



## Your voice ... compelling results

### Agri-Food Environmental Scan 2009

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

**AgriFood Skills Australia (formerly the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council) is holding national consultations with key industry, enterprise and government leaders between now and the end of February 2009.**

The council is seeking your advice and input to the Environmental Scan, which is used as a document to reflect and validate industry's enterprise skills and workforce needs and priorities, and more broadly to attract people to and retain them within agri-food industries.

The Scan will provide our industries, the VET sector, governments and all stakeholders with clear and contemporary insights into the factors shaping and impacting on the agri-food workforce, its skill needs and how the training system needs to respond. It will contain real-time industry views and evidence from across Australia.

The council is in the process of collecting industry data from all sectors of agri-food on which to base our next Environmental Scan, to be completed and published in 2009.

Your voice is crucial to this process and we believe the goal of a ready source of industry information is a compelling one for all stakeholders.

The national agri-food industry generates around \$208 billion a year and employs some 880,000 people. Its industries occupy two thirds of the national landmass and feed 60 million people across the world. The industry is very diverse:

- Rural and related industries
- Food processing (including beverages, wines and pharmaceuticals)
- Meat processing
- Seafood, and
- Racing.

## We are changing

Australia's approach to skilling and workforce development is changing.

The Australian Government's national skills policy - *Skilling Australia for the future* - has created a new national focus on skills and workforce capability that commits more than \$2 billion in new funding for the creation of 700,000 training places -both for new entrants to the workforce and for existing workers.

It recognises that even if a slowing economy frees up the labour market, skill shortages within the existing workforce will remain prevalent and heavily dictate Australian enterprises' capacity to work smarter, more productively and be poised to maximise the opportunities that present themselves in a changing marketplace.

Securing this level of investment in skills, and in a way that immediately impacts on enterprise productivity, has only been possible by industry being active in setting the agenda and clearly voicing its needs at an enterprise, industry and peak body level.

## How it works

Based on real-time industry views and evidence from across Australia, the Environmental Scan is a clear and contemporary insight into the factors shaping and impacting on the agri-food workforce, its skill needs and how the training system needs to respond.

The Scan's immediacy of advice and grass roots consultation is what sets it apart from other reports into skills and workforce development.

Conceived as an 'early warning system' on what's happening and its implications for industry's productivity, it is now a critical planning document for governments, policymakers, industry and training providers.

The Scan will guide the strategies and priorities of the training system, individual training organisations and AgriFood Skills Australia. It also informs the allocation of funding for skills development for the agri-food industry at both a national and state-territory level.

## What the Scan will do

To gather the advice needed, and be in a position to paint a compelling and accurate picture, is no small task. To do so we talk to people all year round and ensure that our conversations take place not just across board-room tables but at farm gates, in processing plants, stables, fisheries and across the country.

We're informed not only by those who run the business, often with their own capital invested, but by those that do the jobs, those responsible for research and development, and those peak bodies working on behalf of various sectors.

Armed with this intelligence - and in accordance with our mandated role and our vision of '*Improving agri-food productivity through innovative skill and workforce solutions*' - AgriFood Skills Australia uses the advice to:

- **Establish skills standards:** we are charged with the development and continuous improvement of the nationally endorsed qualifications and competency standards for the Agri-food industry;
- **Inform Australia's skills policy:** we develop the *Agri-food Environmental Scan* - which is quickly becoming the most influential direction setting document on the industry's national skills and workforce development needs;
- **Provide independent advice on skills and training:** we work with enterprises across the country and across the sectors to identify their workforce development needs, appropriate training and productivity-enhancing solutions.

As a complex and vast industry, Agri-food is intertwined with the central issue of the day, climate change. Other factors include world food security, bio-energy, bio-security and natural resource management. These are just some of the additional drivers impacting on the skills base of our industry and with which it must cope whilst simultaneously growing productivity levels.

To get consolidated, timely, independent advice on industry's current and emerging workforce development needs, the Australian Government recognises and funds 11 Industry Skills Councils (ISCs). Each ISC reflects a major industry grouping within the economy. ISCs are not-for-profit companies, governed by industry boards and established with the sole focus of applying skills and workforce development reforms to building productivity and participation.

