



AGRI-FOOD  
INDUSTRY SKILLS  
COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2000-07

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Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited  
(Incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory  
as a company limited by guarantee)  
ANNUAL REPORT 2005-06

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John Baker, Chairman

# Agri-Food Industry Skills Council

The Agri-Food Industry Skills Council's strategic intent is to improve the business performance of the agri-food industry through the development and implementation of innovative skill and workforce solutions. It operates in partnership with its industry, enterprise and government stakeholders to address the skills and workforce issues facing industry and to refine, simplify and support the implementation of high-quality, nationally recognised training products and services that serve industry needs.

The council was established by the Australian Government in May 2004 to develop and deliver industry-driven training and skills development products and services across all agri-food industry sectors. The council represents the agri-food industry through its 14-member private sector board and is responsible for the broad industry sectors listed below:

## Food processing

- beverages (including wine) and pharmaceuticals

## Rural and related industries

- rural production (agriculture)
- amenity horticulture
- conservation and land management
- animal care and management

## Meat

- abattoirs
- smallgoods
- meat processing
- meat retailing

## Seafood

- aquaculture
- fishing operations
- seafood processing
- fishing compliance
- fishing charter operations

## Racing

- thoroughbred
- harness
- greyhound

The council is a registered private company and receives its core funding from the Australian Government's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and competes for other funding from industry and government programs.

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# CHARTING A NEW COURSE

## Report from the Chairman

On behalf of my fellow directors it gives me great pleasure to present the council's third annual report, representing what I believe is another significant milestone in the council's progress and development.

The council is celebrating its third full year of activities and I can say with confidence that we have overcome some challenges to further strengthen the council's performance and reputation with our partners from industry, governments and training organisations.

In last year's report, I spoke of gaining much clearer appreciation of the agri-food industry through the research and consultations associated with the publication of the national Industry Skills Report and the challenges of dealing with many of the broad issues presenting to agri-food in general – drought and the resultant loss of workers, water shortages, major skills and labour shortages. This information underpinned the implementation of a revised strategy and action plan for the council.

Financial year 2006-07 saw the consolidation of the work of the council in reforming and continuously improving training packages, and we also commenced a process to restructure the Board to move to a smaller and skills-based rather than a representative Board to meet best practice expectations. Once implemented, these changes will build on and expand on the work of the inaugural Board which has overseen the development of the council, an intense and industry-driven work program and strong partnerships across industry, government and training providers.

Governance arrangements have also been reviewed and modified to broaden industry engagement and advisory arrangements and to ensure transparent operations and accountability.



John Baker, Chairman

One of the highlights of the 2006-07 year was the successful inaugural National Conference in Melbourne that attracted more than 150 key industry identities and provided a foundation for the council's role in bringing together the vast variety of industry sectors that come together under the agri-food banner.

The agrifood industry is of an enormous diversity and breadth and we recognise with great pride its place in the Australian pantheon of heritage and its ongoing contribution to the national economy and community wellbeing – and the opportunities for export growth is significant.

A key barrier to the sustainability and growth of the industry is the major shortage of skills and labour. The council's work is therefore aimed at finding solutions through direct engagement with industry, government and training providers on reforming training packages, looking at ways to attract and retain workers and developing exemplar demonstration projects to extend best practice ideas and models across industry sectors. These initiatives, and encouraging enterprises to invest in people development and training, aims to create a favourable employment and careers environment to attract and retain a quality workforce.

The agrifood industry employs around 900,000 people across agrifood and generates some \$208 billion a year towards the Australian economy.

We are fully aware that the bulk of the 130,000 enterprises that create the agri-food industry are hard working family operations, and I think that we are in a position where we can – and I believe do - make a difference for the betterment and wellbeing of all Australians.

This has been a year of great change for the Board and the council and I believe we have set in train reforms that position us well to meet the immediate and longer term skills and workforce challenges.

On behalf of the Board I warmly acknowledge the contributions and support of our industry collaborators and contributors who have worked alongside us to achieve good outcomes for the industry and the nation. I also acknowledge the work of the CEO and staff of the Council and our advisory committees for their strong contributions to the council.

**John Baker**  
Chairman

# OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL AND BOARD ACTIVITIES

During the financial reporting year 2006-07, the council entered into a new phase of its development. The Board continued in its role of guiding the council's strategic engagement with industry and agri-food stakeholder groups, and leading the continuing development of training packages, products and services and building the council's corporate capacity.

The Board developed a new strategic approach and introduced fresh priorities during the financial year to underpin the new a new funding agreement from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), provided early in 2007. This new approach was based on the successful completion of core projects and foundation building frameworks during the first two years of council activities (the council was established in May, 2004).

The emphasis moved firmly to delivering skills and workforce solutions to industry and enterprises through the development and implementation of quality training products and services coupled with innovative project initiatives.

A new operational work plan was overseen by the Board, and the Board model itself and corporate governance reforms entered a final stage of implementation. These developments were supported by a new organisational structure put in place during 2006-70 to strengthen industry leadership and influence and enhance company performance.

The implementation of a revised stakeholder management plan and a review of the membership and roles of the council's advisory committees would further expand industry involvement.

## GOVERNANCE

The Board supported the adoption of best practice governance processes in the company. In addressing the specific requirements of the Government's evaluation of Industry Skills Council and the new Funding Agreement, the Board established a sub-committee to carry out a fundamental review of board and governance arrangements.

Meetings were held in February and June 2007 and the Board agreed to implement an industry-driven model to meet all requirements of the Funding Agreement. This aimed to reduce the size of the Board's membership from fourteen to nine directors and to adopt a fully transparent process for identifying the new Board membership.

