farmers and landowners, but also for scientists, IT experts, teachers, engineers, and more. The Report identifies a number of ways that industry can work to improve the image of agriculture in the community. This includes industry building relationships with local schools and career advisers, and developing relevant accessible information on the broad range of career opportunities within the sector.

The Government believes that attracting people to the industry is best done by initiatives which support the productivity and profitability of individual sectors. Through its *Growing Food and Fibre* initiative, the Government has invested an additional \$61.4 million over four years in improved market access, new agricultural technologies and improved farm management practices, with \$15.7 million invested in subsequent years. To support industry efforts to promote agriculture as a career, the Government has launched the *GROW Your Food and Fibre Career* website, which highlights opportunities and pathways for young people seeking to develop a career in agriculture. The Victorian Skills Gateway is also a new platform provided by Government that industry can use to shape the agriculture related career and training information that is available.

The Government also notes that following the Grow Your Food and Fibre Future Forum held on 27 March 2013, industry has also committed to a range of activities that will engage young people, including through real interactions with industry workers, in an effort to work to change ideas about what it means to work in the agriculture sector.

To support greater engagement, the Government has committed to funding an industry based careers adviser who will work with industry representatives and schools to increase the quality of advice for young people seeking a career in agriculture.

Teaching Victorian school students about agriculture

The Report has recognised that there are significant opportunities for students in Victoria to learn about agriculture: from Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Gardens in primary schools, to secondary school students choosing to study an agriculture-based vocational education and training (VET) program as part of their VCE.

The Government will continue to ensure that students will have the opportunity to study agriculture in a range of educational settings. It will achieve this by continuing to support flexible school arrangements, allowing schools to make decisions over their curriculum and facilities based on the needs of their local community. The Government notes that both the Report and the young farmers report highlight the significant opportunities for industry to engage more closely with schools, training providers and universities to increase interest in this important study area.

The Government will continue to highlight opportunities for individual schools, clusters and networks to partner strategically with industry. The Government also welcomes the commitment from industry to work more closely with schools in order to increase the interest in agriculture and horticulture studies.

Education, training and support for Victorian school teachers

Victoria's autonomous universities continually evolve their course offerings, including for pre-service teacher education. Based on the findings in this Report, at the next meeting of the Victorian Council of Deans, the Government will raise the possibility of higher education providers introducing an agricultural method into their teaching courses.

Teachers in Victorian schools will also continue to receive support through access to online curriculum resources through Scootle (the national repository) and FUSE (the Victorian repository). These materials will continue to be promoted with agricultural and horticultural organisations.

Many individual schools, clusters and networks already have strategic partnerships with industry. Educators use these relationships to support the design and delivery of curriculum and demonstrate to students how contemporary areas of mathematics and science are applied in the workplace. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) will continue to support schools to make best use of such partnerships into the future and welcomes the commitment from the agriculture industry to work more closely with schools.

Opportunities for relevant agricultural and horticultural subject teachers and career practitioners to spend quality time in relevant industry workplaces to find out more about the industry and get experience first-hand would be valuable.

The delivery of vocational education and training (VET) for the agriculture sector

The agriculture sector in Victoria needs access to a skilled workforce to support its businesses to grow, adapt and compete. The vocational training system is vital in delivering the skilled workforce the sector needs.

Vocational training enrolments in agriculture have steadily grown in recent years from 5,400 government subsidised enrolments in 2008 to just over 7,900 in 2012. While the Report highlights the ongoing need to increase participation in all education sectors, Government believes that the focus should not just be on enrolment growth. There is a significant opportunity to introduce agricultural contexts in other study areas as well as opportunities to lift the quality and relevance of the agricultural subjects and courses that are already being delivered.

Industry bodies and employers are much better placed to understand their own needs. To make the most of the Government investment in training through the *Victorian Training Guarantee*, industry will need to work closely with training providers to support higher quality outcomes.

Government will continue to work with agriculture stakeholders through DEECD's Industry Participation Model to help ensure that the training system is meeting their needs. It is noted that enrolments in agriculture courses currently exceed the forecast average annual employment need of 3,730 agriculture workers a year to 2016-17.

As part of the *Better Information* initiative, the Government has recently published a range of labour and training market information, including for agriculture industry sub sectors. In addition, DEECD is scoping a project to enable vocational training data to be made more accessible for all stakeholders. The project is designed to increase the ability of industry associations and stakeholder groups to undertake their own analysis of vocational training data as well as to track outcomes and identify training market issues.

Agricultural colleges and the VET workforce

The role of agricultural colleges in Victoria has changed and evolved over time and there is now an opportunity to examine how these important assets can be used effectively into the future. Several of the colleges remain under government ownership and are now operated as working farms by private and public training providers. Further, The University of Melbourne's campuses of Dookie, Gilbert Chandler and Burnley continue to contribute to research and training in agricultural science, land and environment management and food science disciplines.

The Government is committed to maintaining agricultural colleges in Victoria and will work with training providers to consider how these important assets can be used most effectively into the future.

Higher education landscape and enhancement

Victoria has a number of state of the art agricultural facilities, providing numerous opportunities for undergraduate students to take up studies and research. The Government believes that the most effective means for industry to attract new graduates is through its own promotional activities, and by demonstrating the availability of fulfilling careers in the sector.