## What it can do for your industry

Quite simply, the Environmental Scan will give individual enterprises and industry sectors a broad and unprecedented opportunity to influence what largely dictates productivity - the skills and knowledge of their workforce.

The Scan is unique in many ways but most especially from its ability to influence at a strategic policy level - right through to the day-to-day operations of training providers. It is carefully written to span the interests of multiple stakeholders. It's short and deliberate in focus to ensure it's digestible and resonates and with a proven capacity to:

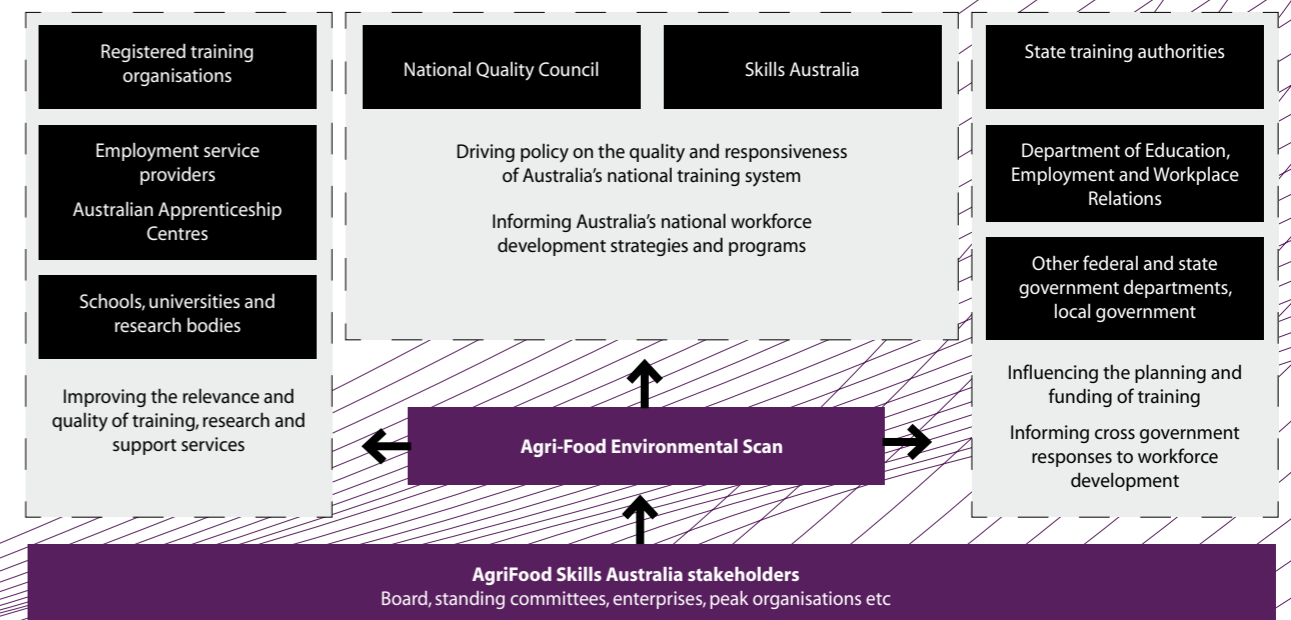
- Influence governments and related bodies such as Skills Australia, to resource agri-food industry workforce development initiatives and training places;
- Validate critical skill and labour shortages which need to be understood and addressed - including across regional Australia - by whole of government solutions (immigration, taxation, labour supply, industry development and infrastructure requirements);
- Provide real-time advice to training providers and guide their products and outcomes to better respond to industry's skill needs
- Inform those organisations which need to play a vital role in a broader, more integrated approach to workforce development, for example, local governments, schools, universities, research bodies.

