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**AGRIFOOD**  
SKILLS AUSTRALIA



Australia's Regions: Australia's Future  
**AGRIFOOD2010**

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE SEPT 23 THE LANGHAM MELBOURNE**



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Australian Government  
Department of Education, Employment  
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# AgriFood Skills Australia

AgriFood Skills Australia was established in 2004 as one of 11 Industry Skills Councils with the task of providing accurate industry intelligence on current and future skill needs and training requirements for the agrifood industry. AgriFood has an industry-led board of nine directors and maintains five industry advisory standing committees. Funding is provided under contract by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The company has invested significant resources in capturing data and information to validate enterprise cases for critical training support from government to:

- » Integrate capacity building and core skill development into agrifood's broader workforce development activities,
- » Promote the use of skills sets and unit clusters as an effective means of providing entry to and sustainable pathways within agrifood industry sectors, and

- » Provide support for registered training organisations (RTOs) to implement effective strategies addressing their core skills in training and assessment practices.

## National industry snapshot

The agrifood industry comprises all rural and related industries, food processing (including beverages, wine and pharmaceuticals), meat, seafood and racing industries.

Collectively, these industries:

- » Represent the national production of food and fibre
- » Contribute \$208 billion a year to the national economy
- » Are responsible for 900,000 jobs nationwide
- » Occupy almost two thirds of the national land mass and resources.

## SPONSORS



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The Board and staff of AgriFood Skills Australia wish to express our sincere appreciation for conference sponsorship provided by Horticulture Australia Ltd, Rural Skills Australia and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

*The Australian Government is proud to support the AgriFood Skills Australia 2010 National Conference through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Visit [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au) to find out more about how the Government is helping all Australians to reach their potential in education, training and employment.*

## From the Chairman

The AgriFood 2010 National Conference is a signature event on the agrifood industry calendar and an important forum for the engagement of the multifaceted agrifood industry.

Once again we have sought to feature leading industry and education speakers accompanied by interactive panels addressing priority issues of interest to a wide cross section of the agrifood industry.

*Australia's Regions: Australia's Future* reflects the ubiquitous presence of agrifood enterprises across regional Australia, providing essential products, jobs, investment and enterprise-based activities that support local infrastructure development and community wellbeing. The conference will examine these fundamental issues and the implications for skills and workforce development and sustainability across the nation.

Australia's regional employers and communities must work together in developing and adopting innovative ways to attract and retain a skilled workforce for the food and fibre production enterprises, as well as meet the needs of other industries and service providers. How can our regional communities continue to attract, develop and retain skilled workers, their families and new businesses in regional Australia? How can we meet the food and fibre demands of a rapidly growing world population? These questions affect us all.

AgriFood Skills Australia has established a model for a 'whole-of-community' approach to address these issues in north west NSW, which has attracted matched funding support from the NSW Government. The successful outcomes of this initiative have attracted national interest from industry, Federal and State Governments and other regions.

As we have identified in the 2010 Environmental Scan, the agrifood industry and governments need to work together to respond to the contemporary skills, training and workforce development needs of the industry, including access to a more flexible and responsive VET system. At the same time, industry and enterprises need to position themselves as 'employers of choice' in offering challenging jobs and competitive benefits.

The answer lies in being prepared, demonstrating industry leadership, and seeking to influence national policy that reflects the specific training and workforce development needs of regional Australia.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff I look forward to your valued participation in AgriFood's 2010 National Conference.