The Government recognises that the State's autonomous universities play a leading role in creating and imparting knowledge that supports society to address a wide range of challenges, including those outlined in the Report. Universities continually refine their course offerings to ensure that they produce work-ready graduates that are prepared to meet the needs of the community, industry and government. The Government supports cooperative working relationships between industry and faculties of agriculture within universities so that their courses are continuously informed by contemporary agriculture principles and practices.

The Victorian Government has recently obtained agreement from the Commonwealth Government that data related to higher education will be made available in a more timely manner, increasing the ability of providers to respond to emerging trends and other developments. DEECD will work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure timely approval on any data that could be reported publicly and develop a framework to support improved performance analysis.

Better coordination of stakeholders

The role of Government in the training system is to monitor its responsiveness to industry needs and to work with industry to address barriers and to respond to issues where the training market is unable to respond. The Industry Participation Model provides for the formation of issues-based taskforces, overseen by the Industry Skills Consultative Committee (ISCC), to respond in such instances.

The ISCC consists of 12 members who have the expertise and experience to reflect a range of business perspectives, enabling industry leaders to provide direct feedback to Government about critical skills, training and market responses that affect the workforce and productivity. Using taskforces and similar forums overseen by the ISCC provides a focused response mechanism to resolve significant and persistent issues that require Government intervention.

The Victorian Government's new Food and Agriculture into Asia Taskforce is a good example of how Government can partner with industry to address significant issues and create opportunities using a focused, time-limited approach.

Government acknowledges the benefits of effective coordination and collaboration between stakeholders, however, like other diverse industries, the agriculture industry is encouraged to strengthen existing industry networks and bodies to enable industry and agriculture training providers to coordinate their activity in line with ongoing industry needs.

THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The importance of agriculture to Victoria is clear. Agriculture is integral to our economy and our social fabric. Government will work in partnership with industry and education and training stakeholders to strengthen and support the provision of agricultural education and training so that future generations also have opportunities for rewarding and stable careers in agriculture.

Of the 45 recommendations in the Report, more than three quarters are supported either fully, in principle or in part, highlighting Government's commitment to working with industry and setting the right conditions to ensure that education and training will meet the needs of the agriculture sector into the future. The Report makes recommendations that have been categorised into key themes. These are set out below with the Government's response.

Attracting people to agricultural careers and agricultural education and training

The Report highlights the benefits the agriculture sector would receive from a coordinated approach by the industry to improve the image of a career in agriculture in the community. This includes industry building relationships with local schools, career advisers and developing relevant accessible information regarding the broad range of career opportunities within the sector.

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 1: Promotional campaign to improve the image of agriculture</p> <p>That the industry associations within the agriculture sector work collaboratively at the national level to develop a promotional campaign aimed at improving the image of agriculture amongst the community.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Government notes that primary responsibility for promotion of the agriculture industry must sit with industry itself. Government believes that attracting people to a career in agriculture is best done by initiatives which support the productivity and profitability of individual sectors.</p> <p>As such, Government has invested an additional \$61.4 million over four years in research, development and technology in the Growing Food and Fibre initiative, with \$15.7 million ongoing in subsequent years.</p> <p>Further, Government has launched the Grow Your Food and Fibre Future website, which highlights opportunities and pathways for young people seeking to develop a career in agriculture. A key outcome of the recent Grow Your Food and Fibre Future Forum was a commitment from industry to establish ways that industry can work to change the image of agriculture.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Developing an agricultural careers awareness program for Victorian school students</p> <p>That the industry associations within the agriculture sector work collaboratively to develop a careers awareness program for Victorian school students.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government notes that this recommendation is aimed at industry and supports the activity of industry associations to strengthen existing career information.</p> <p>The appointment of an industry based agriculture career adviser who will be</p>

	<p>focused on schools will ensure that information provided to career practitioners in the school context is relevant and current.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Improving the quality of agricultural careers advice in schools</p> <p>That the Victorian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work towards the professionalisation of the careers adviser workforce in schools for the benefit of all Victorian school students • provide school careers advisers with professional development opportunities with respect to agricultural careers. 	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government is committed to working with peak industry bodies (for example, the Victorian Farmers Federation and Dairy Australia) to ensure that agricultural career and training pathway information is up-to-date and accessible to all careers advisors via the <i>Victorian Skills Gateway</i>.</p> <p>To complement this activity, the Victorian Government is providing \$240,000 over two years to the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) to support the appointment of a Food and Fibre Careers Officer. The role will help secondary school careers advisers promote study and work opportunities in the food and fibre industry.</p> <p>In addition, industry bodies should also liaise directly with schools and the Career Education Association of Victoria to provide timely access to current information.</p> <p>Careers advisors and schools frequently use careers information resources including <i>myfuture</i>, <i>the Job Guide</i>, <i>Youth Central</i>, the <i>Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework</i> and the <i>Victorian Skills Gateway</i>. Peak industry bodies should liaise directly with the content producers of these careers information resources to ensure that any information about career pathways and career opportunities in agriculture is relevant, up-to-date and easily accessible and where possible, link to relevant industry websites.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Developing an online agricultural careers hub</p> <p>That the industry associations within the agriculture sector work collaboratively at the national level to develop a comprehensive online</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government supports this recommendation in principle, noting that that this action is aimed at industry. Both the Departments of Environment and Primary Industries and Education and Early Childhood</p>