The main characteristics of the new Board model were as follows:

- An independent Board selection committee to select new directors based on guiding criteria, determined by the current Board. The role of the selection committee would be to select nine preferred director nominees following a public notice inviting nominations;
- The selection committee (including the chairman of the committee) would be chosen on the basis of its independence from current Board and standing committee membership.
- The process adopted for identifying potential directors would be public and transparent, with notifications being placed in relevant newspapers. Current Board members would be able to nominate as well as any interested person.

## SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Two rounds of Australia-wide consultations with industry, governments and RTOs provided the council with valuable data and contemporary information on skills and workforce trends, as well as a strengthened relationship with stakeholders.

These consultations formed the basis of the 'Integrated Regional Initiative' jointly developed with the Resources and Infrastructure Industry Skills Council, and which was broadly endorsed by industry and relevant Commonwealth portfolios. This was a key council priority to find a sustainable solution for the chronic shortage of people and skills in regional and rural Australia.

The council considered training packages to be a fundamental platform for the vocational education and training (VET) system and that they needed to be continuously improved to meet the dynamic needs of industry. To achieve this for the agri-food industry, the council philosophy was to focus on continuous training package improvement, comprising three equally important elements;

1. Training packages must respond to industry by showing increased flexibility but reduced duplication and complexity
2. Training packages must focus on higher level technical skills and knowledge and employability skills
3. Training packages must encourage quality delivery by exceptional training providers

In addition to reforming and continuously improving training products and services, the council gave priority to the cross-industry application and implementation of training packages.

An example of this was an innovative Training Package Design Improvement



Jane Brownbill, Senior Manager

Model developed by the council, which incorporated a competency management system and data base.

This model was designed to eliminate duplication, reduce the focus on individual training packages, facilitate 'unpacking' and implementation and improve industry and enterprise outcomes.

This model was applied to managing the merger of three training packages (Amenity Horticulture, Conservation and Land Management and Rural Production).

The model received support from industry and the National Primary Industry Providers' Network. TAFE NSW collaborated with the council (providing significant resources) to test the application of the model in implementing the merged training packages.

Other training package initiatives that were addressed include:

- identifying and incorporating 'skills sets' into training packages
- completing a national licensing/regulation audit to inform national consistency for agri-food licensing arrangements
- embedding employability skills into all training packages and
- involving a high-level registered training organisation (RTO) reference group in strategy and priority development.

The council sought a number of other skills and workforces initiatives, including:

- Agri-food pathfinders
  - *Indigenous land management* – a pathway focussing on chemical and weed management leading to careers in horticulture, agriculture and natural resource management
  - *Basics!* – an introduction into the agri-food industry at a Certificate 1 level
  - *Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN)* – the council continues its commitment to increasing the LLN in the agri-food industry to assist business outcomes.
- Business compliance
  - Providing advice to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) on policy and projects relating to food safety, animal safety and environmental management systems.
- The council prepared to move to a continuous improvement process for modifying training packages once current major reviews were completed. This approach was adopted in finalising a training package improvement process for a major enterprise in the retail meat industry. It incorporated new standards into the training package while serving to pilot a new and more efficient model for training package endorsement.
- The council works closely with the other Industry Skills Councils to develop and negotiate proposals for joint solutions to improve the VET system. One example was the development, in consultation with DEST, of a revised endorsement process for training packages, an approach supported at the National Quality Council (NQC) level.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The council recognised that some 80 per cent of influence (value) would come from around 20 per cent its stakeholders. Effective stakeholder management became a fundamental council activity and a stakeholder management plan was established to guide the process.

Responsibility for interacting with stakeholders was shared by Board members, the CEO and managers, with coordination and management of the process facilitated centrally. Reports to Board meetings identified progress with implementation of the plan.

This was complemented by an enhanced communications and promotions strategy, comprised new corporate marketing material, improvements to the council's website, the launch of informational and industry bulletins and alerts and the expansion of a stakeholder data base.

The council met its obligations under the DEST Funding Agreement to 30 June 2007 and continued to build its leadership role and reputation with its diverse stakeholders.

The council's performance and achievements were supported through close collaboration and support from DEST, industry, enterprise, government and other stakeholders.

# SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

## **A Rationalisation (Continuous improvement and integrated framework)**

The council developed a model and strategy to reduce duplication and encourage portability of qualifications between industry silos. The model encouraged greater flexibility for training providers and made training packages more rigorous. The development of qualifications focused on the technical areas of work, with the embedding of employability skills to include soft skills.

The model was been tested through industry consultation and began validated through the formal review process.

The council was fine tuning a continuous improvement strategy to greatly improve the responsiveness of training packages.

## **B Training package reviews**

The council initiated an integrated approach to training package reviews to ensure consistency across all training packages and to ensure major policy directions were consistent.

The following training packages completed the initial Environment Scan during the reporting period

Phase of reviews.

- Amenity Horticulture
- Animal Care and Management
- Conservation and Land Management
- Food Processing
- Racing Industry
- Rural Production
- Seafood Industry

The meat industry completed its review, which began its endorsement process.

## **C Employability skills**

All units under agri-food training packages were analysed for employability skills. This analysis was to be provided to developers for inclusion into training packages as part

of the normal training package review consultation and redevelopment process

The council also provided each developer with an agreed template to ensure consistency of product.

## **D RTO reference group**

The group met once and had an agreed set of policy issues to work with the council to achieve. The high-level strategic group was a valuable factor in the implementation and continuous improvement of training packages.

This same group was involved in a Reframing the Future project. The project brought together RTOs and training package developers to work on a strategic action plan for the implementation of training packages for the agri-food industry.

## **E Capability building and innovative practices**

During 2005 the Council commissioned an Action Plan for the professional development of RTOs delivering training programs to the Agrifood industry. The philosophy behind this project was to empower and resource RTOs tot be able to develop and deliver training that is more focussed on the needs of industry and specific enterprises.

Due to the evaluation of ISCs and other uncertainties the roll-out of the Action Plan has be postponed.

## **F Industry Skills Report and national consultations**

This initial Industry Skills Report was a catalyst to describing the real issues facing the agri-food industry and the need for a coordinated approach to develop real and sustainable solutions.

