



# Australian Meat Processing Industry Sector

## Annual Update 2020

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### IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work

Prepared on behalf of the Meat Industry Reference Committee (IRC) for the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC).



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# Purpose of this Skills Forecast

This Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work presents the latest industry intelligence from the Meat Industry Reference Committee (IRC), inclusive of national and industry data sources and input from key stakeholders. It further proposes vocational education and training (VET) Training Package review and development work that the IRC deems necessary to meet the needs of industry. The Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) considers this information and includes commissioned work in the National Schedule<sup>1</sup>.

At its June 2019 meeting, the AISC changed the requirements for the annual Skills Forecast. IRCs are now required to submit comprehensive Skills Forecasts once every three years, with abridged annual updates in the intervening two years. As IRCs submitted comprehensive Skills Forecasts in 2019, the next are due in 2022.

This document is not intended to be representative of every issue encountered across all industry sectors; it identifies and addresses the challenges and opportunities that industry has determined as 'priority' for this stage of the schedule, and is a resource for industry and associated skills, learning and accreditation bodies seeking to act upon them.

Detailed information concerning industry skills needs across all sectors covered by the Meat IRC, including information from previous Skills Forecasts, can be found on the Skills Impact website:

<https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/food-beverage-and-pharmaceutical/skills-forecast/>.

## Method & Structure

This is an annual update to the comprehensive Skills Forecast submitted in 2019. IRCs are required to answer the questions in **Section A** to provide updates on issues such as industry skills and workforce development, and qualification utilisation.

IRC's are also permitted to propose additional Training Package development work projects to be included in the Proposed Schedule of Work. Where relevant, these are included in **Section C**, which includes:

- Evidence of employer and industry need for graduates;
- Alignment to Ministers' Priorities;
- Consultation plan.

**Section B** details the extensive, robust and ongoing industry consultation undertaken by IRC members and Skills Impact, including with rural, regional and remote stakeholders. In line with Skills Impact's values<sup>2</sup>, this helps to ensure transparency and accountability in the process of industry research and Training Package development work.

This Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work is developed in line with:

- Standards for Training Packages 2012<sup>3</sup>;
- Training Package Products Policy<sup>4</sup>;
- Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aisc.net.au/content/national-schedule>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/about/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/standards-training-packages-2012>

<sup>4</sup> <https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/training-package-products-policy>

<sup>5</sup> <https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/training-package-development-and-endorsement-process-policy-0>

# COVID-19 Information

This Annual Update to the Skills Forecast does not include detailed responses to the COVID-19 situation, which are being provided separately to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment on a continuing basis. The material in this Annual Update was researched and written during 2019 and early 2020, which only includes the early stages of the response to the outbreak of COVID-19. This is a rapidly evolving situation and there are major differences to the short, medium and long-term skills and labour needs of industries. The IRC and Skills Impact are working with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment to determine contingency, response and recovery plans to address reduced training system capacities; ensure workforce continuity for critical occupations across the economy; and support an emergency, temporary workforce for critical sectors, where appropriate (including strategies to swiftly re-skill newly-unemployed individuals so that they may enter sectors requiring workers).

While the content of this Industry Skills Forecast Annual Update will remain pertinent as the Australian economy and industries recover, the IRC may identify additional work and changing priorities.

## Industry Reference Committee

The Meat IRC is responsible for national Training Package qualifications relevant to the meat processing industry.

Qualifications overseen by the IRC are in the *AMP Australian Meat Processing Training Package*.

The Meat IRC is supported by the Skills Service Organisation, Skills Impact.

Name	Organisation or Area of Expertise
Mr Cameron Dart (Chair)	Meat Processing
Mr Franz Knoll	Smallgoods manufacturing
Mr Geoff Yarham	Beef Processing
Mr Graham Smith	Australian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)
Mr Grant Courtney	Meat Processing
Mr John Hughes	Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC)
Mr Laurie Tobin	Pork Processing
Mr Matthew Journeaux	Meat Retailing
Mr Michael Bayer (Deputy Chair)	Meat Processing
Mr Mick Williams	Beef Processing
Mr Scott Robinson	Meat Processing
Ms Stacey McKenna	Sheep Processing
Position Vacant	Poultry Processing

# Executive Summary

The Australian Meat Industry is rightfully recognised internationally as high quality and reliable provider of excellent value. It is a critical industry to the Australian economy with more than \$50billion in revenue each year. A key to its success is the widespread industry commitment to vocational training, developed in consultation with industry stakeholders.

It is important that the training products within the AMP Australian Meat Processing Training Package remain as up to date as possible to ensure the best quality vocational outcomes are delivered, especially in industry sectors such as rendering and meat retail, where there may not be as much awareness of the types of training package products that are available.

Australia's harsh and changing climatic conditions continue to threaten the ongoing quality and productivity of the industry. There were devastating floods in Queensland during February 2019, and since 2017 significant parts of Australia, especially in New South Wales and Queensland have been experiencing long-running severe drought conditions, with no end to these conditions in sight. Severe bushfires occurred throughout the last quarter of 2019 and continued in to January and February 2020. This has had a significant impact on stock levels, and these conditions will have multiple effects on stock, feed, and employment.

African Swine Fever and coronavirus outbreaks have also had an impact on the industry, and attracting and retaining skilled and capable people to the industry continues to be an ongoing challenge faced by the industry.

# Section A: Overview

## Industry Developments

### Extreme weather conditions

The drought is of critical significance, the current numbers of stock are being depleted. The national herds and flocks for cattle and sheep are already at contracted levels– in June 2019 it was estimated the current levels for sheep were 66 million head<sup>6</sup> and cattle have 24.7 million head projected for mid-2020<sup>7</sup>. When the drought does eventually break producers will hold on to their stock to breed more in the better conditions. This could threaten the viability of many processors in terms of reduced throughput and possible closures. Recent widespread rain in February 2020 has started to put pressure on meat processors as prices for livestock increase and numbers for processing become scarcer.<sup>8</sup> The rain has also not been received by all drought affected areas, the Central West region of New South Wales remains very much in drought<sup>9</sup>.

Bushfires, some of which have been burning for more than 70 days, continue to ravage parts of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. These fires have been fuelled by consistent drought conditions and unusually high temperatures and windy conditions. Late January estimates of stock losses appear to be significantly<sup>10</sup> less than some reports first estimated, with estimates as low as 69,000 head of sheep and cattle, instead of one report's projected 2.1 million. Nevertheless, the bushfire crisis will have impacts on the land itself, which will take many years to regenerate enough for grazing, as well as significant losses of stock feed, damage and loss to farming infrastructure such as fences, sheds and machinery.

A recent report from the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC)<sup>11</sup> highlighted the large losses from the north Queensland floods in 2019 (650,000 head of cattle) and noted that approximately 2.3 million head of cattle and 8.6 million head of sheep could potentially be located in the fire affected regions, although it will be some months before the full extent of livestock losses are known. The report suggests that there could also be potential impacts on feed availability and livestock supply to processors in the short term, as well as long-term supply issues with herds already at unprecedented lows which could see processors having to reduce shifts or even close plants which would have flow on economic and social impacts.

### Smallgoods sector trainer shortages

This sector is facing a lack of trained people who have the specific skills required for smallgoods production. While anecdotal evidence suggests the Training Package components are up to date and in line with industry needs, the delivery of the training is not always at the level required as many trainers in this area do not have a strong smallgoods background.

However, according to one RTO attempting to deliver smallgoods training, the issue is not so much the trainers but the size of the smallgoods qualifications, and also the challenges moving from cooked to raw product. They have found that Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food services) is much more flexible and electives can be chosen to achieve a smallgoods outcome.