<p>agricultural careers hub.</p>	<p>Development support the activities of industry associations by strengthening relevant information on existing careers hubs and linking to relevant industry websites.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: Developing agricultural career pathways</p> <p>That the industry associations within the agriculture sector work collaboratively at the national level to develop clearly articulated career pathways that are linked to education and training qualifications.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government supports this recommendation in principle, noting that that this action is aimed at industry. The importance of clearly articulated career pathways that are linked to education and training qualifications is recognised, and Government will seek to support the activities of Victorian industry associations in this regard.</p> <p>From a national perspective, much has already been done through the AgriFood Australia Industry Skills Council and the Victorian Government would encourage industry associations to work in partnership to strengthen existing information.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: Supporting workforce development for the agriculture sector</p> <p>That the Victorian Government work with the industry associations within the agriculture sector to develop a workforce development plan for the whole of the Victorian agriculture sector.</p>	<p>Support in part</p> <p>Government acknowledges the importance of workforce development. However, like other industries, the agriculture sector is encouraged to take responsibility for its own workforce development strategies, noting that industry is best placed to solve industry workforce issues.</p> <p>Government notes that there are significant resources available for the sector, including workforce planning tools and existing workforce development models which can support industry to both create and implement workforce plans.</p> <p>In this context, there are opportunities for Government to support workforce planning efforts by ensuring that industry has access to relevant economic, labour and training market information to inform industry planning processes.</p> <p>In addition, where there are training market</p>

	<p>barriers to workforce development, Government is also able to work in partnership with industry to design solutions.</p> <p>An example of this is the <i>Make it Work: Regional Skills and Workforce Development</i> initiative. This joint initiative of the Victorian Government (through Regional Development Victoria) and AgriFood Skills Australia is aimed at increasing the attraction and retention of skilled workers, families and business across regional Australia and to strengthen the economic sustainability of agricultural communities. In Victoria, the two year program is being implemented in the Loddon, Gannawarra and Buloke municipalities by developing and implementing a strategic workforce plan. The <i>Make it Work</i> initiative is based on a cross-sector model of engagement that brings together government, training providers, industry representatives and communities to develop strategies for securing a skilled workforce, enhancing workforce participation and improving long-term growth and competitiveness in agricultural regions undergoing transition.</p> <p>Government is also providing further assistance to industry to build farm management capability through the development of the Farm Business Management Skill Set through AgriFood Industry Skills Council. This Skill Set is designed to increase the ability of farmers to manage their farm business, one element of which is human resources and workforce planning.</p>
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Teaching Victorian school students about agriculture

The Report highlights the benefits for students if food and fibre production examples were integrated into the general school curriculum. It also calls for advocacy to ensure that the profile of food and fibre production is increased as the new Australian Curriculum is introduced.

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 7: Supporting the use of food and fibre production examples in teaching</p> <p>That the Victorian Government encourage and support schools and teachers to use food and fibre production as a context within relevant broader disciplines in the curriculum such as mathematics, science and geography.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government supports any efforts by schools wanting to use food and fibre as a context within other curriculum areas.</p> <p>DEECD currently provides schools with advice and resources to support a themed approach to teaching and learning that incorporates a range of subjects.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: Increasing the profile of food and fibre production in the Australian Curriculum</p> <p>That the Victorian Government advocate for sustainable food and fibre production to be included as an organising idea in the cross-curriculum sustainability priority of the Australian Curriculum.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will lead feedback to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority on the development of the Australian Curriculum, in collaboration with DEECD, the Catholic Education Commission Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: Supporting the delivery of VCE Agricultural and Horticultural Studies</p> <p>That the Victorian Government commit to the provision of VCE Agricultural and Horticultural Studies into the future and explore strategies to assist rural and regional schools to deliver this subject, such as clustering and online delivery.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government is committed to the delivery of VCE Agricultural and Horticultural Studies. However, decisions about the provision of particular curriculum options (including Certificates in Agriculture), rest with individual schools, and in some cases schools may cluster together for the provision of programs. DEECD is not able to directly influence the curriculum choices of schools.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: Reviewing the scaling of VCE subjects in areas experiencing skills shortages</p> <p>That the Victorian Government review</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>While Government acknowledges the intention of this recommendation, the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre</p>

<p>the scaling of VCE subjects, such as VCE Agricultural and Horticultural Studies, where the relevant industry sector is experiencing skills shortages, to encourage greater enrolments in these important areas.</p>	<p>(VTAC) scales study scores and the Victorian Government does not have any direct influence over the process.</p> <p>The scaling process is carried out each year for every VCE study and VCE VET program with a study score. There are no pre-determined outcomes—the adjustments are based on the performance of students each year.</p> <p>This independent process ensures that the nation-wide ATAR provides a fair comparison for all students regardless of the combination of studies they take, including Agricultural or Horticulture Studies.</p> <p>To increase interest in VCE Agricultural and Horticultural Studies, the Government has committed to the appointment of a Food and Fibre Careers Officer. The role will help secondary school careers advisers promote study pathways related to the food and fibre industry.</p> <p>In this regard, Government also welcomes the commitment from industry to work more closely with schools in order to increase the interest in agriculture and horticulture studies.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: Reviewing the VET in Schools program</p> <p>That the Victorian Government review the delivery of the VET in Schools program with a view to examining the quality, flexibility, delivery and resourcing of the program.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>The Victorian Government has commenced a review of the VET in Schools program. The review is focussing on how effectively vocational education is being delivered in senior secondary schools, how well Government investment is being used to achieve results for students and how well the current system is placed to continue to deliver job- and study-ready students into the future.</p> <p>This review will take into consideration the fact that decisions about the provision of particular curriculum options (including Certificates in Agriculture) rest with</p>