During 2006 the Board and executive held further national consultations with high-level stakeholders to ensure that the findings of the report were still relevant. The executive found that the council did reflect the issues and that it was working to find solutions.

# NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2006



Arthur Blewitt, Chief Executive Officer



Peter Clack and Wayne Cornish, Deputy Chairman

The council held its first National Conference on 28-29 September 2006 at the Sofitel Hotel in Melbourne. Some 155 people attended and it proved to be a very successful conference.

This inaugural conference elevated the council's national standing and prestige, providing the council with some fresh, clear ideas, data and priorities to help guide future directions and planning.

The meeting format, theme, value for money and location were strongly supported. The average approval rating based on early analysis of the figures was 95.72 per cent overall, with 57.16 per cent saying they were very satisfied.

A significant proportion of the delegates reported being satisfied or very satisfied (60.7 per cent and 37.5 per cent) with the overall event - 1.8 per cent said they were dissatisfied.

The attendance set against agri-food industry sectors was: Food 18.05 per cent, Meat 9.72 per cent, Racing 12.5 per cent, Rural 48.61 per cent, and Seafood 11.12 per cent.

Email was found to be the most significant medium for promoting the conference, identified by 59 per cent of attendees - web was 3.27 per cent, mail-out 11.47 per cent, networking 21.31 per cent, and other 4.94 per cent.

## OUTCOMES

### Key themes and issues

Conference moderator, Peter Noonan, grouped conference outcomes under four broad themes:

- Government priorities
- External drivers
- Enterprises
- VET system and Industry Skills Councils

### Government priorities

- Skills and skills shortages high on political agenda, e.g. organisations like the council of Australian governments (COAG)
- There has been a shift from supply side of the skills agenda to the human capital agenda
- There is a greater focus on how skills are used and to skills required in diverse enterprises
- Skilled migration is now firmly on the agenda
- As is the issue of short-term semi-skilled migration
- There is a shift in emphasis to retraining the adult and existing workforce
- The emphasis is on outcomes not inputs and processes
- There are broad linkages to other impacting priorities – community development, sustainability, workforce participation
- There is a measurably increasing demand for higher level and generic skills

## External drivers

- Changes in global markets and increases in per capita production
- International urban consolidation and increase in demand for sophisticated and value added products
- Premium on value-adding - value in the system not just in raw produce - and in specialisation
- Environmental and water management issues
- Influence of requirements of external standards, quality assurance and compliance requirements
- Higher level skills and personal capabilities
- Population and workforce aging and the drift to cities and coast
- Time and cost pressures, including competition for labour from other sectors and exchange rate pressures

## Enterprises

- A primary issue is employee attraction and retention and skills shortages, but these are a particular problem in rural and regional areas
- Difficulty of describing and defining jobs and careers
- Diversity of enterprises
- Importance of recruitment and skilling local communities rather than relying on a mobile workforce
- Diversity of potential employees creating ongoing career paths in small and stable enterprises
- Difficulty of articulating needs and using flexibility in the vet system
- Specific challenges in terms of costs, market access and environmental factors
- But also case studies of success - importance of integrating skills with human resource development and other enterprise strategies
- Collaboration between enterprises in common locations

## VET system and Industry

### Skills Councils

- How vet products and services can be quickly and cost effectively applied: to respond to broader government priorities; to respond to growing diversity of enterprise needs
- Standardised solutions are no longer sufficient and must be part of community development and community renewal; and part of workforce development – not as an isolated intervention
- Greater focus is on the use and application of skills - vet as part of their human capital supply chain
- Greater focus on existing workforce up-skilling
- Challenge of lower skill needs
- Importance of innovation, continuous improvement and front-line management to help enterprises and workforce to adapt
- Renewal and professional development of vet workforce - facilitators not just teachers/trainers
- Engagement in local employment learning networks
- Importance of on-going industry leadership
- Importance of elearning for national, rapid response and cost effective learning
- Understanding enterprise, industry pressures and challenges
- Incorporation and certification of regulator and other compliance requirements
- Value of international research and benchmarking
- Need for more flexible packaging rules
- Challenge of delivery in remote localities
- Possible overarching priorities for ISCs
- Focus on use of standards and other products with enterprises, industry bodies and RTOs
- Linkages with human resource development and innovation networks

- Rapid development and renewal of standards and products
- Building understanding of eternal challenges, pressures facing industry.
- Ensuring units of competence can be flexibly used
- International benchmarking and integration with international standards compliance requirements
- Advocacy for industry in terms of relative priorities
- Linkages with other governmental industry agencies
- Skills and knowledge gained through both formal and informal learning important as is codified knowledge (e.g. Competency standards) and tacit knowledge (gained through experience) in the form of individual and workforce capabilities – not just skills.
- Focus under human capital agenda will also shift to how skills are used – for innovation, customer relationships, problem solving and for further learning – not just human capital measured through qualification levels.
- Contextualisation of skills for enterprise and individual needs and circumstances.
- Interest in how skills are used for broader workforce development and for community and social development – vet not a ‘stand alone’ intervention.
- Sustainability of environment and local economies and communities also a dominant concern – climate change rates higher than terrorism and an international issue.
- Shift also to focus more on adult learning/retraining and implications of this for vet pedagogy, skills sets, qualification structures recognition of prior learning etc.
- COAG priorities also include mutual recognition of occupational licensing and alignment and use of vet sector by regulators and shift to outcome audit and vet performance measures.