**John Baker**  
Chairman  
AgriFood Skills Australia

John Baker



## THURSDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

<b>8:15am</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>9:00am</b>	<b>Conference Opens</b> Mr Peter Noonan, Conference Facilitator Director, The Allen Consulting Group <b>Official Welcome</b> Mr John Baker Chairman, AgriFood Skills Australia
<b>9:10am</b>	<b>Opening Address</b>
<b>9:45am</b>	<b>Keynote Address: An International Success Story from regional South Australia</b> Mr Hagen Stehr AO Founding Director, Clean Seas Tuna Limited
<b>10:15am</b>	<b>Special Guest Speaker: The Big Picture: Australia's regions and beyond</b> Mr Michael Creed Agribusiness Economist, NAB
<b>10:45AM</b>	<b>MORNING TEA</b>
<b>11:15am</b>	<b>Plenary address: From Little Things Big Things Grow: The success of chia</b> Mr John Foss Founder and Managing Director, The Chia Company
<b>11:45am</b>	<b>Panel 1: How do we sustain a regional workforce?</b> The attraction, development and retention of a skilled workforce in the regions is a key issue for Australia's agrifood industry and the economy. The panel will explore how local employers, community leaders and Government can work in partnership to solve workforce issues, become 'employers of choice', and identify opportunities for greater participation of indigenous people in the workforce. <b>Chair</b> Mr Arthur Blewitt Chairman, AgriFood Skills Australia <b>Panel</b> Dr John Buchanan Director, Work Research Centre, University of Sydney Mr Richard Orr President, Narrabri Chamber of Commerce, NSW Cr John Brent Mayor, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Queensland Mr Kevin Bryant Chief Executive, The Agriculture Industry Training Organisation, New Zealand
<b>12:45PM</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>1:30pm</b>	<b>Panel 2: How do we drive production via innovation?</b> The agrifood industry is experiencing unprecedented change. To remain competitive we must continue to innovate and explore opportunities and career pathways. The panel will explore innovation in the international agrifood arena, the investment needed to be made locally, the competition for research and development funds, and planning for the impact and opportunities of an enhanced broadband network. <b>Chair</b> Mr Leigh Radford National Editor, ABC Rural <b>Panel</b> Ms Kate Carnell AO Chief Executive, Australian Food and Grocery Council

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM

2:15pm

Professor James Rowe  
Chief Executive Officer, Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC)

Ms Su McCluskey  
Chief Executive, Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations

**Panel 3: What does the future hold for the agrifood industry?**

Australia remains a world leader in the agrifood field. However, driving economic growth in a competitive environment will test our technologies, practices and leadership. This panel will explore global trends facing the agrifood industry, workforce needs for sustained productivity and profitability, and how to ensure that the industry has access to skills and enterprise capability.

**Chair**

Mr Leigh Radford  
National Editor, ABC Rural

**Panel**

Mr Stephan Wellink  
Business Intelligence and Strategy Consultant: Food & Agribusiness

Mr Ben Fargher  
Chief Executive, National Farmers' Federation

Dr Ian Knuckey  
Chairman, Australian Seafood Co-products

Mr Andrew Harding  
Chief Executive, Australian Racing Board

Mr Kevin Cottrill  
Chief Executive, Australian Meat Industry Council

3:15PM

**AFTERNOON TEA**

3:45pm

**Panel 4: How do we recruit and retain young workers?**

The perception of the agrifood industry amongst youth is one with limited job and career pathways, low pay, low technology take-up and hard labour. This poses a significant challenge in attracting a larger proportion of Australia's younger workforce to the sector. Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools provides an opportunity to engage directly with our future workers and teachers to develop job ready skills through innovative school programs. The panel will discuss VET in school opportunities, young people's perspectives of our industry, pathways and strategies to help engage and attract our future workforce.

**Chair**

Dr Cameron Archer  
Principal, Tocal College

**Panel**

Mr Graeme Harris  
Head Teacher Agriculture and VET Coordinator, Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School

Mr Tony Considine and students  
Senior Director, Taminmin College

Associate Professor David Russell and student  
National Director, The Primary Industry Centre for Science Education (PICSE),  
University of Tasmania

Mr David Aldred and trainee  
General Manager, Bendigo Harness Racing Club

4:45pm

**Closing remarks**

Mr Peter Noonan  
Director, The Allen Consulting Group

4:55pm

**Official closing address**

Mr John Baker  
Chairman, AgriFood Skills Australia

# SPEAKERS



## HAGEN STEHR AO

Hagen Stehr is the Founding Director of Clean Seas Tuna Limited, an ASX listed Aquaculture Company, and has long been recognised for his expertise and drive in pioneering tuna fishing and farming. For the past 28 years, Hagen has been Chairman of the Seafood Industry Training Council and inaugural Chairman of the South Australian Seafood Industry Skills Centre. Hagen was also founder of the Australian Fishing and Maritime Academy, having been Chairman since its inception in 1992, training young fisherman from Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