During the course of 2020 the IRC will be seeking additional information to identify causes of and potential approaches to this issue. All training in this sector is workplace based.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/6555510/prime-outlook-for-sheepmeat-in-2020/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.corowafreepress.com.au/rural-news/2020/02/07/1025468/australian-cattle-herd-to-fall?amp=1>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/6635997/we-told-you-so-drought-starts-to-bite-red-meat-sector/?cs=14694>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-24/farmers-still-in-the-grip-of-drought-despite-rain/11985368>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.beefcentral.com/news/bushfire-livestock-loss-estimates-downgraded/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Beef%20Central%20News%20Headlines%20January%2023%202020&utm\\_content=Beef%20Central%20News%20Headlines%20January%2023%202020+CID\\_50df409e096afb350d0602a50a97e4ef&utm\\_source=eGenerator&utm\\_term=Bushfire%20livestock%20loss%20estimates%20downgraded](https://www.beefcentral.com/news/bushfire-livestock-loss-estimates-downgraded/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Beef%20Central%20News%20Headlines%20January%2023%202020&utm_content=Beef%20Central%20News%20Headlines%20January%2023%202020+CID_50df409e096afb350d0602a50a97e4ef&utm_source=eGenerator&utm_term=Bushfire%20livestock%20loss%20estimates%20downgraded)

<sup>11</sup> 2019, G. Revell, Short and long term implications of Australia's 2019-2020 bushfires – available from AMPC

## African Swine Fever (ASF)

Implications of the global ASF outbreaks for the Australian meat industry include the need to ensure there is EAD awareness and preparedness, good biosecurity practices. Any livestock standstills (stopping the movement of livestock to limit the spread of an EAD, also called a movement restriction) that occur will have rolling impacts on the industry.

## Coronavirus

The recent coronavirus outbreak has already impacted one large NSW meat processor, Northern Cooperative Meat Company<sup>12</sup>, who in February reportedly had product held on the docks in China due to ports being closed, as well as isolating two of their employees who had recently travelled to China as a precautionary measure. Other companies are also experiencing delays in getting shipping containers through ports.

The virus has also affected Chinese working visa holders in several other meat processing plants, who had travelled to China for the holiday period and are currently unable to return to Australia. This has directly affected Midfield Meats, WAMMCO, and Fletchers<sup>13</sup>.

These were early impacts of the coronavirus situation and other impacts continue to develop.

## Retail ready processing increasing and blurring the lines between meat processing and meat retailing roles

At a recent Queensland training funding review for beef processing working party meeting, the meat processing companies in attendance as well as a representative from the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) discussed the increasing amount of retail ready products that the meat processing industry is currently producing. This requires different types of skills for workers who are not preparing bulk cuts and package of meats to go to a wholesaler or retailer for further processing, but are preparing cuts, portioning product, and packaging products to be ready to go directly onto supermarket shelves.

# VET Qualifications & Employment Outcomes

Different employers have different reasons for employing or not employing people with VET qualifications, depending on their locations, size, type of business and other factors.

In the meat industry the reasons for employing people with VET qualifications usually include:

- regulatory requirements, such as meat inspectors, AAOs,
- a qualification is perceived as evidence that a person has stayed with a previous employer for at least as long as it took to complete their qualification
- the requirements of industry awards and wages – e.g. retail butchers
- workplace agreements and job classifications – e.g. boners and slaughterers, skilled worker visas

Reasons for not employing people with VET qualifications:

- the labour market is so tight that businesses can't afford to turn anyone away, qualified or not, particularly in rural and remote areas
- following on from the point above, businesses in rural and remote areas potentially have a higher risk of losing formally qualified employees to metropolitan areas
- a qualification is evidence of someone's competency but not the basis for why they are employed (i.e. it's advantageous if they have a qualification, but not essential to employment)
- in some cases and states someone may not be funded for a meat industry traineeship or apprenticeship if they have already achieved a qualification, therefore the employer might miss out on funding or government incentives they would otherwise have if putting someone on as a trainee.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2020-02-08/coronavirus-hits-nsw-meat-exporter/11942392>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.sheepcentral.com/coronavirus-outbreak-keeps-red-meat-workers-in-china/>

## Other Training Used by Employers

In the meat industry, employers are utilising training other than VET qualifications, units and skill sets, however this is very difficult to identify and quantify.

Other training that is being utilised depends on the employer, the industry sector they belong to, the type of training they are looking for, training content and time available.

In some instances, employers are limited by RTO capability/availability or what training is funded in their state or region, not necessarily what is the best fit for their business. For example, employers can be faced with timetable arrangements for intensive teaching, which may be the only viable method of RTO delivery in some circumstances (especially in RRR Australia), but may not suit the employers' seasonal staffing needs. RTOs need viability and must comply with the strict regulatory requirements imposed by ASQA. It is unrealistic to expect that any single RTO can viably and compliantly deliver all units within the AMP Training Package, and they must make decisions about offerings based on their own business model, including but not limited to, market demand.

In the meat industry especially, many skills are best learnt on the job due to the nature of the specific skills formation and the needs of learners in employment. The current system could focus on workers and on the job learning, yet the current trend is to focus on the formal training delivery, with focus on enrolment numbers, non-completions and other statistical data relating to RTO delivery. The current directions of the VET system have led to greater emphasis on formal education and training at the expense of formal competency assessment and certification, including industry, informal and non-formal training and learning. While industry is often asked to promote the formal VET system (RTO learning), this is often at odds with the views and requirements of industry which prefers a more flexible approach to vocational learning centred on the workplace.

In the meat industry, short courses tend to be very popular as they are cost effective and require less time out of production for attendance at workshops. Workplace health and safety requirements and meeting regulatory requirements are training priorities.

One private RTO providing meat industry training has estimated that they deliver approximately 35% non-accredited training and 65% accredited. They often use components of the Training Package to help design training that directly meets employer needs. It depends on what the employers they work with want as to whether learners are enrolled or not, and many of these learners will not appear as enrolments in the system.

Anecdotally it's believed there is a lot of unaccredited training occurring that is not recorded, and that the AMP Training Package is used to design some of this unaccredited training. The challenge is capturing this information and there is scope to investigate this in more detail.

Foreign workers may not have access to accredited training if they are not permanent residents, although it's possible they could still access this on a fee-for-service basis.

Qualifications are job roles and units of competency are job functions. They provide valuable assistance to industry and could provide even greater assistance if there was greater awareness of this resource outside of the formal training system, in addition to the work carried out identifying and attempting to get RTOs to place training on scope and deliver. This is work that IRC members attempt to do, with the assistance of the SSO, however greater resources would be needed to create any significant impact.

## Enrolment Levels

Despite recent improvements in NCVET data, there remain significant issues relating to enrolment data across the board, including:

- The lack of recognition of use of the Training Package outside of the formal and enrolled RTO system
  - Enterprise training and training designed by RTO for enterprises may not be funded and may not be recorded through enrolments
  - Internal training that is often based on training package products
- How different state and territory funding models affect the recording of enrolments: for example, whether learners need to enrol in the full qualification, if only to do part of the qualification (including Skill Sets).

In common with other IRCs, the Meat IRC is faced with competing priorities and standards which may have an impact on the retention of qualifications with low and no enrolments. The IRC is required to support “nationally consistent qualifications that reflect the skills and knowledge required to successfully operate in a particular occupation”, and training products are required to reflect “occupational skills needs of an industry, or a group of industries, to facilitate employment and vocational outcomes for individuals.” The role of the IRC relates to industry skills standards, not to RTO enrolments in the formal part of the VET system.

New units are developed to meet new ways for working, but at the same time it is almost impossible to delete units that describe older methods of work that are still in use. Some abattoirs have old systems like bed dressing an animal, the unit *AMPA3033- Bed dress carcass* is a slaughtering unit used at only a few sites. For example, a small remote abattoir in NT has this system and the unit would not be used very often. Also, small abattoirs don't have the money to have the new technology and would be disadvantaged if less used but still relevant units were to be removed. RTOs choose to deliver units based on viability, the local market and the availability of appropriate people and resources to deliver the unit. As a result, many units are underutilised despite reflecting currently used skills within industry. This issue is magnified by the rapid pace of change in technology and infrastructure, which can be readily adopted by some market leaders but will take time before they can be adopted by other market entities, especially small to medium businesses. A lack of delivery against any specific group of units or qualifications should not always be seen as a signal that these units or qualification are unwanted and should be deleted. It may be a signal that identifies that the system places unreasonable demands upon RTOs which have consequently withdrawn from delivery in these areas.

The IRC understand the imperative to reduce the numbers of qualifications and units within the system overall, as RTOs cannot be expected to keep up with an ever-expanding list of offerings. On the other hand, the retention of current skills within the system provides significant flexibility for RTOs to meet local industry needs, while also retaining the accurate description of current skills. There is very little cost to industry to retain a unit even if it is rarely used, and in the meat industry RTOs have been historically very proactive in identifying where a unit requires a minor update to deal with a changed or improved industry practice which is then fed into the Training Package Issues Register and included in the next release of AMP.