## What we need from you

AgriFood Skills Australia is in the first stage of preparing the 2009 *Environmental Scan*. This involves casting a net across the industry to capture current views on:

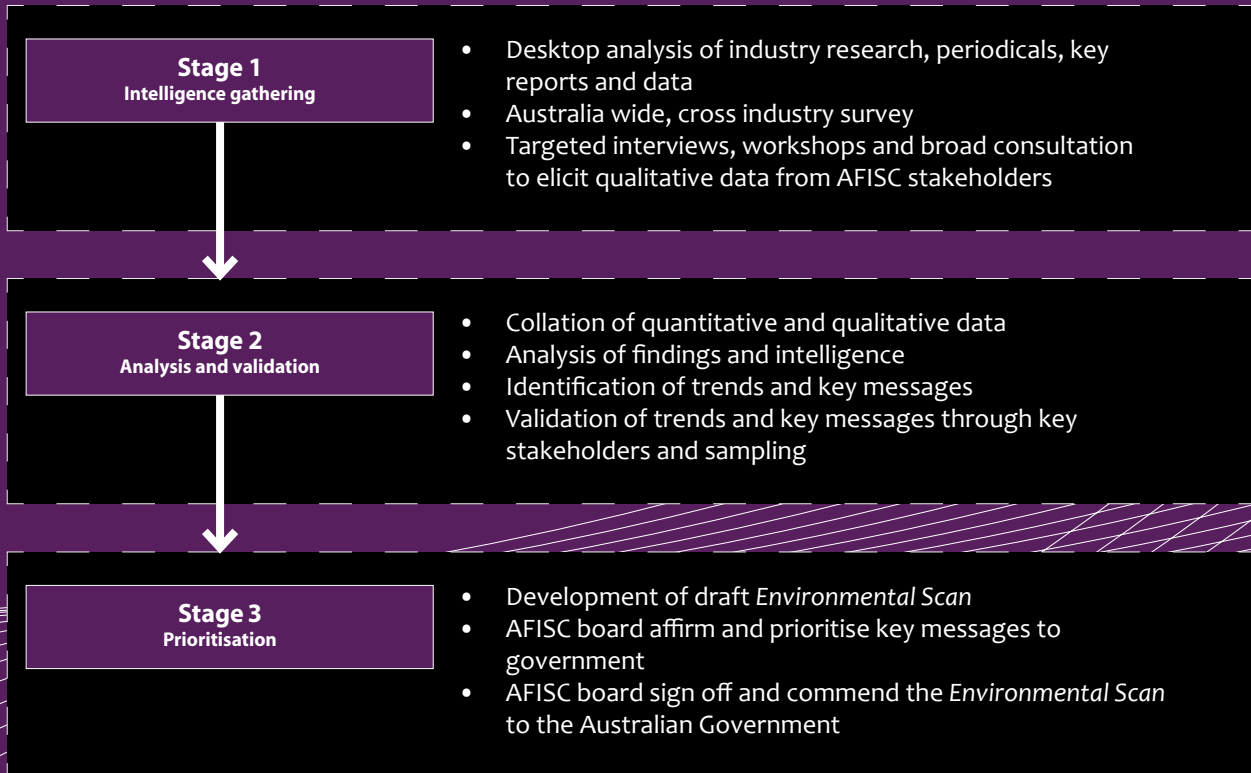
1. new and emerging factors impacting on workforce skills and labour supply
2. the job roles and skills involved
3. the magnitude of impact
4. what the training system, its products and services need to do to best meet the new and emerging skill and workforce development needs of industry

To ensure we get answers to the questions being asked by governments, AgriFood Skills Australia has developed a short discussion paper comprising 10 targeted questions. It is available for download on our website and will be used as a basis for our intelligence gathering activities.



## Our methodology

As a short sharp document – the Scan’s length being about 20 pages – we are not seeking to capture everything that’s happening across our industries. But we do need to capture those things that will have a direct and resounding impact on our industry over the next 12-18 months and which need a response from AgriFood Skills Australia and governments more broadly. Our methodology is specifically designed to respond to the purpose of the document and consists of three key stages:



## Contact details

Should you wish to find out more about the Environmental Scan or its process, please contact:

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