### **Issues and priorities for strategic and policy planning**

The council of Australian governments (COAG) - human capital agenda and analysis of future labour market needs highlights following key drivers:

- Workforce participation and productivity major economic challenges with raising skill and educational attainment levels the major priority
  - Particularly as population and workforce ages.
- Skills requirements are also changing;
  - Likely shift in demand for higher level skills
  - Also have to focus on needs of lower skilled as workforce participation strongly correlated with educational attainment and skills – equity of access both a social and economic issue.
- International competitive pressures also a growing factor:
  - Competition for skilled labour
  - Supply chains, technical and quality standards, cross cultural communications, portability and recognition of skills and qualifications.
  - Changes in global markets and consumer preferences particularly with growing income levels in third world.

# COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS STRATEGY

The Board adopted a communications and promotions strategy to underpin the council's strategic and business plans and all key performance areas.

- Enhance and give maximum effect to industry consultation processes
- Promote advocacy and advice
- Provide explanatory and promotional material for training products
- Give support to implementation processes
- Provide a strong corporate and industry presence to maximise business management

The strategy was designed to target all categories within the council's goals, strategies and outcomes:

- To deliver recognition as peak industry body focused on skills and workforce issues
- Become a leading source of information
- Be recognised as a partner with government and industry in combating workplace, locational and skills challenges
- Supporting training package strategies
- Winning stakeholder approval and recognition.

The strategy was to become the chief medium for maximising the council's industry presence and awareness of its role across all stakeholder categories:

- Agri-food and related industries
- Industry peak bodies
- Unions/employee and employer associations and organisations
- Employees and employers
- State/territory/federal agencies
- Registered training organisations (RTOs)
- Local and metropolitan councils/agencies
- News media/public
- Key interpersonal business partners/stakeholders
- Board and committee members

The strategy was designed to support three key council objectives:

- Engage and assist industries, enterprises and their workforce to integrate workforce and skill development with business goals
- Actively support the development, implementation and continuous improvement of high quality, nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) products and services and improve cross-industry efficiency.
- Ensure the availability of a range of support materials to assist in the delivery of training by providers.

## Corporate promotion and marketing

The council put these strategies into effect during the financial year. Key outcomes were:

- Corporate design concept for all promotional material
- Improved interactive website, with proven performance
- Greatly expanded distribution network
- Training package review support on-line
- Posters development
- Industry-led newsletter
- Establishment of industry bulletins, updates and alerts
- Media releases/features/news presence

# SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

## 2006-07 financial year

This is a summary of the achievements during the reporting year.

### 1. Board leadership and company governance

- Achieved a strategic and cohesive Board, which strives to achieve best business outcomes for the agri-food industry
- Reviewed and streamlined the constitution
- Followed best practice governance arrangements
- Standing committees revised by Board and re-focused on providing high level strategic advice on council priorities, aligning with industry expectations to ensure effective industry representation

### 2. Engaging with industry - small and large enterprises (SMEs)

- Achieved good stakeholder engagement across the country at national and state levels
- Analysed and wrote *Industry Skills Report* for the agri-food industry, driven by industry consultation and input. The report was cited in many other forums and has allowed the council and stakeholders to understand the agri-food industry in greater detail. The council now is undertaking extra and deeper analysis to further strengthen the report
- National consultations held during 2006 to update Industry Skills Report and to reconfirm priorities
- Ongoing consultations to engage small, medium and large business, and peak associations
- Board, standing committees and project steering committees involvement in projects to ensure industry input and guidance
- National Conference 2006 held with industry stakeholders from all sectors and themes for a sustainable future assessed

### 3. Implementing core program strategies and priorities

- Rationalisation of training packages – Agri-Food Industry Skills Council model broadly adopted by other ISCs
- Continuous improvement strategy developed
- Analysis of employability skills for all training packages – completion of integration for meat industry, integration for other agri-food Training packages imminent
- Continuous improvement reviews of all agri-food training packages underway through an integration model to ensure employability skills integration, rationalising and elimination of duplication and to create better and more current training packages, including the establishment of a framework approach to packaging
- Assessing the viability of merging the three training packages – Amenity Horticulture, Rural Production and Conservation and Land Management. Consultations with stakeholders were undertaken.
- As part of an initial analysis of all training package units of competencies the council developed cross-industry competencies and will further develop cross-sector competencies as part of the training package review process to further eliminate duplication
- Commissioned the writing of a Capability Building Action Plan, implemented during the financial year. This plan was an interactive developmental tool to assist RTOs with an improved delivery of programs to industry
- RTO reference group – to provide the council with high level implementation advice
- Industry skills and workforce assessments of wine industry (fully funded by industry)
- Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) – development of resources, professional development

of trainers and research into specific industry equity needs

- Extended the Food, Seafood, Racing and Rural Training Packages to include units of competency and qualifications in answer to industry emerging needs
- In answer to COAG – licensing and skills sets projects were initiated, with others to follow
- Development of a continually operating design improvement register to streamline training package review processes
- Successful migration of training packages to the new National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- Skills sets policy agreed and incorporated into training packages

#### **4. Policy and government**

- Involvement with the National Quality Council
  - Cross-industry rationalisation
  - Continuous improvement
  - Implementation and support
  - COAG initiatives
- Involvement with Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
  - Influencing migration policy
  - Food Safety Auditor standards
  - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy
- Working with DEST on policy development especially for continuous improvement and employability skills
- Crucial player for the VISA migration debate for agri-food industry
- Responded to and faced Parliamentary committee into two reviews – ‘Rural Training and Research’ (House of Representatives) and ‘Seasonal Workers – Asia-Pacific Solutions’ (Senate).
- The council pursued a cross-Government submission with the resources sector to address labour issues in regional and remote Australia

#### **5. Communication and Promotion**

- Communication and promotion strategy approved by Board and Implemented to target all stakeholders and media
- Significant media coverage and influence on debate
- Interactive web site.

#### **6. Industry Skills Council CEO Forum**

- High level initiatives completed
  - Working with National Quality Council – industry rationalisation
  - With DEST – employability skills
  - Submissions and input into state reviews
  - Conclusion of protocols with Tafe Directors Australia, Australian Council for Private Education and Training and the Enterprise RTO Forum
- The council responsible for supporting promotional and media plan for ISC’s and for ongoing communication plan coordination and liaison services – activities supported financially by all ISCs



# DIRECTORS' REPORT

The directors of Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited present their report on the company for the financial year ended 30th June 2007.