The evidence based on reports from employers, industry participant members associations and other stakeholders indicate that the reasons for low and no enrolments include:

- RTO delivery issues, and in particular the inability to find RTOs to deliver in regional areas, and the lack of available, fully qualified assessors in various work sectors. One major RTO in NSW, VERTO, has recently withdrawn from providing agrifoods qualifications due to a lack of qualified staff, which has left only six RTOs registered to deliver meat processing qualifications across the entire state. Only two of those six RTOs are physically based in NSW – the remaining four are based interstate and while registered to deliver in NSW this does not necessarily mean they actually deliver training in that state. The actual number of RTOs delivering meat processing qualifications in NSW is in reality only two.
- RTO delivery issues related to the costs of delivery of formal training, and in particular the need to bear the expenses of assessment and training materials, on top of very significant capital expenditure and expenditure on compliance, especially relating to industry regulation and safety requirements. In the meat industry most of the training and assessment must be conducted on-the-job which means that RTOs face mounting travel costs for their trainers, not to mention the pressures that extensive

travel places on the work/life balance of their staff members.

- Some RTOs now only have limited scope due to the requirement for them to have a trainer that holds every unit that is on their scope of registration, even units where there is minimal delivery and small markets
- Industry trends which means that particular qualifications may not be needed for a few years, but where it is also known that the need for training will return in the future
  - These trends may not be reflected in enrolment numbers and data going over only 3-5 years and there is a risk of deleting qualifications or units which later become needed
- Areas where meeting regulatory, licensing or “ticket” requirements occur on a cyclical basis and may lead to extreme highs and lows of enrolment numbers, particularly when only a small number of units are required and the learner is enrolled in the qualification of choice of that RTO rather than in the qualification that fully reflects the job role and function. One example of this is stunning and sticking units in NSW domestic abattoirs – the state regulator requires that staff performing slaughtering tasks hold units in these as a minimum, so units AMPA3000- Stun animal and AMPA3001- Stick and bleed animal, AMPA3000 in particular, experience highs and lows in enrolments.
- The job role reflected in the qualification has small numbers and low turnover, but is critical to the industry, resulting in training only being offered every few years rather than annually. This is particularly true of the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Meat Processing – both of these qualifications are self-funded by the industry and only offered every two years. The groups are typically small numbers as the job roles for these qualifications are plant managers and above, there are a limited number of management roles in the industry, and these roles also tend to have relatively low turnover levels
- The use of non-accredited training, either to address delivery issues or to enable timely upskilling of industry participants. In the meat industry MINTRAC has delivered unaccredited workshops for workplace assessors assessing against company work instructions in processing plants which have proven quite popular. Other non-accredited training utilised by the industry includes HACCP refreshers, workshops to address changes to post-mortem inspection practices, and there has been a request regarding a workshop on Food Safety Culture Program training. Often this unaccredited training is aligned with accredited units of competency – for example, online Request for Permit (RFP) training which is required by the regulator for RFP validators working in export plants. The training program is based on the unit *AMPX424 Raise and validate requests for export permits and Meat Transfer Certificates*, however it is not accredited and is not required to be by the regulator. The learner can go on to complete assessments with an RTO to achieve a Statement of Attainment for the Unit, but they do not have to. Enrolment numbers for this unit are typically quite low – 0 on 2015 and 2016, 4 in 2017, and 2 in 2018, however this would not reflect the amount of unaccredited training happening in this area. There is limited scope for the introduction of online and virtual training, and work experience is critical to delivery of the Training Package: This makes the continuing delivery of the training more expensive and less attractive to RTOs, a situation that will not change for some considerable time regardless of improvements in technology
- State funding priorities may be skewing enrolments – employers might be enrolling trainees in qualifications that attract higher levels of funding (or any funding) rather than the best fit for the job role, this in turn inflates numbers in those particular qualifications making it seem as if the qualification is a priority, however it's actually the fact that the qualification attracts funding. There was discussion at a recent Queensland training funding review for beef processing working party meeting that suggested that currently funded training and pathways might not match what employers want and need for their staff now and into the future
- The use of overseas labour is also having an impact on enrolment levels in the meat processing sector. Historically, local workers entry-level roles would progress on to specialised or advanced roles, like boning, slicing and slaughtering. Those working in Australia in the meat industry under visa conditions are generally not eligible for subsidised training or expected to work in Australia for extended periods of time, and the standard progression no longer exists. The use of skilled 482 visa workers in boning and slaughtering roles also affects enrolment levels in these qualifications.

Enrolment volumes have very little relationship to the criticality of skills to sectors of the economy nor the value of those skills to the economy, or the risks to society of not having properly trained workers in specific niche occupations or industry activities. The identification of skills and the establishment of standards is especially important in an industry like meat where there are higher risks of injury.

## Reasons for Non-Completion

The Industry Reference Committee suggests that it is more likely that the AISC has access to better, timely and more accurate information concerning these issues than the IRC has. The IRC would be interested in obtaining the broad information that should be available through exit surveys and other sources that may be available through RTOs or through NCVET, which is unavailable to the IRC.

It is widely believed throughout the VET sector that state- and territory-based funding approaches play significant roles in non-completion figures. Funding in many places is restricted to enrolments in full qualifications, when only partial training may be required (this can apply even to Skill Sets). For many learners, the purpose of vocational training is to obtain employment, and they may well leave formal education when it is gained. Success for a trainee or employer in completing the units they had targeted or in gaining employment from the training received is often recorded as a noncompletion and considered a failure by the system. Part qualifications in NSW are enrolled as a full course and then withdrawn once the part qualification is completed which greatly affects completion rates. One meat industry RTO delivering meat retailing training commented that non-completions in their sector could also be attributed to wages and lack of training by employers. The same RTO also noted that in the retail sector many students cancel their training, then re-enrol: the cancellation is counted as a non-completion, yet the cause is a change of employment while continuing the qualification. It is not uncommon for an apprentice to have more than one training contract before completion.

The cost of training remains high for many employers, with resources directed at the training required to ensure the employee can carry out job functions, and not at employees obtaining full qualifications. This is particularly true in regional, rural and remote areas where there may be a lack of available assessors to ensure timely completion of qualifications. However, in the retail sector feedback from one RTO indicated that it is the training provider which bears most of the cost of training.

An emerging issue is the inclusion of irrelevant learning through the use of imported and cross-sector units. In designing qualifications, the IRC encourages the importation of units from other Training Packages to avoid duplication. Feedback from learners and RTOs is that this often results in additional classroom or online training with too much content which is not relevant to learners or cannot be contextualised to the learners' job roles in the teaching context. This demotivates learners and is resulting in higher drop-out rates, subject failures and poor RTO feedback.

Even with imported units however there is no control over how and when these are reviewed and updated. The AMP Training Package has found with each new release there is at least one imported unit that was suitable when first included in a qualification or skill set, however has since been updated and a change has meant it is no longer suitable for the meat industry, leading to confusion and frustration for RTOs. Inconsistent application of term 'equivalent' by the developers of these imported units causes more issues, for example MEM13003B - Work safely with industrial chemicals and materials was recently superseded by MEM13003 - Work safely with industrial chemicals and materials, and the mapping advice was that the units are equivalent. However, the new unit MEM13003, which is an elective in the Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services), now contains three prerequisite units, all of which are completely irrelevant to the meat industry, with one of these actually impossible to undertake in a meat industry context. How a unit update that previously had no prerequisite units and now requires three is deemed equivalent is concerning.

## Cross-Sector Units

AISC developed cross-sector units are not currently applied within qualifications that are part of the Meat AMP Training Package. During the course of the activities identified in Section C of this report, the potential for using cross-sector units are investigated. The IRC maintains a close watch on the development of AISC cross-sector units and considers inclusion where applicable, however most of the completed work has little connection to the meat industry.

## Changes to Skill Requirements

Many of the significant changes to skill requirements in the meat industry have already been highlighted in previous Skills Forecasts. Automation has been around in various forms for a number of years now, and organisations have adopted this to varying degrees, however there is still a need for traditional manual processing skills. Social license to operate and sustainability have also been highlighted in previous Forecasts, and there are a number of training package products from the AMP Australian Meat Processing training Package and other training packages that address these areas.

A review of the *AS4696:2007 Australian standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption* is currently underway, with an updated standard expected for publication sometime in 2020. Domestically there have already been alternative techniques approved for Schedules 2 and 3 of the Standard regarding post mortem inspection and disposition, and these are already being implemented. The changes mainly relate to a modernised and more risk-based approach to inspection procedures. This may have implications for the training in meat inspection and quality assurance personnel.