	<p>individual schools, and in some cases schools may cluster together for the provision of programs. The review could also consider broadening the range of scored VCE VET programs to include VCE VET Agriculture.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: Supporting established school agricultural education programs</p> <p>That the Victorian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support and promote established agricultural education programs that provide students with an understanding of where their food and fibre comes from and the available careers within agriculture • recognise excellence in school agricultural education and training through awards to teachers, schools and industry partners • support the expansion of the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education program into Victoria. 	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>(a) Support</p> <p>Victorian schools have the autonomy to make decisions regarding curriculum programs and implementation approaches. Many individual schools, clusters and networks already have strategic partnerships with industry. Educators use these relationships to support the design and delivery of curriculum and demonstrate to students how contemporary areas of mathematics and science are applied in the workplace. DEECD will continue to support schools to utilise such partnerships into the future.</p> <p>Government also welcomes the commitment from industry to work more closely with schools in order to increase the interest in agricultural and horticultural studies.</p> <p>(b) Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government recognises educational accomplishment across all study areas, including agriculture. Teaching and support staff can be recognised in one of 14 award categories in the annual Victorian Education Excellence Awards. Students are recognised through the Premier’s VCE Awards in disciplines including Agricultural and Horticultural Studies, Environmental Science, and Outdoor and Environmental Studies. Students and teachers of VET Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Studies and Conservation and Land management are also eligible for awards under the Victorian Training Awards.</p>

	<p>The Victorian Schools Garden Awards encourage primary and secondary school communities to come together and get involved in the development of green spaces within the school environment. Schools such as Tyrell College have successfully partnered with local industry to assist delivery of agriculture-related programs.</p> <p>Government notes that there are also a wide range of industry specific awards that recognise the achievements of both agriculture educators and students.</p> <p>(c) Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government will continue to promote the benefits of schools working in partnerships with industry organisations, including linking curriculum resources as relevant.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13: Promoting school partnerships with the agriculture sector</p> <p>That the Victorian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compile case studies of successful agricultural school-industry partnerships operating in Victorian schools • promote opportunities for schools to work with local farmers and industries within the agriculture sector to provide students with hands-on agricultural experience and access to expert information and advice • investigate partnering with AgriFood Skills Australia to introduce an agribusiness gateway to industry schools program in Victoria. 	<p>Support</p> <p>(a) DEECD will use a case study approach to assist schools in sharing good practice of successful agricultural school-industry partnerships operating in Victorian schools.</p> <p>DEECD will develop a Partnerships in Learning Framework as part of Towards Victoria as a Learning Community.</p> <p>(b) Government is working with industry to support industry commitments to working with schools in order to increase the interest in agricultural and horticultural studies. This includes exploring opportunities for food and fibre professionals to speak to school students about career opportunities in the food and fibre industry.</p> <p>(c) DEECD will work with AgriFood Skills Australia to see whether opportunities exist to work more closely with Victorian schools, noting existing budget constraints.</p>

Education, training and support for Victorian school teachers

The Report suggests greater promotion of curriculum resources to Victorian school teachers.

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 14: Increasing the opportunities for pre-service teachers to study agricultural education</p> <p>That the Victorian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with higher education providers that offer both agricultural and teaching qualifications to explore the possibility of introducing an agriculture method into their teaching courses • provide scholarships to attract students into studying an agriculture method as part of their teaching courses • provide learning on agricultural education for all pre-service teachers • provide increased opportunities for pre-service teachers to work in schools with an agricultural focus as part of their teaching placements. 	<p>Support in part</p> <p>The Victorian Government meets with the Victorian Council of Deans on a regular basis regarding matters related to pre-service education. The Government will raise the possibility of higher education providers introducing an agriculture method and practical placement opportunities into their teaching courses in future discussions.</p> <p>Currently, the Government provides a range of scholarships in priority high demand curriculum areas such as maths, science and languages. In addition, it also provides a number of attraction and retention scholarships to attract teachers to rural and remote Victoria.</p> <p>The Student Teacher Practicum Scheme is also available to assist pre-service teachers with their placements to cover accommodation, travel and out of pocket expenses. This scheme is used as an attraction strategy to enable the pre-service teacher to experience a rural placement and influence future employment decisions.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: Agricultural professional learning for teachers</p> <p>That the Victorian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support existing organisations such as the Victorian Association of Agricultural and Horticultural Educators, the Primary Industries Education Foundation and the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education to deliver more agricultural professional learning activities in Victoria • support teachers to attend 	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>(a) Victorian Association of Agricultural and Horticultural Educators and other agricultural/horticultural-related industries currently belong to the Environment, Science and Technology Strategic Partnerships Program network, which is a professional learning community.</p> <p>DEECD will continue to support Strategic Partnerships Program networks and their work in school and teacher capacity building</p>