## Directors

The names of the directors in office at any time during and since the end of the financial year and details of their qualifications are as follows:

Name of Director	Occupation	Qualifications	Appointment (A)/ Resignation (R) Dates
John Baker	Managing Director	BSc	
Wayne Cornish	Farmer, Grazier/Horticulturalist		
Jennifer Dowell	Federal Secretary Food & Confectionery Division Australian Manufacturing Workers Union		
Kathleen Evans	Union Secretary	Grad Dip Health Science (Rehabilitation Counselling)	
Peter Griffin	Dairy Farmer		
Donald Hayes	Union Secretary		
Sylvia Healy	HR Manager – Learning & Development	B App Sci, Grad Dip Ed, Grad Cert Management	
John Hughes	General Manager, Operational Improvement		
Rob Jacobs	Chair, Primary Industry Skills Council (South Australia)		16/11/2006 (R)
Ralph Leutton	Program Manager	BSc MSc MAICD	
Robert Pennington	Professional Fisherman	B Eng, Dip T, Master Class V Certificate	
Douglas Stevens	National Industrial Officer	Indentured Machine Toolmaker, Production Engineering Technical Certificate Aust Public Service	
Roderick Thirkell- Johnston AM	Farmer, Grazier	BScAg FAIST	
Michael Horne	Manager, FarmBis Program Dept. of Primary Industries and Water	B Ag Sci, Grad Dip Ed, Grad Dip Ag Econ, Grad Cert Rural Management Studies	16/11/2006 (A)
Geoffrey Richards	Managing Director, Richgro Garden Products		16/11/2006 (A)

The directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

## Company Secretary

The following person held the position of company secretary at the end of the financial year:

Arthur Blewitt – his qualifications are BA FAICD FAIM. Mr Blewitt was appointed as company secretary on 17/8/2004. He is also the chief executive officer of the company.

## **Principal Activities and Review of Operations**

The principal activities of the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited during the financial year were:

For the following industries: Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical Manufacturing, Meat, Racing, Rural and Related Industries and Seafood:

- (a) advance education and training and to identify generic and emerging skills to support the employability of individuals and provide for local community development and to give strategic advice to government on these issues;
- (b) support the development, implementation and continuous improvement of high quality, nationally recognised training products and services, including enhancing innovation, rationalising materials where there are cross-industry synergies, and improving efficiency;
- (c) assist the Industry enterprises and their workforce to integrate skills development with business goals;
- (d) support accurate industry intelligence on future directions, including provision of strategic advice on industry skills and training needs to the National Industry Skills Forum;
- (e) work with the Industry to set the future direction for education and training within the Industry in order to meet both current and future needs;
- (f) research, collect, plan, coordinate and provide input to national research and develop strategies relating to education and training within the Industry;

There were no significant changes in the nature of these activities during the financial year.

## **Operating Results**

The net surplus after providing for income tax was \$221,911 (2006: \$34,460).

## **Dividends Paid or Proposed**

The constitution prohibits the payment of dividends to members of the Company.

## **Significant Changes in the State of Affairs**

There were no significant changes in the company's state of affairs during the financial year.

## **After Balance Date Events**

At the date of this report, the company had a contract with the Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training for 15 months grant funding from January 2007 to March 2008. As no agreement for future grant funding has been finalised, the Directors will be making a decision on the company's future operations within the next five months.

Except for the matter noted above, no other matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the company, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the company in future financial years.

## **Future Developments**

The directors believe that there are no other likely developments that will significantly adversely affect the company in the coming year, except for the matter noted above.

## Indemnifying Officers or Auditor

The company has not, during or since the financial year, in respect of any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of the company or a related body corporate:

- indemnified or made any relevant agreement for indemnifying against a liability incurred as an officer, including costs and expenses in successfully defending legal proceedings; or
- paid or agreed to pay a premium in respect of a contract insuring against a liability incurred as an officer for the costs or expenses to defend legal proceedings; with the exception of the following matters.

During the financial year the company has paid premiums to insure each of the directors against liabilities for costs and expenses incurred by them in defending any legal proceedings arising out of their conduct while acting in the capacity of director of the company, other than conduct involving a wilful breach of duty in relation to the company. In accordance with normal commercial practices, under the terms of the insurance contract, the nature of the liabilities insured against and the amount of premiums paid are confidential.

## Meeting of Directors

During the financial year, 7 meetings of directors were held. Attendances by each director during the year were as follows:

	Directors' Meetings	
	Number of meetings eligible to attend	Number of meetings attended
John Baker	7	7
Wayne Cornish	7	5
Jennifer Dowell	7	1
Kathleen Evans	7	7
Peter Griffin	7	7
Donald Hayes	7	5
Sylvia Healy	7	6
Rob Jacobs	4	4
John Hughes	7	7
Ralph Leutton	7	5
Robert Pennington	7	5
Douglas Stevens	7	3
Roderick Thirkell-Johnston AM	7	7
Michael Horne	3	3
Geoffrey Richards	3	3

## Auditor's Independence Declaration

The auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 30th June 2007 has been received and can be found in the financial report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



John Baker  
Director



Wayne Cornish  
Director

Dated: 29th October 2007 Canberra

# INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the members of Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited

## **Report on the Financial Report**

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited (the company), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30th June 2007 and the income statement, statement of recognised income and expenditure and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the directors' declaration.

## **Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report**

The directors of the company are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Corporations Act 2001. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

## **Auditor's Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

## **Independence**

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001.

## **Auditor's Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial report of Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited is in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2007 and of their performance for the year ended on that date; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Corporations Regulations 2001.