Attracting and retaining skilled and capable people to the industry continues to be an ongoing challenge faced by the industry. In May 2019 Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) research indicated there were 3780 job vacancies<sup>14</sup> in the red meat processing industry alone.

In *RED Meat 2030*<sup>15</sup> *A shared vision and direction for Australia's red meat and livestock businesses*, (formerly the Meat Industry Strategic Plan) there is a proposal to undertake a national stocktake of the skills needed across Australia to deliver high-quality red meat and related products to help achieve the objective that “*people see being part of the Australian red meat and livestock industry as attractive now and into the future.*” This stocktake whenever it should occur will be monitored closely by the Meat IRC for any changes which might have an impact on the future development and maintenance of training package products.

The massive impacts of African Swine Fever and the coronavirus outbreaks on the meat industry and the entire world mean that biosecurity and responding to emergency animal disease situations are more important than ever, and training package products have been created in recent years to address these.

There is a need to ensure that training package products are kept current and up to date with any changes or improvements to processes, technologies, consumer expectations, and three of the four projects in this Annual Update, which were not identified in the 2019-2022 Industry Skills Forecast and Schedule of Work concentrate on reviewing units and qualifications where the a minor update to the training package product would not be enough to resolve the issue

The rendering sector of the meat industry employs sophisticated technologies and techniques to convert animal by products into a range of different edible and inedible products. These processes and technologies are regularly being updated and improved.

The retail sector too is employing more use of technology, particularly for slicing product, and some tasks which would have traditionally been completed by hand are increasingly using machinery to assist.

It is important for all employees in the meat industry to be highly skilled to be able to keep up to date with the latest processes and technology to ensure that graduates have current skills and knowledge to work in this sector of the industry.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/6099609/labour-shortages-are-bleeding-us-dry-say-meat-processors/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.redmeat2030.com.au/>

## Apprenticeship and Traineeship Barriers

Specific to the meat industry there are some significant barriers to employers hiring apprentices and trainees, including:

- Drug testing requirements at the onset of employment means that many job applicants do not move beyond this step (this has been estimated by one company as upwards of 50% of applicants who are eliminated)
- Some employment arrangements mean that new employees do not qualify for training funding
- There is a lack of subsidised support for existing worker training and upskilling opportunities
- Each state funds different qualifications, has different (and sometimes difficult to navigate/understand) funding models and different/inconsistent ways of determining training priorities (e.g. the priority system in Qld, versus no rankings in Victoria).
- Inflexibility of training arrangements
- Distances from RTOs.

Many employers are having difficulties accessing funding for apprenticeships and traineeships due to:

- a) The decreases in available funding
- b) Increased requirements relating to reporting and administration
- c) Having to meet RTO training requirements, especially dates for “out of workplace” training, which may not align with industry cycles
- d) Lack of flexibility in apprenticeship and trainee models.

There is a systemic issue requiring relevant bodies to support a different way of thinking about apprenticeships and traineeships. It is increasingly important as workplace models designed for major cities continue to fail in RRR areas and fee for service models are evolving and proving to be relevant in these areas.

Addressing this requires greater flexibility in concepts of supervision, workplace learning, self-directed learning and the nature of pathways to apprenticeships and traineeships.

One relevant way to enable this approach is through supporting and working with a national network of RTOs who are committed to servicing the industry. A key aspect of this would be through the IRC supporting the development of national assessment tools and associated resources. This would enable more economically efficient application of skills training to national standards across all jurisdictions, including the transferability of assessors and trainers across jurisdictions and the use of workplace-based staff in the gathering of assessment evidence. The National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council Limited (MINTRAC) has received several enquiries from RTOs asking about materials for recently developed units of competency from Release 4.0 of the training package.

Many businesses are finding a reduced visibility for ongoing future demand for services and products with pipelines for work often less than 3 months. This is as a result of the rapidly changing economy and consumer preferences; incoming work flows are less secure and more volatile. This environment is not favourable to taking on trainees or apprenticeships with 3 to 4 year learning programs.

## Section B: Ongoing Consultation

Detailed below is the industry consultation undertaken by IRC members and Skills Impact, including with rural, regional and remote stakeholders.

Entity Name	Sector	State	Rural/ Regional/ Remote	Activity
Australian Renderers Association (ARA)	Rendering	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work collection of industry intelligence for future training package developments promotion of the VET system cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry
Australian Lotfeeders Association (ALFA)	Feedlots	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry
Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)	All meat industry sectors	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC)	All red meat industry sectors	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Australian Pork Limited (APL)	Pork processing	National	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)	All red meat industry sectors	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Australian Chicken Meat Federation	Poultry	National	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Australian Country Choice	Beef Processing	Qld	No	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Baiada	Poultry Processing	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Bindaree Beef	Beef Processing	NSW	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence

Charles Darwin University	Training retail	- NT	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
CHM Alliance	Training	Qld	No	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	All meat industry sectors	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
DPIPWE Tas	All meat industry sectors	Tas	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Eversons Food	Multi-species processing	NSW	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
FGM Consultants	Training	Vic	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Food Safety Operations	Training	Qld	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Game Meat Processing	Game harvesting	Qld	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Hillside Meat Processors	Sheep processing	WA	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Ingham's	Poultry processing	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
JBS Australia	Red meat processing	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
KIAA	Game harvesting	National	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Luv-a-Duck	Poultry processing	Vic	No	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
M&J Chickens	Poultry processing	Yes	No	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Macro Meats	Game harvesting	SA	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence

NSW TAFE	Meat processing	NSW	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Poultry Hub	Poultry Sector	NSW	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Red Meat Advisory Council	Red meat processing	National	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Response Consulting	Training	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Samex Peterborough	Cattle, sheep, goat, poultry and camel processing	SA	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
TAFE QLD	Training	Qld	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Teyes Australia	Red meat processing	National	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Total Quality Management Systems	Training	Vic	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Training Solutions Australia	Training	WA	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
VERTO	Training	NSW	Yes	Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Leisha Hewitt, poultry auditor and animal welfare consultant	Poultry and red meat processing	Tas	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
Natasha Wing Consultancy	Red meat processing	NSW	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence
NSW Department of Primary Industries	All meat industry sectors	NSW	Yes	Ongoing engagement and validation of training package development work Cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry Collection of industry intelligence

# Section C: Proposed New Work

## 2020–2021 Project Details

### Project 1: Meat Rendering

#### Description

The *AMP30416 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)* will be reviewed to ensure that changes in technology and trends in international markets are addressed. In addition, two to three skill sets will be developed to allow for stand-alone delivery of the rendering units currently contained within AMP30416. One new unit of competency may be developed covering product quality checks.

#### Rationale

Increasingly the industry is being asked by State Training Authorities to justify the ongoing importance of the *AMP30416 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)* to the meat processing industry. Enrolments in this qualification have continued to decline in the past few years, from 44 (nationally) in 2014 to just 16 in 2017. Only Qld, Vic and NSW have recorded any enrolments since 2014.

Enrolments in individual units are higher, suggesting that RTOs might be using alternative qualifications and are selecting rendering units within those qualifications, or may be delivering the units individually and not as part of a qualification.

There is no rendering-specific qualification at Certificate II level, but there are seven rendering-specific units which can be undertaken as part of the *Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs)*. Most of these are consistently recording enrolments of between 15-25 nationally.

There are 10 rendering-specific units at Certificate III level. Half of these have recorded enrolments of between 20-30 during 2014-2016 which suggests that they are being completed either as part of the *Certificate III in Meat Processing (General)* or the *Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)*.

The Meat IRC recently reviewed the results of research into the viability of the *AMP30416 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)* to better understand why enrolments in this qualification are declining and to determine need for this qualification. This included direct discussions with employers organised through the Australian Renderers Association and with all 17 RTOs with *AMP30416 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)* on their scope of registration, asking for their views on the ongoing need for the qualification.

As a result of this review it became clear that:

- Currently there is minimal awareness of the availability of accredited training among stand-alone rendering operations.
- RTOs have not actively promoted the availability of rendering training except to client processors who also happened to have rendering plants.
- Because of the low numbers and relatively low turnover of rendering staff, demand for *AMP30416 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)* has steadily declined.
- Despite the low numbers there was sufficient feedback that the *AMP30416 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)* continues to have value as a stand-alone qualification, and therefore should be retained.
- the take-up of the level II units is consistent in the abattoirs sector, and there is potential to create two or three Skill Sets at labourer level which may foster an increase in the take-up of accredited training by the independent renderers.