<p>agricultural professional learning activities.</p>	<p>(b) DEECD provides funding to government schools through the Student Resource Package. Individual schools make decisions about how to use the funding to support the delivery of learning and teaching programs and professional learning for teachers.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16: Reintroduce LandLearn</p> <p>That the Victorian Government reintroduce the LandLearn program or an equivalent program.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>The Government will continue to maintain the existing learning teaching resources developed by LandLearn on the program's website. This will ensure the resources continue to be available for schools seeking to incorporate sustainable agriculture and natural resource management studies into their curriculum.</p> <p>DEECD will also continue to make resources available to Victorian schools, teachers and students online through Scootle (the national repository) and FUSE (the Victorian repository). This includes linking to new resources by organisations such as Primary Industries Education Foundation and the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17: Resources and professional learning for agriculture and horticulture teachers</p> <p>That the Victorian Government work with the Victorian Association of Agricultural and Horticultural Educators to identify opportunities to resource a part-time position within the Association to collate relevant curriculum resources and organise professional learning.</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>DEECD provides funding to government schools through the Student Resource Package.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18: Promoting available agricultural teaching resources</p> <p>That the Victorian Government promote the teaching resources</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>DEECD makes resources available to Victorian schools, teachers and students online through Scootle (the national repository) and FUSE (the Victorian</p>

<p>available through the Primary Industries Education Foundation and the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education to Victorian schools and teachers.</p>	<p>repository). These materials will continue to be promoted with agricultural/horticultural organisations.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19: The agriculture sector’s investment in teaching resources</p> <p>That the industry associations within the agriculture sector direct funding to established programs which produce teaching resources, such as the Primary Industries Education Foundation and the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government note that this recommendation is aimed at industry. Government recognises the importance of ensuring an industry co-contribution to investment in the development of teaching resources. DEECD will endeavour to influence industry in this respect, but has no direct control over the use of industry funds.</p>
<p>Recommendation 20: Designing new curriculum resources</p> <p>That the Victorian Government, through the LandLearn program or equivalent program, design new curriculum resources for Victorian schools following the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, in consultation with the agriculture sector, teachers and the Primary Industries Education Foundation.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Through the proposed National Trade Cadetship initiative, being developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, the Agrifoods industry has been identified as one of three industries being supported by their respective Industry Skills Council for the development of a subject for inclusion at Year 11 and 12 of the National Curriculum.</p> <p>In addition, DEECD sources curriculum resources and makes these available to schools through Scootle (the national repository) and FUSE (the Victorian repository). DEECD does not intend to develop new resources in direct response to this recommendation, but will continue to provide access to new and existing resources through the above mechanisms.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21: Assisting schools to maintain school farms and facilities</p> <p>That the Victorian Government provide additional support to schools with established farms.</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>All Victorian schools receive school-based funding for school infrastructure and programs specific to individual schools through the Student Resource Package (SRP). This funding includes a grounds allowance for ground maintenance and improvement, a building area allowance and funding for maintenance and minor</p>

	<p>works.</p> <p>Principals have complete autonomy in how they spend their SRP and can choose to direct all or none of their school infrastructure funding to their facilities. Principals also have autonomy to implement a staffing structure to support the school's curriculum direction. With schools that maintain farms, Principals can factor in the cost of a farm assistant within their given budgets.</p> <p>Schools in other states, including New South Wales and Queensland, do not have the same level of financial autonomy as Victorian schools do. Therefore it is difficult to compare the additional support provided to schools with farms in these states with the Victorian SRP model.</p>
<p>Recommendation 22: Assisting schools to meet animal ethics requirements</p> <p>That the Victorian Government streamline and simplify the ethics requirements for schools using animals in agricultural education programs and improve the education and advice available to schools about the animal ethics requirements.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>DEECD will work with the Department of Environment and Primary Industries to assist schools to meet animal ethics requirements, particularly, DEECD will continue to chair the Victorian School Animal Ethics Committee to support schools' compliance with legislation and codes.</p>

The delivery of vocational education and training for the agriculture sector

The Report makes recommendations regarding the impact of current training market settings, including eligibility criteria, regulated training, skill sets, increased industry influence in training market outcomes and access to training market information.

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 23: Monitoring the impact of funding reforms on agricultural training providers</p> <p>That the Victorian Government monitor the impact of the 2012 fee and funding reforms on agricultural training providers to determine whether tuition subsidies are adequate.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Government is committed to ensuring that public investment in vocational training supports the goal of fostering a strong, sustainable training market, with as many people as possible developing skills that lead to real jobs and a more certain future.</p> <p>As part of the Refocusing Vocational Training reforms, the Victorian Government established the Market Monitoring Unit (MMU) to monitor the integrity and efficiency of the government subsidised training market, including competition, price and the quality of training outcomes.</p> <p>A primary role of the MMU is to monitor, review and report on market trends. This includes consideration of training in regional Victoria with particular attention to the supply of skilled workforces into regional economies.</p> <p>The Industry Participation Model enables providers and enrolment trends to be tracked from an industry perspective. This information is published through the Quarterly Vocational Training Market Outcome Reports.</p>
<p>Recommendation 24: Improving language, literacy and numeracy skills of agricultural students</p> <p>That the Victorian Government support and promote the work of AgriFood Skills Australia to integrate language, literacy and numeracy skills into agricultural training.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Government supports the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and National Foundation Skills Training Package under the Victorian Training Guarantee. This will allow government contracted providers to integrate nationally recognised literacy and numeracy skills into subsidised vocational</p>

