



Meat Processing



Employs over
98,000 people⁵¹

Contributes
\$7.94 billion in value⁵²

Revenue of \$52.22 billion⁵³

Made up of more than
6,400 businesses⁵⁴

Australian meat processors
export over 65% of
production by value⁵⁵

In 2021, 97.5% of cattle were processed through an establishment accredited under the Australian Livestock Processing Industry Animal Welfare Certification System (AAWCS), an independently audited program to demonstrate compliance with animal welfare standards from receipt of livestock to the point of humane processing.⁵⁶

Strong skills in food safety, quality assurance control, animal welfare, and compliance requirements have built up Australia's reputation for producing high quality meat products. This workforce plays an important role in supporting the Australian economy and in providing food that meets a range of cultural and lifestyle needs around the globe.

While COVID-19 has presented challenges, the industry is forecast to continue growing over the next five years⁷. Continued adoption of new technology, including big data and automation, will help industry meet the strong demand for its products while becoming more efficient and sustainable.

The national skills standards and qualifications for Australia's meat processing industry are overseen by the Meat Industry Reference Committee (IRC).

⁵¹ IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

⁵² IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

⁵³ IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

⁵⁴ IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

⁵⁵ IBISWorld (2022); *Meat Processing in Australia*

⁵⁶ Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (2022), *Annual Update 2022*,

https://www.sustainableaustralianbeef.com.au/globalassets/beef-sustainability/documents/absf_update_2022_web.pdf

Industry Skills Report

This year, Skills Impact prepared a Meat Processing Industry Skills Report, at the request of the Industry Reference Committee (IRC), to provide in-depth information about industry-specific issues impacting skills and training.

The importance of Australia's meat processing industry has been accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Industry has shown the adaptability of its skills throughout this time, meeting strong demand for meat products throughout pandemic-related restrictions while managing the various challenges associated with disrupted supply chains, shipping and workforce availability (which have impacted all industries). Revenue from meat exports has remained high over the past few years, despite volatility associated with the international markets and COVID-19. While food prices are rising around the world, demand for meat products is projected to remain high.

Like many industries, the Australian meat industry is experiencing a labour shortage, with meat processors looking for an average of 26 additional workers per business, and retail butchers looking for an average of four additional workers per business. Two-thirds of meat/smallgoods processors are operating below 80% capacity, while almost half of retail butchers are operating below 80% capacity. Findings from Australian Meat Industry Council research indicate a complexity of reasons for this.

There is also a need for higher-level skills, including increased safety skills relating to biosecurity issues and infection control. The importance of these skills has been reiterated by the recent outbreaks of lumpy skin

disease and foot and mouth disease in countries to the north of Australia. The Australian meat processing industry has built a strong reputation for producing 'clean and green' products through the demonstration of biosecurity skills, providing a point of difference in local and international markets. Industry continues to work hard in this area to prevent incursions and prepare for containment of disease should it reach the country. Addressing labour shortages will assist in maintaining the Australian meat processing industry's strong image.

The IRC has identified priorities for consideration in future:

- the next stage (Stage 2 of 3) of the AMP Training Package Whole of Training Package/Core and Foundation Qualifications project
- evaluation of Stage 1 of the Whole of Training Package/Core and Foundation Qualifications approach for the AMP Training Package
- training and assessment materials to support the delivery of recently updated and new training products for the meat processing sector.

Projects

Project work between 2021-22

Outlined over the following pages is a summary of the projects managed by Skills Impact, with support from MINTRAC, between July 2021 and June 2022.

The Meat IRC oversaw the project development, as part of their responsibility to support engagement with their industry and to ensure the projects meet stakeholder needs.

The skills standards and qualifications updated as part of the following projects are expected to be endorsed by the AISC and State and Territory Ministers later in 2022.

Meat Processing, General, Quality and Safety Skills Project

The Australian meat processing workforce possesses core skills in safety, quality assurance, and leadership that underpin its ability to produce high quality meat products. It is important that the qualifications and skills standards that describe these skills are kept up to date, as they are essential for roles throughout the entire meat processing industry – from entry level positions through to management and across all kinds of processing.

Consultation took place throughout this project to review and update qualifications and skill standards that describe some of the core skills used throughout Australia's meat processing industry. As a result, the qualifications have been streamlined to promote flexible career pathways and transferability throughout different sectors.

This project is the first of a three-part process to update the entire Meat Training Package to address duplication, adjust units to better reflect the level of task described, and remove skills standards that are no longer working for industry. This will support career pathways and make the training package easier to deliver.

Key Outcomes

- Seven qualifications have been reviewed and some merged to become four updated qualifications. Changes have been made to improve flexibility and promote career pathways and better match with current and future occupations. Nested qualification content and the point system have been removed to better reflect job outcomes, support flexibility and ensure compliance with Standards for Training Packages. Merged qualifications have been structured to provide either a general meat processing qualification or a specialisation. Mandatory work requirements have been retained where needed to ensure users can easily identify requirements and so that the qualifications are comparable to international qualifications in countries to which Australian meat is exported.
 - Three additional qualifications have been updated to reflect the revised units, with one receiving a code change as a result.
 - Two skill sets have been developed: one for meat processing mentors and one to act as a pathway into the Certificate IV meat qualifications.
- One skill set in animal welfare has been updated.
 - One hundred and seventeen units have been reviewed and updated to clarify assessment conditions and better match job roles, including 15 merged to become two.
 - Seven units have been developed to support skills in communication, meat safety, quality, and workplace health and safety. Two of these units are to cover the job roles of meat inspectors in micro meat processing enterprises that are located in some regional and remote areas.
 - Three units are proposed for deletion and seven are identified for potential deletion as part of future projects.
 - A Training Package Companion Volume Implementation Guide (CVIG) has also been produced to support delivery of the qualifications, skill sets and units.

Completed Projects (started in the previous year)

The following projects were endorsed by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). The revised qualifications, skill sets and units, that were developed as part of these projects, are published on training.gov.au and available for delivery by registered training organisations (RTOs).

Visit www.skillsimpact.com.au/completed-projects for further details.

Meat Rendering Project

Meat rendering and pre-rendering processes play a key role in the sustainability of the meat processing industry by transforming animal by-products into stable and useable material. Feedback was collected throughout this project to review the qualification and skills standards for rendering and pre-rendering processes so that they reflect changes in industry operations, equipment and terminology. The Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering) was redesigned to better align with the level of skills required and the diversity of rendering operations. Rendering and pre-rendering units were updated, and three skill sets were also developed to capture the unique skills required for this work.

Meat Slicing Project

Meat slicing techniques are used in a range of environments to safely and hygienically prepare products to customer specifications. Expertise for this work was previously supported by the unit AMPS207 Slice product using simple machinery, which was specific to the smallgoods sector and not accessible to workers in other environments. Consultation took place throughout this project to update the unit so that it is relevant to the various sectors that use these skills and to reflect personal and food safety skills. Skill sets and qualifications that contain the unit were also updated to include these changes.