The Australian Renderers Association (ARA) website has a section devoted to training, but this refers only to training programs offered through ARA itself, mostly focused on the hygienic rendering of animal products. As a result of this inquiry around the ongoing need for this rendering qualification, ARA advised that they felt that very few of their non-packer members are even aware of available accredited training. As a result, a presentation was given to the November 2019 ARA meeting about available training.

The presentation provided information on the current training package products suitable for the rendering industry and how they could be utilised. Attendees were also given a short questionnaire and asked to fill this out during the presentation and return them at the end.

The responses received from those in attendance suggests:

- the original assertion about the lack of industry awareness of this qualification and units seems to be correct
- there was a high level of interest in the unit *AMPA2157 Overview rendering process*
- there is sufficient interest in the *AMP30416* for it to be retained in the AMP Training Package
- all of the level III units continue to be of value
- *AMPA405 Develop and implement a Quality Assurance program for a rendering plant* continues to be of value
- there is interest in Diploma level qualifications
- there is interest in the development of Skill Sets for rendering
- the draft new unit *AMPX318 Monitor product to be sent to rendering* received unanimous support from those who responded to this question in the survey
- several areas, most commonly related to environmental and safety issues were raised as possible skill gaps, some of which could be addressed by adding suitable units to the rendering qualification
- there may be need for a new unit for product quality checks.

## Ministers' Priorities Addressed

### **Obsolete and duplicate qualifications removed from the system**

No qualifications are proposed for deletion as part of this project, but the project will ensure that the qualification does not become obsolete and is up to date with current industry practices and standards.

### **More information about industry's expectations of training delivery is available to training providers to improve their delivery and to consumers to enable more informed choices**

Initial consultation for this project showed that many stand-alone renderers were previously unaware of the availability of accredited training in the rendering sector. This project will help to promote the availability of this training and further encourage providers to deliver training in this sector.

### **The training system better supports individuals to move more easily between related occupations**

People undertaking training in the rendering sector will have the ability to move between stand alone rendering premises to processing premises with onsite rendering facilities

### **Improved efficiency of the training system through units that can be owned and used by multiple industry sectors**

The proposed new unit covering quality checks would be able to be included as an elective in other meat industry qualifications, such as Certificate III in Meat Processing (General) which could be used by pork, poultry and red meat processing organisations.

Current units will be reviewed and broadened for applicability across all applicable meat industry sub-sectors, as will new units.

### **Foster greater recognition of skill sets**

Up to three new Skill Sets will be created as part of this project.

## Consultation Plan

The following stakeholders will be consulted throughout the project:

- Ridley
- Teys Australia
- Inghams
- Talloman
- NH Foods
- Western T. Proteins
- Peerless
- MBL Protein
- Members of the Australian Renderers Association
- The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC)

The list above has been selected because of their respective involvement in the rendering industry. There is a mix of independent renderers, meat processing companies with rendering facilities on site, the national regulator, and relevant industry bodies. Most of these organisations were consulted during the initial research for the project proposal. As the project progresses it is possible that other stakeholders will be identified, either by project team members or self-nominated.

## Key Activity Timing

Months	Activity
1	Project planning and briefing, identification of experts and consultation with IRCs
2-3	Workshops with subject matter experts including research and functional analysis
4-6	Development of draft documents in preparation for public consultation
6 - 8	Public Consultation
9	Review of public consultation and Equity Review
10-11	Validation and Quality Assurance, final consultation for STA
12	Approval of Case for endorsement to IRCs and submission to AISC

## Summary of Components

All work is within the Australian Meat Processing Training Package.

Qualifications

- Review – one qualification
- Updating – up to one qualification

Affected qualifications will include:

- AMP30416 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Rendering)

Units of Competency

- Review – seventeen units
- Updating – up to seventeen units:
  - AMPCOR201 Maintain personal equipment
  - AMPCOR202 Apply hygiene and sanitation practices
  - AMPCOR203 Comply with Quality Assurance and HACCP requirements
  - AMPCOR204 Follow safe work policies and procedures
  - AMPCOR205 Communicate in the workplace

- AMPCOR206 Overview the meat industry
- AMPA3082 Operate batch cooker
- AMPA3083 Operate continuous cooker
- AMPA3084 Operate press
- AMPA3085 Operate wet rendering process
- AMPA3086 Monitor boiler operations
- AMPA3087 Operate tallow processing plant
- AMPA3088 Operate blood processing plant
- AMPA3089 Produce rendered products hygienically
- AMPA3090 Render edible products
- AMPA3091 Implement a Quality Assurance program for rendering plant
- MSMENV172 Identify and minimise environmental hazards
- New – up to one unit covering product quality checks

#### Skill Sets

- New – up to three skill sets

## Project 2: Electric Meat Slicing Skills

### Description

The majority of retail butchers use electric slicers to cut both fresh and cooked meats. There is currently no unit within the AMP30815 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher) that covers the use of an electric slicer for a meat retail premises. There is a unit from the smallgoods manufacturing sector which may be suitable, AMPS207 Slice product using simple machinery. The unit application states the unit is for use in a smallgoods manufacturing establishment, so reviewing and updating this unit to a cross sector meat industry unit is necessary. This would mean a new unit would not need to be developed for retail butchers.

### Rationale

Most meat retailing businesses employ the use of electric slicers. Slicers are also used in delicatessens and supermarkets.

There is a significant risk of injury to workers if this type of equipment is not used correctly. The main hazards associated with meat slicing machines include access to the cutting blade while it is moving, continued operation of the machine while covers or guarding are removed or opened and no emergency stop device within the operator's reach to rapidly stop the machine in an emergency situation.

According to one food processing website, from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2019, the Office of Industrial Relations in Queensland was notified of six events involving an amputation-related incident within the meat, poultry and smallgoods wholesaling industry<sup>16</sup>. Just recently there was an incident in August 2019 where a young worker in Brisbane had their hand severed while operating a slicing machine in a meat processing plant.

Another risk is the potential for cross-contamination of products if the equipment is not properly cleaned and sanitised. Food slicers can harbour dangerous bacteria such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, which causes listeriosis, a serious infection that can cause death in people who are at-risk such as infants or the elderly. According to The Australian Institute of Food Safety<sup>17</sup> it is estimated that more than five million Australians suffer from foodborne illness each year, and food poisoning accounts for an average of 120 deaths per year.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.foodprocessing.com.au/content/processing/article/meat-slicer-injury-under-investigation-277676611>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.foodsafety.com.au/resources/videos/food-poisoning>

Initially, it was determined that there was a need to develop a unit specifically for the use of electric slicers in meat retail businesses. However, upon further investigation a unit was found in the AMP Australian Meat Processing Training Package that appeared suitable. This unit is *AMPS207 Slice product using simple machinery*, and it is a smallgoods manufacturing sector unit.

Consultation about the suitability of this unit was undertaken and confirmed that the elements, performance criteria, knowledge and performance evidence the unit contained would be appropriate for use by retail butchers. However, the unit's application specifies it is to be used in the smallgoods manufacturing sector. By updating this unit to be a cross sector unit within the *AMP Training Package* this will mean it can be used by the retail and other sectors such as poultry, and also could be imported by other training packages such as the *FBP Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical Training Package*.

This project reflects the fact that in most meat retail businesses it is a common expectation that staff will be able to safely and hygienically be able to operate meat or food slicing equipment.

## Ministers' Priorities Addressed

### **Obsolete and duplicate qualifications removed from the system**

While this project does not seek to delete a qualification or unit, it does prevent the potential for a duplicate unit for the retail sector to be created.

### **More information about industry's expectations of training delivery is available to training providers to improve their delivery and to consumers to enable more informed choices**

The increased uptake of this unit by the meat retail and other sectors will reflect the industry expectation that meat retailing workers are able to operate and clean equipment commonly used in the industry sector.

### **The training system better supports individuals to move more easily between related occupations**

Individuals who undertake this unit as a cross sector unit will be able to move between meat industry sectors such as small good manufacture and meat retail, and possibly also to the food processing sector.

### **Improved efficiency of the training system through units that can be owned and used by multiple industry sectors**

Updating this unit to one that can be used more broadly in the AMP Training Package it allow other meat industry sectors to use the it as well as well as the food processing sector.