	training, including agricultural courses.
<p>Recommendation 25: Reviewing the application of the Victorian Training Guarantee to individuals with previous qualifications</p> <p>That the Victorian Government review the feasibility of allowing individuals whose highest qualification is over seven years old to access subsidised training places under the <i>Victorian Training Guarantee</i>.</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>Under the <i>Victorian Training Guarantee</i> criteria, students over the age of 20 who wish to access a government subsidised training place must undertake a qualification that is higher than any qualification/s they already hold, unless they are enrolling as an apprentice or studying a foundation level qualification. The intention is to ensure that a training entitlement is available to all Victorians seeking to gain a qualification for the first time, or improve their skill levels by gaining a qualification higher than the one they already hold.</p> <p>The Victorian Government’s Workers in Transition Program helps retrenched workers in transition to access career advice, skills recognition assessments and a government subsidised training place (regardless of their prior qualification).</p> <p>The Victorian Government does not intend to further extend or review the existing eligibility criteria at this time.</p>
<p>Recommendation 26: Treatment of agricultural traineeships under the Victorian Training Guarantee</p> <p>That the Victorian Government enable individuals undertaking traineeships in occupations experiencing skills shortages to access government-subsidised training places under the Victorian Training Guarantee.</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>Under the <i>Victorian Training Guarantee</i> criteria, the intention is to ensure that a training entitlement is available to all Victorians seeking to gain a qualification for the first time, or to improve their skill levels by gaining a qualification higher than the one they already hold.</p> <p>In response to addressing skills shortages, the Victorian Government has refocused training subsidies to encourage the delivery of training in these areas. The subsidies and regional loadings have been applied to agriculture courses in recognition of the ongoing need for skilled graduates.</p> <p>Government notes that as the majority of agricultural training is not undertaken as</p>

	<p>part of a traineeship, and that in some sectors, over 65 per cent of existing agricultural workers hold no post-compulsory qualification, there are not significant barriers for people wishing to access a government subsidised training place in agricultural studies.</p>
<p>Recommendation 27: Enhancing access to agricultural VET in rural and regional areas</p> <p>That the Victorian Government investigate and put in place measures to enhance access to agricultural VET in rural and regional Victoria, such as increased use of information and communications technology to deliver training courses.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government has provided \$200 million in competitive funding for Victorian TAFEs to support innovation; provide TAFEs with greater commercial and operating autonomy; and, help them adapt to changing learner and industry needs. Regional and rural TAFEs are being supported by an independent facilitator and with funding to help in the development of business transformation strategies</p> <p>The Victorian Government is reviewing existing e-learning and online tools. The review will inform future investment decisions.</p> <p>Government has also commenced a pilot on Technology Enabled Learning Centres which may have some applications for agriculture study. This possibility will be further investigated once the pilot has been completed.</p>
<p>Recommendation 28: Supporting skill sets for agricultural VET</p> <p>That the Victorian Government provide greater support and flexibility in funding and delivering skill sets to the agriculture sector.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>While the importance of individual skills sets is recognised and the <i>Victorian Training Guarantee</i> provides the flexibility for students to undertake a selection of units from nationally recognised qualifications, the formal acquisition of nationally-recognised accredited qualifications is still vital so that workers are able to transition between jobs and employers are assured of the range and level of skills held by prospective employees.</p> <p>DEECD supports the development of Skill</p>

	Sets by the Industry Skills Council, AgriFood Skills Australia.
<p>Recommendation 29: Promoting business and human resource skills and health, wellbeing and safety education</p> <p>That the Victorian Government promote the importance of business and human resource skills and also health, wellbeing and safety education to training providers and the agriculture sector.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>The flexibility of training packages already enables industry to negotiate units of competency as part of qualifications that align with industry needs.</p> <p>Should industry value the integration of skills related to business and human resources and health, wellbeing and safety education, then industry should work directly with training providers to ensure that course content is in line with industry needs.</p> <p>A good industry led example is The People in Dairy program. In addition, Government is able to disseminate good practice examples where training is tailored to industry needs through the Industry Participation Model.</p>
<p>Recommendation 30: Supporting the agriculture sector to contribute to the development of agricultural training</p> <p>That the Victorian Government support individuals and industry associations within the agriculture sector to participate on training provider boards and advisory committees for agricultural training in the VET sector.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Government recognises the benefit of working in partnership with industry to support innovative and sustainable industry-led solutions. DEECD works closely with the agriculture sector through the Industry Participation Model. As part of regular consultations, the Department will ascertain how to best support the agriculture sector to contribute to the development of agricultural training.</p> <p>The AHC10 Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package is regularly revised by the Industry Skills Council, AgriFood Skills Australia, to ensure continuous improvement and industry relevance of qualifications and skill sets. DEECD facilitates and supports consultation within the agricultural sector in the development and maintenance of national agricultural qualifications and training products as part of the consultation process.</p>