He has received many international and national accolades, including Icon of the Sea Award 2009, Officer of the Order of Australia (for services to education and training) 2007 and a Centenary Medal (for services to the community) 2000. Hagen has also consistently been recognised as one of the most innovative businessmen, by *Business Review Weekly and Bulletin Magazine* where he was voted in the Top 100 Smartest, Most Creative and Innovative people in Australia, and was this year awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of the Sunshine Coast.



## MICHAEL CREED

Michael Creed is an agribusiness economist with NAB where he is responsible for providing economic insights into key Australian and global agricultural markets, assessing industry level risk, forecasting market movements and providing public comment on market developments. Michael was previously a macroeconomist with the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance and before that at the Department of Justice and Department of Human Services, providing key economic policy advice.



## JOHN FOSS

John Foss is the Founder and Managing Director of The Chia Company. While a Nuffield Scholar researching global agrifood trends, John discovered chia and was fascinated by its nutritional benefits and sought to introduce the seed for use as an ingredient in Australian food products. John has since lead The Chia Company to its position as the world's largest producer of chia. It's a new industry which brings benefit to the Kimberley region and delivers wholesome, quality, Australian grown food for the local market and export.

# FACILITATORS



**Peter Noonan**  
Director, The Allen  
Consulting Group



**Arthur Blewitt**  
CEO, AgriFood Skills Australia



**Leigh Radford**  
National Editor, ABC Rural



**Dr Cameron Archer**  
Principal, Tocal College

# PANELISTS



**David Aldred**  
General Manager, Bendigo  
Harness Racing Club



**Cr John Brent**  
Mayor, Scenic Rim Regional  
Council



**Kevin Bryant**  
Chief Executive, Agriculture  
ITO NZ



**Dr John Buchanan**  
Director, Work Research  
Centre, University of Sydney



**Kate Carnell**  
CEO, Australian Food and  
Grocery Council



**Tony Considine**  
Senior Director,  
Taminmin College



**Kevin Cottrill**  
CEO, Australian Meat  
Industry Council



**Ben Fargher**  
CEO, National Farmers'  
Federation



**Andrew Harding**  
CEO, Australian Racing Board



**Graeme Harris**  
Head Teacher Agriculture  
and VET Coordinator,  
Farrer Memorial Agricultural  
High School



**Dr Ian Knuckey**  
Chairman, Australian  
Seafood Co-products



**Su McCluskey**  
CEO, Council of Rural  
Research and Development  
Corporations



**Richard Orr**  
President, Narrabri Chamber  
of Commerce



**Professor James Rowe**  
CEO, Sheep CRC



**Associate Professor  
David Russell**  
National Director, PICSE



**Stephan Wellink**  
Business Intelligence and  
Strategy Consultant:  
Food & Agribusiness

# Rural Skills Australia

Rural Skills Australia supports training in agriculture and horticulture and gives advice and assistance on rural and related Australian Apprenticeships to a range of national and state bodies.