### **Foster greater recognition of skill sets**

This unit is already part of six skill sets. Making the unit more accessible to other industry sectors may also promote the availability of these skill sets.

## Consultation Plan

Broad consultation will be undertaken during the project, covering skills and training needs relating to slicing product using simple machinery, including in meat retail businesses, supermarkets, delicatessens and other premises where food or meat is sliced for sale to customers.

Stakeholders may include but will not be limited to the following:

- RTOs delivering AMP30815 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher)
- The Australian Meat Industry Council, in particular the National Retail Council
- Barossa Fine Foods
- Major meat retailers

## Other Relevant Information

All relevant units of competency underwent transition to meet the Standards for Training Packages and were released in either 2015 or 2016. During that time they were also reviewed for relevance, content, new work methods or duplication.

## Scope of Project Overview

This project will take twelve months from the time of commencement.  
Overall timing: 12 months from delivery of signed Activity Order  
Expected Date for Endorsement: July 2021

### Key Activity Timing

Months	Activity
1	Project planning and briefing, identification of experts and consultation with IRCs
2-3	Workshops with subject matter experts including research and functional analysis
4-6	Development of draft documents in preparation for public consultation
6 - 8	Public Consultation
9	Review of public consultation and Equity Review
10-11	Validation and Quality Assurance, final consultation for STA
12	Approval of Case for endorsement to IRCs and submission to AISC

### Summary of Components

All work is within the Australian Meat Industry Training Package.

#### Qualifications

- Affected qualifications will include:
  - AMP31016 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Smallgoods - Manufacture)
  - AMP30916 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Smallgoods - General)
  - AMP20216 Certificate II in Meat Processing (Smallgoods)
  - AMP20117 Certificate II in Meat Processing (Food Services)
  - AMP20116 Certificate II in Meat Processing (Food Services)
  - AMP30815 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher)

#### Units of Competency

- Review – one unit
- Updating – up to one unit

#### Skill Sets

- Affected Skill Sets will include:
  - AMPSS00053- Produce UCFM Products Skill Set
  - AMPSS00052- Produce Smoked Meat Products Skill Set
  - AMPSS00051- Produce Dried Meat Products Skill Set
  - AMPSS00050- Produce Cooked Meat Products Skill Set
  - AMPSS00049- Produce Cooked Fermented Meat Products Skill Set
  - AMPSS00012- Cook and Process Meats for Meat Retail Product Range Skill Set Cook and Process Meats for Meat Retail Product Range Skill Set

# Project 3: Meat Size Reduction Skills

## Description

The units AMPA2158 Operate hogger and AMPA2159 Operate blow line units have been identified as using language and terminology that is no longer used by industry, as well as containing redundant performance criteria that is already covered elsewhere in other units. This project would review and update these units to ensure they are current and accurately represent the tasks standards required of industry.

## Rationale

The units AMPA2158 Operate hogger and AMPA2159 Operate blow line both include an element covering operating a metal detector. Not all premises use a metal detector in conjunction with a hogger especially small abattoirs. Individuals who undertake these units in these circumstances will have difficulty in meeting the requirements for this unit.

The operations of a metal detection unit are covered in unit AMPX218 Operate metal detection unit. Individuals can undertake this unit independently from AMPA2158.

In the rendering sector, 'hoggers' and 'pre-breakers' usually refer to machines that reduce hard tissue (for example, head, feet, horns, bones) to a required size. 'Shredders' and 'hashers' usually refer to machines that reduce soft tissue (for example, gut materials, condemned offals, slaughter floor trimmings and boning room fats) to a required size.

To cover the full range of terminology used it is recommended that term 'hogger' in AMPA2158 is replaced with "size reduction equipment" which should then cover all these types of equipment, regardless of the particular term used by the enterprise.

It is also recommended that the element requiring the operation of a metal detection unit be removed, as this is covered in a separate unit for just this job role (AMPX218, as mentioned above)

In the particular case of the unit AMPA2159 Operate blow line, it has been identified that not all premises use a size reduction machine and/or a metal detector in conjunction with the blow line. Individuals who undertake this unit in these circumstances will have difficulty in meeting the requirements for this unit.

The operations of hogger and a metal detection unit are covered in units AMPA2158 and AMPX218 respectively, so it is proposed that both elements 6 and 7 from this unit be removed. These elements cover checking size reduction equipment, and operating a metal detector.

The rendering industry, whether businesses are independent renderers or an integrated part of a meat processing plant employ sophisticated technologies and techniques to convert animal by products into a range of different edible and inedible products. These processes and technologies are which are regularly being updated and improved.

It is important for graduates in this sector to be highly skilled to be able to keep up to date with the latest processes and technology. Broadening the terminology in these units and removing elements not critical to the role or covered in units elsewhere will ensure that graduates have current skills and knowledge to work in a rendering plant.

Both these units have experienced declining enrolments in the past two years, in particular AMPA2159 Operate blow line. In 2015 AMPA2158 Operate hogger had 19 enrolments, while AMPA2159 Operate blow line had 16. In 2018 the unit enrolments were 5 and 4 respectively. This can be attributed somewhat to the fact that rendering plants tend to experience lower levels of employee turnover than other sectors of the meat industry, however it's possible that enrolments have fallen due to the outdated components of the units in their current form.

## Ministers' Priorities Addressed

### Obsolete and duplicate qualifications removed from the system

Not applicable, however the project proposes to remove obsolete content from two units of competency to ensure they are up to date with industry standards and practices.

### More information about industry's expectations of training delivery is available to training providers to improve their delivery and to consumers to enable more informed choices

The revised units would be more closely aligned to industry practices and expectations.

### The training system better supports individuals to move more easily between related occupations

Not applicable

### Improved efficiency of the training system through units that can be owned and used by multiple industry sectors

Not applicable

### Foster greater recognition of skill sets

Not applicable

## Consultation Plan

Broad consultation will be undertaken during the project, covering skills and training needs relating to operating the hogger and blow line in a rendering plant.

Stakeholders may include but will not be limited to the following:

- Processing organisations with rendering departments attached, such as Teys Australia, JBS
- The Australian Rendering Association and member organisations
- RTOs embedded with industry

## Other Relevant Information

All relevant qualifications and units of competency underwent transition to meet the Standards for Training Packages and were released in either 2015 or 2016. During that time they were also reviewed for relevance, content, new work methods or duplication.

## Scope of Project Overview

This project will take twelve months from the time of commencement.

Overall timing: 12 months from delivery of signed Activity Order

Expected Date for Endorsement: July 2021

### Key Activity Timing

Months	Activity
1	Project planning and briefing, identification of experts and consultation with IRCs
2-3	Workshops with subject matter experts including research and functional analysis
4-6	Development of draft documents in preparation for public consultation
6 - 8	Public Consultation
9	Review of public consultation and Equity Review
10-11	Validation and Quality Assurance, final consultation for STA
12	Approval of Case for endorsement to IRCs and submission to AISC

## Summary of Components

All work is within the Australian Meat Processing Training Package.

Qualifications

The following qualifications will be affected:

- AMP20316- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs)

Units of Competency

- Review – two units
- Updating – up to two units

## Project 4: Training and Assessment Support Materials

### Description

This project is for the development of contextualised training and assessment support materials for up to 35 units of competency. The units identified are a combination of new AMP units and imported units used in qualifications from the AMP Australian Meat Processing Training Package and have been identified as high priority units for the industry. The project will improve consistency of training delivery and assessment across the industry, as well as supporting established and new RTOs to deliver quality services and to offer new and imported units of competency as electives.

This project will facilitate the development of standardised training and assessment resources for 35 units of competency where no national training and assessment materials have been developed, including:

- Newly developed AMP units from Release 3.0 and Release 4.0
- Imported units identified as a high priority and used in AMP qualifications
- AMPCOR sector units (core units across AMP qualifications) which have materials that are typically focused on red meat and pork and now require a poultry version developed

### Rationale

In considering whether to submit this proposal, the Meat IRC considered a number of criteria that had been developed as an approach to prioritising industries where support of this type would be applicable. The Meat IRC believes that the Meat industry is:

- An industry with strong and nationally important international markets, requiring evidence that enables businesses to demonstrate compliance with international requirements to achieve appropriate recognition and protection for the export industry
- A high risk Industry with a need for strict safety standards which are applied throughout the industry and can be rapidly developed to introduce safer techniques and equipment
- An industry facing significant issues in attracting on-scope RTO and training and assessment opportunities, particularly in thin markets, regional and remote areas, and Indigenous communities, where the provision of foundational training and assessment materials may provide incentive for RTOs to deliver training due to the reduced cost factors and improved RoI

Australia is one of the top red meat exporters internationally, however there is increasing competition in the international marketplace. Structured training is becoming increasingly important as companies seek to maintain the viability and competitiveness of all sectors of the industry in both domestic and international markets. Biosecurity and food safety considerations are critical for industry protection (as currently being evidenced in the Pork industry).