<p>Recommendation 31: Supporting agricultural industry bodies to act as training brokers</p> <p>That the Victorian Government support industry associations within the agriculture sector to carry out a training broker role with respect to agricultural training.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Where the Victorian Government is aware of effective arrangements, it will support industry associations to access information regarding best practice models relating to industry-based training brokers.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the Industry Participation Model supports direct engagement between industry and training providers and is aimed at building industry capability to negotiate the training it requires without relying on intermediaries. These direct relationships support more robust training market outcomes.</p>
<p>Recommendation 32: Ensuring data on VET meets the needs of the agriculture sector and training providers</p> <p>That the Victorian Government review whether the current practices for collecting and disclosing data on VET are meeting the needs of the agriculture sector and training providers.</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>DEECD works closely with industry through the Industry Participation Model. Industry consultations enable Government to share, discuss and validate training and labour market information with key stakeholders. Through this process, the Department is able to gain feedback on the relevance and usefulness of data provided.</p> <p>As part of the Victorian Government's <i>Better Information</i> initiative, it has recently published a range of labour and training market information as well as custom industry alerts, including for the agriculture industry. In addition, DEECD is scoping a project to enable data to be more accessible for all stakeholders. The Victorian Farmers Federation is involved in this project.</p>

Agricultural colleges and the VET workforce

The Report requests a commitment from Government to examine the use of Victoria's agricultural colleges to investigate their future role in agriculture education and training. It also highlights the need for greater flexibility to attract and retain a highly skilled VET teacher workforce.

<p>Recommendation 33: Supporting Victoria's agricultural colleges into the future</p> <p>That the Victorian Government commit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivering agricultural training at the agricultural colleges • maintaining the facilities at the agricultural colleges. 	<p>Support</p> <p>The Victorian Government is committed to Victoria's agricultural colleges. The current agreement with the operators of the agricultural colleges ensures that they are operated as viable farm properties, including reinvestment in equipment and upkeep.</p>
<p>Recommendation 34: Exploring new opportunities for Victoria's agricultural colleges</p> <p>That the Victorian Government work with the operators of the agricultural colleges and the industry associations within the agriculture sector to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct a feasibility study into how the colleges could be better utilised to deliver agricultural education to school, VET and higher education students • revitalise the college facilities through attracting new investment. 	<p>Support</p> <p>Government is committed to maintaining agricultural colleges in Victoria and would welcome the opportunity to investigate how these important assets can be used most effectively into the future.</p> <p>DEECD supports the operators of these colleges to enable them to secure commercial investments to maximise the use of the properties in line with their primary purpose of delivering agriculture and related education and training.</p>
<p>Recommendation 35: Attracting and retaining VET agriculture teachers</p> <p>That the Victorian Government support VET training providers to offer remuneration that attracts and retains talented agriculture teachers in a competitive market.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>As part of <i>Next Steps for Refocusing Vocational Training in Victoria – Supporting a Modern Workforce</i>, the Victorian Government announced changes that will provide greater flexibility for TAFE institutes to negotiate their own enterprise bargaining agreements.</p> <p>Private registered training providers in Victoria are already able to negotiate flexible enterprise bargaining arrangements in line with the Modern Award for VET Professionals.</p>

	<p>Government further supports the development of the VET workforce through funding to the VET Development Centre.</p>
<p>Recommendation 36: Enhancing industry currency and teaching practices in the VET sector</p> <p>That the Victorian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate the best ways to maintain industry currency and enhance the teaching practices of agriculture teachers in the VET sector • support VET providers to contract experts to deliver agricultural VET • introduce incentives for experts from the agriculture sector to undertake VET teaching qualifications • explore strategies to reduce the administrative demands on VET teachers. 	<p>Support in part</p> <p>(a) Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government established the VET Development Centre in recognition of the importance of the VET workforce. The Centre is responsible for the professional development of the vocational training workforce in Victoria. The Government suggests that interested agricultural training providers work in partnership with the VET Development Centre to design a program to explore opportunities to enhance agriculture teacher capability. In addition, DEECD will disseminate best practice approaches relating to greater industry engagement with providers through the Industry Participation Model.</p> <p>(b) Support in principle</p> <p>There are no restrictions on training providers partnering with local farmers or experts in the field. This ongoing industry engagement is an important part of the vocational learning environment.</p> <p>(c) Support in principle</p> <p>A scholarship program is already available for Victorians working in VET or seeking to work in the VET sector. The scholarships are focused on supporting study in Diploma level studies in VET teaching and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. These scholarships are available through the VET Development Centre.</p> <p>(d) Do not support</p> <p>The Victorian Government is committed to reducing the regulatory burden on</p>

	<p>businesses in Victoria and acknowledges the importance of this recommendation.</p> <p>However, the Government notes the reporting requirements for registered training providers that relate to this recommendation are in line with standards set by independent state and national regulators for the VET system.</p> <p>In terms of Victorian Government contracts, every effort is made to ensure that reporting requirements do not duplicate those set by the regulatory bodies.</p>
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The current higher education landscape

The Report recommends that Government call for the collection of clear data on agricultural higher education enrolments and completions.