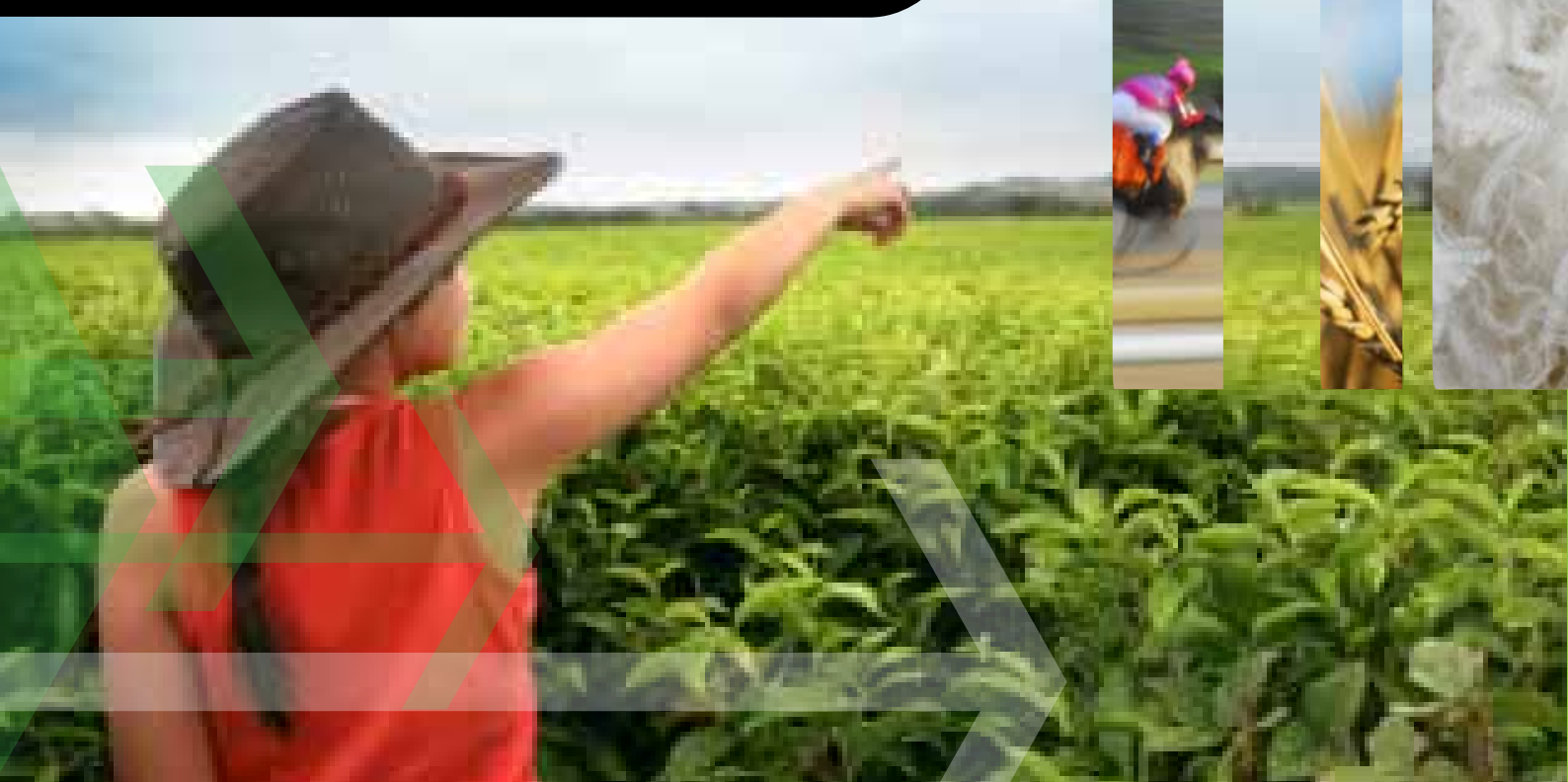
These include the National Farmers' Federation and its affiliated bodies' members, Australian Apprenticeship Centres, Job Services Australia members, registered training organisations and group training organisations, state farm associations, wool producers, commodity councils, the Australian Workers' Union and its related industry bodies.

Since its inception in 1995, Rural Skills Australia has fostered improved rural industry involvement in education and training with a view to enhancing the skills and capacities of new entrants, existing workers and primary producers alike. Over the past 15 years, it has contributed significantly to achieving a 15-fold increase in the number of rural and related traineeship and apprenticeship commencements. A primary aim has been to combat an ageing rural workforce and shrinking rural communities and to equip the current and next generation of farmers and rural workers with transferable, recognised and valued skills.

Rural Skills Australia provides information and advice to industry on training reforms and training packages, and at times undertakes special projects linked to increasing education and training in rural and related industries.

**For more information**, call 1800 647 798 or visit [www.ruralskills.com.au](http://www.ruralskills.com.au)

[WWW.AGRIFOODSKILLS.NET.AU](http://WWW.AGRIFOODSKILLS.NET.AU)



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