## **HARDWICKE'S**

Chartered Accountants



Robert Johnson, F.C.A.  
Partner

Dated: 29th October 2007  
Canberra

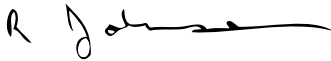
AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION  
UNDER SECTION 307C OF THE  
CORPORATIONS ACT 2001 TO THE  
DIRECTORS OF AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY  
SKILLS COUNCIL LIMITED

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30th June 2007 there have been:

- a) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- b) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

**HARDWICKE'S**

Chartered Accountants



Robert Johnson, F.C.A.  
Partner

Dated: 29th October 2007  
Canberra

# DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

The directors of the company declare that:

- a) the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 9 to 22, are in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001:
  - i) comply with Accounting Standards and the Corporations Regulations 2001; and
  - ii) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30th June 2007 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of the company;
- b) in the directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



John Baker  
Director



Wayne Cornish  
Director

Dated: 29th October 2007  
Canberra

# INCOME STATEMENT

## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2007

	Note	2007 \$	2006 \$
Revenue	4	2,825,083	3,050,351
Employee benefits expense		(682,761)	(677,929)
Depreciation expense		(65,357)	(58,853)
Other expenses		(1,855,054)	(2,279,109)
Surplus before income tax expense		221,911	34,460
Income tax expense	3	Nil	Nil
Surplus after income tax expense		221,911	34,460

# BALANCE SHEET

## AS AT 30TH JUNE 2007

	Note	2007 \$	2006 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	169,940	338,540
Trade and other receivables	7	465,552	185,332
Other current assets	9	10,576	3,317
Total Current Assets		646,068	527,189
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	8	57,786	116,843
Total Non-Current Assets		57,786	116,843
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>703,854</b>	<b>644,032</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	259,900	421,989
Total Current Liabilities		259,900	421,989
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>259,900</b>	<b>421,989</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>443,954</b>	<b>222,043</b>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>			
Retained surplus		443,954	222,043
Total Members' funds		443,954	222,043

# STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED INCOME AND EXPENSE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2007

	Note	Retained Surplus \$
Balance at 1st July 2005		187,583
Surplus		34,460
Balance at 30th June 2006		222,043
Surplus		221,911
Balance at 30th June 2007		443,954

# CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2007

	Note	2007 \$	2006 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from operating activities		2,730,027	2,535,165
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,904,621)	(3,090,101)
Interest received		12,294	28,378
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	11(b)	(162,300)	(526,558)
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Purchase of plant and equipment		(6,300)	(40,197)
Net cash used in investing activities		(6,300)	(40,197)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		(168,600)	(566,755)
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		338,540	905,295
Cash at the end of the financial year	11(a)	169,940	338,540

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2007

## NOTE 1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards including Australian Accounting Interpretations, other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the Corporations Act 2001.

The financial report covers Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited as an individual entity. Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited is an unlisted public company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia.

The financial report of Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Limited complies with all Australian equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (AIFRS) in their entirety.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the company in the preparation of the financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

### **Basis of preparation**

#### ***Reporting basis and conventions***

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs modified by the revaluation of selected non-current assets, and financial assets and financial liabilities for which the fair value basis of accounting has been applied.

### **Accounting policies**

#### **a) Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of four months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within short-term borrowings in current liabilities on the balance sheet.

#### **b) Property, plant and equipment**

Property, plant & equipment are carried and measured at cost or fair value less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. The carrying amount of property, plant and equipment is reviewed annually by directors to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from those assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows which will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to their present values in determining recoverable amounts.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over their useful lives to the company commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. The depreciation rate used for plant & equipment is 33.3%.

The assets residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance date. An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable

amount. Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains and losses are included in the income statement.

### **c) Employee benefits**

Provision is made for the company's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled, plus on-costs. Contributions are made by the company to employee superannuation funds and are charged as expenses when incurred.

### **d) Revenue**

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised upon the delivery of goods to customers. Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the service has been provided to the customers. All revenue is stated net of goods and services tax (GST).

### **e) Financial instruments**

Financial assets are measured on the cost basis. At each reporting date, the company assesses whether there is objective evidence that a financial instrument has been impaired. Impairment losses are recognised in the income statement.

### **f) Goods and services tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown as inclusive of GST. Cash flows are presented in the cash flow statement on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

### **g) Impairment of assets**

At each reporting date, the company reviews the carrying values of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement. Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the company estimates the recoverable amount as the depreciated replacement cost of the asset.

### **h) Leases**

Leases of fixed assets where substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to the ownership of the asset, but not the legal ownership that is transferred to the company, are classified as finance leases. Finance leases are capitalised by recording an asset and a liability at the lower of the amounts equal to the fair value of the leased property or the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual values. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the lease interest expense for the period. Leased assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over the shorter of their estimated useful lives or the lease term. Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

The financial report was authorised for issue on 29th October 2007 by the board of directors.

## NOTE 2 MEMBERS' GUARANTEE

The company is incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 as a company limited by guarantee. At 30th June 2007, there were 14 members guaranteeing to contribute up to \$50 each in the event of the company being wound up.