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 37: Improving data collection on agricultural higher education</p> <p>That the Minister for Higher Education and Skills advocate at Ministerial Council level for the collection of clear data on agricultural higher education enrolments and completions.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>All data for higher education enrolments and completions is collected by the Commonwealth (Department of Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education). Data is available by field of study including Agricultural, Horticulture and Viticulture, Forestry, Fisheries, Environmental and Other Agricultural, Environmental and Related Studies.</p> <p>Victoria has recently obtained agreement from the Commonwealth that data will be available in a more timely manner.</p> <p>It is anticipated that 10 years of higher education performance data will be made available to Victoria in August/September this year – in line with the data protocols, recently endorsed at a national level. The data will be used to support improved performance analysis of the higher education space. DEECD will work closely with the Commonwealth to ensure timely approval from them on any data that might be reported publicly.</p>

Enhancing agricultural higher education

The Report focuses on industry and universities working together to design and marketing of higher education qualifications as well as Commonwealth policy on eligibility for supported places in agriculture courses.

<p>Recommendation 38: Extending Commonwealth-supported higher education places to higher education providers offering agricultural degree courses</p> <p>That the Minister for Higher Education and Skills advocate at ministerial council level for higher education providers offering agricultural degree courses to be eligible for Commonwealth-supported higher education places.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>All Victorian universities that offer degree courses in agriculture are able to offer Commonwealth supported places. Under the current demand driven system, every eligible student that applies should be able to get a place.</p> <p>The Minister for Higher Education and Skills continues to advocate for expansion of Commonwealth supported higher education places to all high quality Victorian higher education providers.</p>
<p>Recommendation 39: Improving the marketing of agricultural higher education courses</p> <p>That the Victorian providers of agricultural higher education explore new opportunities to market or rebrand their agricultural courses.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government notes that this recommendation is aimed at tertiary education providers. Government does not have a role in promoting one higher education course over another. The most effective means for universities to increase enrolments is through their own marketing initiatives, and through provision of a high quality, engaging educational experience. Government supports universities in their efforts to effectively promote their courses in this way.</p>
<p>Recommendation 40: Improving the design of agricultural higher education Courses</p> <p>That the Victorian providers of agricultural higher education consider using new approaches to course design to attract more students into agricultural higher education courses in line with growing industry demand.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government recognises that the State's autonomous universities play a leading role in creating and imparting knowledge that supports society to address a wide range of challenges. Universities continually refine their course offerings to ensure that they produce work-ready graduates who are prepared to meet the needs of the community, industry and government.</p> <p>Government supports cooperative working</p>

	<p>relationships between industry and university agriculture faculties so that their courses are continuously informed by contemporary agriculture principles and practices.</p>
<p>Recommendation 41: Improving pathways from VET to higher education</p> <p>That VET and higher education providers continue to work together to improve pathways between agricultural VET and higher education courses.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government supports the promotion of pathways between vocational training and higher education to produce quality graduates. It has supported partnerships between vocational training organisations (TAFE institutes, private training providers and Learn Local organisations) and higher education institutions (universities and private higher education providers) to provide pathways from vocational training to higher education in regional Victoria through the establishment of the \$20 million Regional Partnerships Facilitation Fund.</p>
<p>Recommendation 42: Marketing agricultural careers to undergraduate students from relevant disciplines</p> <p>That the industry associations within the agriculture sector work collaboratively to market careers in agriculture to undergraduate students from relevant disciplines such as science and natural resource management.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government does not promote one career over another. The most effective means for industry to attract new graduates is through its own promotional activities, and by demonstrating the availability of fulfilling careers in the sector.</p> <p>Government notes that this recommendation is aimed at industry and that there are opportunities for collaboration between universities and industry to market career outcomes from a range of disciplines.</p>
<p>Recommendation 43: Attracting students into agricultural research</p> <p>The Victorian Government, higher education providers and the agriculture sector work together to identify measures to attract students into agricultural research.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Government does not have a role in promoting one research discipline over another. Government notes that primary responsibility for attracting research students into any discipline must sit with the industry itself and will depend on existing promotional opportunities at relevant tertiary education locations and through industry research bodies.</p>

Working together to achieve a world-class agriculture sector

The report recommends funding and establishing an Education and Training Council for Agriculture.

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 44: Establishing a Victorian agricultural education and training council</p> <p>That the agriculture sector, the education and training sector and the Victorian Government establish a Victorian agricultural education and training council.</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>While the Victorian Government acknowledges the intent of this recommendation, there are already numerous industry funded networks and bodies that enable industry and agricultural education providers to coordinate their activities.</p> <p>Some examples include the Grains Industry Training Network, People in Dairy, Victorian Farmers Federation Workplace Relations Committee, State Network of Agriculture Training Providers and the Horticulture Training Council.</p> <p>To avoid duplication of effort, it is suggested that these existing networks and bodies be strengthened by industry in line with industry needs.</p>
<p>Recommendation 45: Funding to assist with the establishment of the Victorian agricultural education and training council</p> <p>That the Victorian Government provide funding to assist in the establishment of the Victorian agricultural education and training council.</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>See recommendation 44.</p>