Many meat industry businesses are located in regional and rural areas, and so struggle to retain access to training. Training providers often struggle to be able deliver cost-effective training to small numbers of students across wide geographical locations as well as providing the most relevant electives for job outcomes.

The National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council Limited (MINTRAC) has been developing training and assessment resources for the meat industry for more than 27 years. MINTRAC has already developed training

and assessment support materials for most of the 456 units within the current AMP Australian Meat Processing Training Package. These developments were initially industry-funded and are reviewed every six months and updated when required, e.g. after changes to Training Packages, legislation and standards, or industry practices. There are, however, still many new and imported units for which there have yet to be contextualised training and assessment materials created.

This development program is part of industry planning and focused attention on building structured training, maintaining high-level and current skills and developing career paths, and has contributed to the meat processing sector having the advantage of a younger workforce and a balanced age structure under 50 years of age. The program has helped to ensure ongoing support from RTOs for delivery nationally. Changes to demand levels and funding policies have led to the development of these materials falling behind the needs of industry, and the IRC is seeking support for a project to address this need.

Industry drivers that have necessitated this development include:

- The AMP Training Package currently includes 199 imported units, many of which do not have meat industry-specific training and assessment materials available;
  - There are a small number of AMP units from Release 3.0 of the AMP Training Package for which there are no training materials;
  - Release 4.0 of the AMP Training Package included 13 new units of competency, 11 of which have no training materials developed;
- In Release 3.0, ten poultry processing units were migrated into the AMP Training Package. MINTRAC has already developed contextualised units of competency for these units; however, the core units used across AMP qualifications are specific to red meat processing, thus are inappropriate for the poultry sector. There is a requirement for creating contextualised materials for the poultry processing sector.
- MINTRAC has a long history and reputation for developing quality training products and training and assessment materials. There is currently a well-tested template used to develop contextualised materials for each unit. To maintain consistency across the industry, it is important to capture new and imported units within this suite of products.
  - Enrolment evidence strongly suggests that the provision of these materials have contributed to electives being offered by RTO (on scope) and taken up by learners.
- For many companies, particularly those who export products overseas, the national framework for training, and consistency of training and skills this provides, is critical for market access. Good quality assessment tools and training resources are essential to ensure consistency is maintained. MINTRAC is a national organisation and all RTOs across Australia delivering AMP units, skill sets and qualifications have access to the materials to support the delivery of national skill standards.
- The current materials are widely used within the industry by Registered Training Organisations as samples which they customise and contextualise further to their individual learner cohorts and workplaces. RTOs are familiar with their content and structure, with many providing regular feedback to ensure materials remain current and any errors or changes are updated promptly and regularly.
- The MINTRAC template provides very clear instructions and advice to RTOs on customisation and contextualisation, as well as guidance on mapping the materials and assessments to unit of competency requirements.
- Due to the regional location of many employers, RTOs find it difficult to achieve economies of scale by delivering to large groups of students and often find the cost of delivering in thin markets prohibitive, even though this training is essential to industry. Having training and assessment resources readily available, which require only customisation and contextualisation rather than development from scratch, may encourage RTOs to offer training in new units of competency more relevant to the job outcomes than selecting units for which there are already materials prepared.

The AMP Training Package has recently included poultry units that were formerly in the FDF Training Package. There is now a need for training materials that are contextualised for the poultry sector of the industry. To date, most of the materials developed are very much oriented to lamb/mutton, beef, pork and, in some cases, game meats.

A number of new units have been developed over the past two releases of the AMP Training Package in direct

response to changing or emerging job roles; however, there are no training materials yet available to support units facilitate managing biogas collection, responding to workplace incidents, handling meat products in cold stores and warehouses, and implementing TACCP/VACCP plans.

Most people undertaking the proposed training and using the training and assessment materials will be across all meat industry sectors and job roles including abattoir, retail and smallgoods workers and/or assistants, team leaders, supervisors, quality assurance managers, plant managers and other management roles who may already be currently undertaking meat processing qualifications.

The meat industry across all sectors and roles struggles with attraction and retention of staff. Providing more opportunities for training and development may help employers recruit and retain staff and reduce the significant costs associated with high levels of turnover.

#### *Training Package components.*

The industry self-funds the Diploma of Meat Processing, with students commencing every year. The industry also self-funds the Advanced Diploma of Meat Processing, which runs as a national program approximately every two years. The Graduate Certificate of Agribusiness has run once as a national program and is expected to be offered again in 2020.

Between 2015 and 2018, there were more than 46,173 program enrolments, 10,939 program completions, and 405,071 subject enrolments.

Up to 2016, there was a steady decrease in program enrolments and completions. In 2017, completions continued to fall but, conversely, enrolments increased by 5.6 per cent (660) to nearly 12,400. Likewise, subject enrolments declined steadily from 2014 (115,174) to 2016 (101,278) but increased by 5.8 per cent (5,839) in 2017. In 2018 program enrolments declined significantly, however completions increased by 2.6 per cent on the previous year going from 2,442 to 2,506.

In 2018, there were low enrolments in Diploma (13), Advanced Diploma (four), Graduate Certificate (zero) and Graduate Diploma (18) qualifications. Certificates II, III and IV accounted for 99.6 per cent of enrolments. One method of addressing low enrolments has been the development of contextualised training and assessment materials. There is strong evidence that unit enrolments are inhibited if there are no available training and assessment resources.

Two AMP Training package Release 3.0 units are part of this proposed project:

- AMPA413 - Review or develop an Emergency Animal Disease Response Plan
- AMPG305 - Store wild game carcase

Enrolment data is available for AMPA413 (0) but due to the 2018 releases is understandably low at this stage, and so has not been analysed here; but AMPG305 demonstrates a barrier to unit enrolments due to the lack of training and assessment resources.

For example, the unit AMPX427 - Dry age meat is included in one qualification: AMP40215 - Certificate IV in Meat Processing (General). Compared with other units included in the qualification, AMPX427 shows unfavourable RTO availability and enrolment figures:

The unit AMPG305 - Store wild game carcase likewise shows significantly low enrolments within the three AMP qualifications in which it is included:

Between 2014 and 2017, there were three enrolments in the unit AMPG305. In 2017, there were zero enrolments in AMPG305. In this context, it shows consistently low enrolments across the board when compared with the overall uptake of units in the three qualifications in which it is included – and for which there are already training and assessment resources.

**Table 1: Data for qualifications in which AMPG305 - Store wild game carcase is included**

Qualification in which AMPG305 is included	No. of AMP elective units included in qualification	No. of AMP elective units with zero enrolments in 2018	Average number of enrolments for each elective unit in 2018
AMP40516 - Certificate IV in Meat Processing (Meat Safety)	44	12	111
AMP30616 - Certificate III in Meat Processing (General)	110	30	158
AMP30316 - Certificate III in Meat Processing (Meat Safety)	27	8	113

Source: NCVER VOCSTATS, program enrolments, 2015-2018

The provision of training and assessment materials is likely to support training organisations in establishing and encouraging enrolments in those units for which contextualised resources are currently unavailable. With a history of developing quality training and assessment products and materials, MINTRAC is well-placed to fill the gaps in availability of AMP Training Package Release 3.0 and 4.0 resources and therefore support the job outcomes that these as-yet neglected units facilitate.