## NOTE 3 INCOME TAX

The company is considered to be exempt from income tax under sections 50-40 and 50-45 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

## NOTE 4 REVENUE

	2007 \$	2006 \$
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Grant income	1,672,506	2,791,973
Project income	658,750	110,000
Interest income	12,294	28,378
Sundry income	481,533	120,000
Total revenue	2,825,083	3,050,351

## NOTE 5 SURPLUS

Surplus before income tax has been determined after:

	2007 \$	2006 \$
<b>CHARGING AS EXPENSES</b>		
Rental expense on operating leases	62,665	60,825

## NOTE 6 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2007 \$	2006 \$
Cash on hand	200	200
Cash at bank	129,740	288,340
Cash on deposit	40,000	50,000
	169,940	338,540

## NOTE 7 TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES

	2007 \$	2006 \$
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Trade receivables	465,552	185,332

## NOTE 8 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	2007 \$	2006 \$
Office furniture & equipment – at cost	201,207	194,907
Accumulated depreciation	(143,421)	(78,064)
	57,786	116,843

### Movements in Carrying Amounts

Movement in carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and end of the current financial year were as follows:

	2007 \$
<b>OFFICE FURNITURE &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>	
Balance at 1st July 2005	135,499
Additions	40,197
Depreciation expense	(58,853)
Balance at the beginning of year	116,843
Additions	6,300
Depreciation expense	(65,357)
Carrying amount at end of year	57,786

## NOTE 9 OTHER ASSETS

	2007 \$	2006 \$
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Prepayments	10,576	3,317

## NOTE 10 TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES

	2006 \$	2005 \$
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Trade payables	111,774	218,505
Accruals	14,810	17,531
Grants in advance	95,916	150,000
Employee benefits	37,400	35,953
	259,900	421,989

## NOTE 11 CASH FLOW INFORMATION

### a) Reconciliation of cash

Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the cash flow statement is reconciled to items in the balance sheet as follows:

	2007 \$	2006 \$
Cash on hand	200	200
Cash at bank	129,740	288,340
Cash on deposit	40,000	50,000
	169,940	338,540

### b) Reconciliation of cash flows from operations with surplus after income tax

	2007 \$	2006 \$
Surplus after income tax	221,911	34,460
Non-cash flows in surplus		
Depreciation	65,357	58,853

CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
(Increase)/decrease in Receivables	(280,220)	488,528
(Increase)/decrease in Prepayments	(7,259)	17,255
Increase/(decrease) in Employee benefits	1,447	22,588
Increase/(decrease) in Payables	(106,731)	51,048
Increase/(decrease) in Accruals	(2,721)	4,215
Increase/(decrease) in Grants in advance	(54,084)	(1,203,505)
Cashflow from operations	(162,300)	(526,558)

The company has no credit standby or financing facilities in place.

## NOTE 12 AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

	2007 \$	2006 \$
REMUNERATION OF THE AUDITOR FOR		
auditing the financial report	7,000	6,000
other services	1,660	1,530
	8,660	7,530

## NOTE 13 RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Transactions between related parties are on normal commercial terms and conditions no more favourable than those available to other parties unless otherwise stated.

### a) Director-related entities

	2007 \$	2006 \$
Consultancy fees paid to Optimum Training Solutions Pty Ltd in which John Baker has a beneficial interest	26,705	25,974

## NOTE 14 ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY

The company is reliant on grant funding from the Commonwealth Government. At the date of this report, the company had a contract with the Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training for 15 months grant funding from January 2007 to March 2008. As no agreement for future grant funding has been finalised, the Directors will be making a decision on the company's future operations within the next five months.

## NOTE 15 LEASING COMMITMENTS

Non-cancellable operating leases contracted for but not capitalised in the financial statements.

	2007 \$	2006 \$
<b>PAYABLE – MINIMUM LEASE PAYMENTS</b>		
not later 12 months	62,151	60,825
between 12 months and 5 years	17,261	16,968
	79,412	77,793

The property lease is a non-cancellable lease with a 3 year term, with rent payable monthly in advance. Contingent rental provisions within the lease agreement require the minimum lease payments shall be increased annually by CPI in October. An option exists to renew the lease at the end of the 3 year term for an additional 2 years. After balance date, the company had elected to extend the lease agreement to October 2008 and a monthly lease commitment thereafter. The photocopier lease is a non-cancellable lease with a 3 year term, with rent payable monthly in advance.

## NOTE 16 SEGMENT INFORMATION

The company operates in the ACT and in the education and training industry within Australia.

## NOTE 17 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

### a) Interest rate risk

The Company's exposure to interest rate risk, which is the risk that a financial instrument's value will fluctuate as a result of changes in market interest rates and the effective weighted average interest rates on classes of financial assets and financial liabilities, is as follows:

FIXED INTEREST RATE MATURING							
	Weighted Average Effective Interest Rate	Floating Interest Rate \$	Within one year \$	1 to 5 years \$	Over 5 years \$	Non- interest Bearing \$	Total \$
<b>2007</b>							
Financial Assets							
Cash	4.0	129,740	40,000	–	–	200	169,940
Receivables	–	–	–	–	–	465,552	465,552
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>		<b>129,740</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>465,752</b>	<b>635,492</b>
Financial Liabilities							
Payables	–	–	–	–	–	222,500	222,500
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>		<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>222,500</b>	<b>222,500</b>
<b>2006</b>							
Financial Assets							
Cash	4.0	288,340	50,000	–	–	200	338,540
Receivables	–	–	–	–	–	185,332	185,332
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>		<b>288,340</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>185,532</b>	<b>523,872</b>
Financial Liabilities							
Payables	–	–	–	–	–	386,036	386,036
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>		<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>386,036</b>	<b>386,036</b>

### b) Credit risk

Credit risk on the company's financial assets is the loss that would be recognised if the other parties failed to perform their contractual obligations. The maximum exposure to credit risk, excluding the value of any collateral or other security, at balance date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements.

Except for the following concentration of credit risk, the company has no significant concentration of credit risk arising in respect of receivables. \$355,080 of receivables due to the company is owed by a single debtor.

### c) Net fair values

For financial assets and financial liabilities, the net fair value approximates their carrying value. No financial assets and financial liabilities are readily traded on organised markets in standardised form. Financial assets where the carrying amount exceeds net fair values have not been written down as the company intends to hold those assets to maturity. The aggregate net fair values and carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities are disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements.

## NOTE 18 ACCOUNTING POLICY AMENDMENTS

Certain new accounting standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for 30th June 2007 reporting period. The company's assessment of the impact of these new standards and interpretations is set out below:

i) Revised AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements

The revised AASB 101 is applicable to reporting periods commencing on or after 1st January 2007. The company has not adopted the standard early. Application of the standard will not affect any of the amounts recognised in the financial statements, but certain disclosures will no longer be required.

ii) AASB 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures and AASB 2005-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 132, AASB 101, AASB 114, AASB 117, AASB 133, AASB 139, AASB 1, AASB 4, AASB 1023 & AASB 1038]

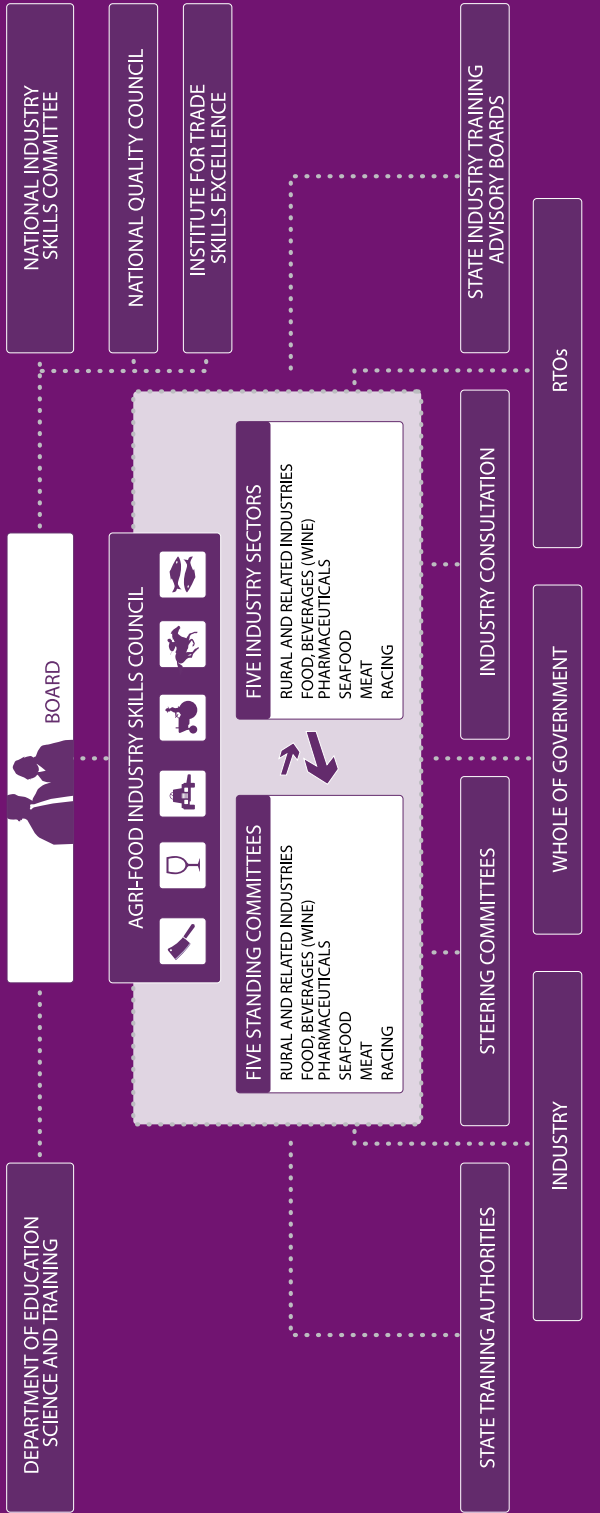
AASB 7 and AASB 2005-10 are applicable to annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1st January 2007. The company has not adopted the standards early. Application of the standards will not affect any of the amounts recognised in the financial statements, but will impact the type of information disclosed in relation to the company's financial instruments.

## NOTE 19 COMPANY INFORMATION

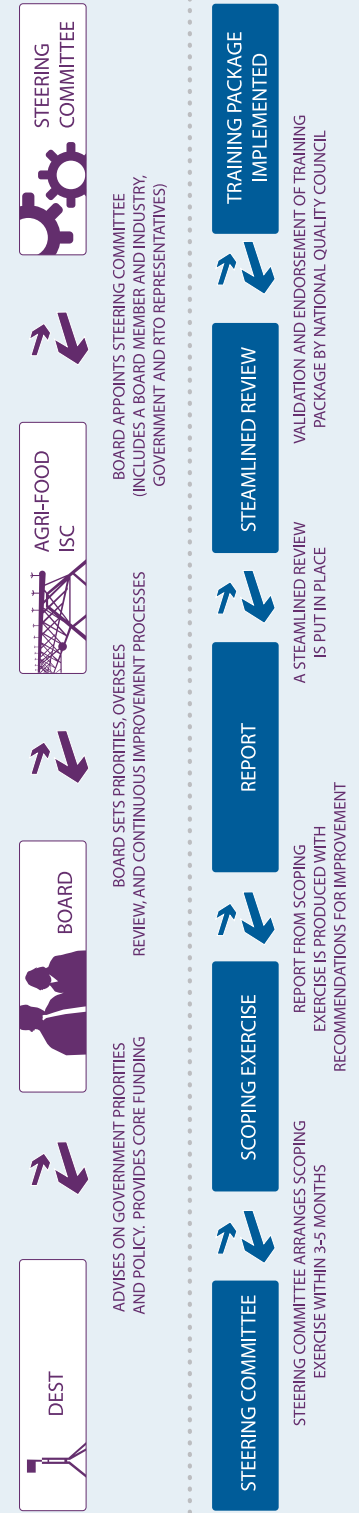
The registered office of the company is:

Level 1, John McEwan House  
7 National Circuit  
Barton ACT 2600

**MINISTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION — COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS (COAG)**



**TRAINING PACKAGES CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**





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INDUSTRY SKILLS  
COUNCIL**

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[www.agrifoodskills.net.au](http://www.agrifoodskills.net.au)