## Data

Unit of Competency	Enrolments (inclusive of superseded units)				Notes
	2015	2016	2017	2018	
AMPA3137 - Operate biogas facilities	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPA3138 - Identify secondary sexual characteristics - beef	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPA3139 - Prepare market reports - cattle	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPA3140 - Prepare market reports – sheep	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPA413 - Review or develop an Emergency Animal Disease Response Plan	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	0	Release 3.0 unit (release date: 01/03/18)
AMPCOR201 - Maintain personal equipment	7,131	5,465	5,996	4,234	Requires contextualisation for poultry sector
AMPCOR203 - Comply with Quality Assurance and HACCP requirements	7,233	5,728	6,151	4,290	Requires contextualisation for poultry sector
AMPCOR204 - Follow safe work policies and procedures	7,283	5,850	6,578	4,444	Requires contextualisation for poultry sector
AMPCOR205 - Communicate in the workplace	7,405	5,434	6,594	4,360	Requires contextualisation for poultry sector
AMPCOR401 - Manage own work performance	238	313	320	262	Requires contextualisation for poultry sector
AMPCOR402 - Facilitate Quality Assurance Process	310	210	352	406	Requires contextualisation for poultry sector
AMPG305 - Store wild game carcasses	1	2	0	0	Release 3.0 unit
AMPG307 Inspect wild game field depot	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 5.0 unit
AMPX219 - Follow electronic	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date

labelling and traceability systems in a food processing establishment					10/09/19)
AMPX230 - Undertake pest control in a food processing establishment	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPX314 - Handle meat product in cold stores	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPX315 - Follow hygiene, sanitation and quality requirements when handling meat product in cold stores	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPX317 Monitor product flow in an automated process (new unit)	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 5.0 unit
AMPX318 Monitor product to be sent to rendering (new unit)	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 5.0 unit
AMPX428 - Plan, conduct and report a workplace incident investigation	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPX429 - Develop and implement a TACCP and VACCP plan	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AMPX430 - Develop, implement and evaluate a pest control program in a meat processing premises	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	Release 4.0 unit (release date 10/09/19)
AHCLSK204 - Carry out regular livestock observation	0	0	0	15	Imported unit to be contextualised (current)
AHCLSK320 - Coordinate and monitor livestock transport	0	0	0	0	Imported unit to be contextualised (current)
AHCMOM217 - Operate quad bikes	0	0	0	0	Imported unit to be contextualised (for Release 4.0)
FBPAUD4001 - Assess compliance with food safety programs	76	50	97	52	Imported unit to be contextualised (for Release 4.0)
FBPAUD4002 - Communicate and negotiate to conduct food safety audits	76	47	79	42	Imported unit to be contextualised (for Release 4.0)
FBPAUD4003 - Conduct food safety audits	64	23	64	30	Imported unit to be contextualised (for Release 4.0)
FBPAUD4004 - Identify, evaluate and control food safety hazards	27	14	35	22	Imported unit to be contextualised (for Release 4.0)
FBPOPR2001 - Work effectively in the food processing industry	0	0	0	29	Imported unit to be contextualised (current)
FBPOPR2012 - Maintain food safety when loading, unloading and transporting food	4	0	0	0	Imported unit to be contextualised (current)
MSMENV472 - Implement and monitor environmentally sustainable work practices	0	0	0	0	Imported unit to be contextualised (current)
MSS024006A - Perform sampling and testing of water	0	0	0	0	Imported unit to be contextualised (for Release 4.0)
NWPGEN006 - Implement	0	0	0	0	Imported unit to be

and manage environmental management policies					contextualised (current)
NWPGEN008 - Sample and test wastewater	0	0	0	0	Imported unit to be contextualised (current)
<b><i>n/a* = data not yet available due to recent or forthcoming release date of unit</i></b>					
<b><i>Figures for imported units only include enrolments under AMP Training Package</i></b>					

## Ministers' Priorities Addressed

### Obsolete and duplicate qualifications removed from the system

Not applicable.

### More information about industry's expectations of training delivery is available to training providers to improve their delivery and to consumers to enable more informed choices

The development of training and assessment support material will incorporate current research, legislation and standards. The training and assessment materials templates include extensive information regarding training in the meat industry.

### The training system better supports individuals to move more easily between related occupations

These materials will be designed to relate to specific and specialised meat processing industry sectors, depending on the unit of competency, however care will be taken to ensure that where possible materials can be used across sectors and industry sectors such as poultry which have not been included to date will have materials directly related to that sector.

### Improved efficiency of the training system through units that can be owned and used by multiple industry sectors

There are nine cross-sector AMP units (demoted by the code AMPX) which are designed to be used by multiple industry sectors. The materials would be developed so that they were generic enough to be used in as many industry sectors as possible, as well as providing examples of how further customisation could be used by the RTO to tailor the materials specifically to the industry sector and learner cohort they were delivering in.

### Foster greater recognition of skill sets

Not applicable.

## Consultation Plan

Work in this project will be overseen by a network of industry experts, their advice will be sought for the technical aspects of the training materials. The technical expert consulted will depend on the nature of the unit involved. MINTRAC has an established database of meat processing and training provider experts to draw on.

As the project progresses public comment and input will be invited through:

- the Skills Impact website, and
- direct mail to industry stakeholders

Individual consultation will be undertaken with:

- The more than 40 RTOs who actively deliver AMP Training Package components
- the AMIEU
- peak bodies such as AMPC, AMIC, MLA and APL

## Scope of Project Overview

This project supports development work that has taken place over the last three years.

Overall timing: 12 months from delivery of signed Activity Order

Expected Date for Endorsement: July 2021

### Key Activity Timing

Months	Activity
1	Project planning and briefing, identification of experts and consultation with IRCs
2-3	Workshops with subject matter experts including research and functional analysis
4-6	Development of draft documents in preparation for public consultation
6 - 8	Public Consultation
9	Review of public consultation and Equity Review
10-11	Validation and Quality Assurance, final consultation for STA
12	Approval of Case for endorsement to IRCs and submission to AISC

## Summary of Components

All work is within the *AMP Australian Meat Processing Training Package*.

### Qualifications

Because these units appear in a wide range of qualifications, all qualifications at AQF level II, III and IV will be impacted, however no changes will be made as the project will not require formal endorsement.

### Key Deliverables

- The development of standardised training and assessment resources for 35 units of competency where no MINTRAC training and assessment materials have been developed, including:
  - Newly developed AMP units from Release 3.0
  - Units which are currently undergoing endorsement as part of AMP 4.0 (due for release in June 2019)
  - Imported units identified as a high priority and used in AMP qualifications
  - AMPCOR sector units (core units across AMP qualifications) which have materials that are typically focused on red meat and pork and now require a poultry version developed

*Units for which training materials are considered a priority:*

	Unit
1.	AMPA3137 Operate biogas facilities
2.	AMPA3138 Identify secondary sexual characteristics - beef
3.	AMPA3139 Prepare market reports - cattle
4.	AMPA3140 Prepare market reports – sheep
5.	AMPA413 Review or develop an Emergency Animal Disease Response Plan
6.	AMPA415 Manage biogas facilities
7.	AMPCOR203 Comply with Quality Assurance and HACCP requirements
8.	AMPCOR204 Follow safe work policies and procedures
9.	AMPCOR401 Manage own work performance
10.	AMPCOR402 Facilitate Quality Assurance Process
11.	AMPG305 Store wild game carcasses
12.	AMPG307 Inspect wild game field depot (new unit)
13.	AMPX219 Follow electronic labelling and traceability systems in a food processing establishment
14.	AMPX230 Undertake pest control in a food processing establishment
15.	AMPX314 Handle meat product in cold stores
16.	AMPX315 Follow hygiene, sanitation and quality requirements when handling meat product in cold stores
17.	AMPX317 Monitor product flow in an automated process (new unit)

18.	AMPX318 Monitor product to be sent to rendering (new unit)
19.	AMPX428 Plan, conduct and report a workplace incident investigation
20.	AMPX429 Develop and implement a TACCP and VACCP plan
21.	AMPX430 Develop, implement and evaluate a pest control program in a meat processing premises
22.	AHCLSK320 Coordinate and monitor livestock transport
23.	AHCLSK204 Carry out regular livestock observation
24.	AHCMOM217 Operate quad bikes
25.	FBPAUD4001 Assess compliance with food safety programs
26.	FBPAUD4002 Communicate and negotiate to conduct food safety audits
27.	FBPAUD4003 Conduct food safety audits
28.	FBPAUD4004 Identify, evaluate and control food safety hazards
29.	FBPOPR2001 Work effectively in the food processing industry
30.	FBPOPR2012 Maintain food safety when loading, unloading and transporting food
31.	FBPTEC3002 Implement the pest prevention program
32.	MSMENV472 Implement and monitor environmentally sustainable work practices
33.	MSS024006 Perform sampling and testing of water
34.	NWPGEN008 Sample and test wastewater
35.	NWPGEN006 Implement and manage environmental management policies



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**Cameron Dart, Meat IRC  
Chair**