



Issue 3:

Monday 30th October 2006

On behalf of the Food, Tourism and Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Council SA Inc. and the project team, I am happy once again to provide you with another issue of the Meat Industry Workforce Development Project Newsletter!

“Attraction and Retention of Labour in the SA Meat Industry” Workforce Development Project

This project is titled “Attraction and Retention of Labour in the SA Meat Industry” Workforce Development Project. In user-friendly terms, it is often referred to as “The SA Meat Industry Workforce Development Project”.



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

Industry Workforce Development Issues:

Labour shortages and Skills shortages

Labour shortages and skills shortages can occur for a number of reasons.

General shortages can occur when the economy is strong and there are low rates of unemployment – or through demographic pressures such as an ageing population.

Specific industry shortages can occur when there is significant growth within an industry – or when there is growth in other industries which are more attractive to jobseekers.

Sometimes technological changes within an industry can bring pressures, because workforce training has not kept pace with developments.

At other times, shortages will be felt more within a specific business because it is not an ‘employer-of choice’ for the people it is seeking to engage – jobseekers don't apply for vacancies and don't stay with the company for long – or the business has been so busy focusing on day-to-day operations that it has failed to plan for its future needs.

The Australian Meat Industry is currently facing skills and labour shortages for all these reasons – but it is not alone. Mining, Health, Retail, Construction, Transport (and many others) are struggling to recruit and retain a workforce which is appropriate for their current and future needs. These industries are actively planning and implementing a range of strategies to overcome their workforce challenges.



HOW CAN WE HELP YOU

Project Strategies

How do you become an employer of choice in an industry of choice?

What is workforce development? Why would you do it? How would you do it?

Our project staff are often asked these questions by employers in the Meat Industry. In response to many of these questions we have developed a ***“How to become an employer of choice in an industry of choice: A practical guide to workforce development for the Australian Meat Industry”***.

This book provides a range of advice on Workforce Development including workforce planning, recruitment, retention, workforce culture, migrant recruitment, multi-cultural workplace, building capability and community perceptions.

It is particularly useful for organizations who are looking for new ways to target and attract the right people, or who are experiencing high staff turnover and looking to identify why and how to overcome this. It takes a closer look at migrant recruitment as a short-term solution, and points out that importing employees can also be done at local, regional and national level.

The book introduces a range of strategies for improving workplace culture and includes helpful hints on cross-cultural communication. It also asks employers to consider the need of existing employees and the need to build their capability to support many of these strategies.

We are now planning for the development of follow up **Fact Sheets** that will provide more in-depth advice and some good examples of templates that can be used to put many of these strategies in place.

To request a copy of this book, and nominate for subscription to the Fact Sheets, please phone Kerryn or Graeme on (08) 8362 6012

Project Achievements

Aside from the development of our Workforce Development Book, our team has been very busy working on the following range of activities:

- The **School Based New Apprenticeship Program** has almost completed its first year. 8 participants have indicated that they will be continuing on with their second year of the program. TAFESA Meat Studies are now calling for nominations for a new group of 6 to participate in the program in 2007. This program will again be run through the Mt Gambier TAFE Food Processing Section and be supported by Group Training Employment. It is open to students from Secondary Schools within the SE Region. Travel assistance can be provided.

Know anyone that might be interested? If so, please call (08) 8348 4444 and ask for Steve Maslin from the Meat Studies Section.

- Ongoing negotiations on how best to trial a **Collaborative Model for Attraction of New Workers** in the region has identified the following range of issues:
 - A high demand for new employees within Processing plants in the upper SE Region

- The need for new and innovative ways to target new workers who are work ready and willing to actively engage in this industry
- The need to further clarify employer expectations of new recruits
- A need for employers to consider flexible working arrangements for new target groups coming into the employment market
- The need for organizations to better settle new workers by providing a “buddy” to mentor them when they start
- Greater funding support for potential employees wanting to train to come into the industry
- The setting up of more Flexible Training arrangements with Training Providers or within workplaces to allow for pre-skilling in base technical skills
- The need for available and affordable short, medium and long term accommodation for new residents working in the region
- The need to have all of the above considerations taken into account and managed through a local agent within the region

These findings have led to discussion with the Limestone Coast Regional Development Board and TAFESA Mt Gambier to explore the possibility of developing a joint initiative. This project will be designed to trial a range of activities that will engage new people in the world of work, educate them on the expectations of employers and provide them with base technical skills in food handling to make them more work-ready. The first round of this program will be free to unemployed and underemployed from all target groups.

- Two joint Industry/Union “**Training for Retention**” Road Shows were conducted in the SE at Naracoorte and Mt Gambier to assist regionally based processors and retailers with Professional Development strategies. These Forums included:
 - A presentation by Meat & Livestock Australia on the changing meat industry today
 - The industry launch of the “*How to become an employer of choice in an industry of choice* A practical guide to workforce development for the Australian Meat Industry” by the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union.
 - A round table discussion by employers and other regional support agencies on what the significant workforce development issues are, and how they can best be overcome.
 - A presentation by the Australian Meat Industry Council on “Taking Pride in your industry”
 - An invitation by the WFD Task Force Group to industry personnel for nominations of participants for:
 - 2007 School Based New Apprenticeship Program
 - Meat Industry Pre-Skilling Workshops throughout the SE
 - A Regional Supervisors program
 - The *Appetite for Success* Young Leaders Program 2007

Statewide Growth Strategy:

Our Statewide Growth Strategy is continuing. Our team is continuing to look for new and innovative ways to foster the sustainable growth of this project within the industry. Much of what we are learning will influence the development of a range of promotional information on Career Development Pathways within the industry. In particular:

- We have been successful in a joint bid with Meat & Livestock Australia for funding to develop a Proposal for a Skills Eco-system for the Meat Industry in the SE. This process will identify and target ways in which people can develop through lateral movement between the Meat Processing and Retail Sectors. This will require consultation within the industry. Please feel free to make contact with our project team if you wish to provide your thoughts on this process.

- Our team is currently working on a Career Development Fact Sheet. We are looking to provide some advice to potential industry employees on the many pathways they can take should they choose to enter this industry.



CONTACTS

FTH Skills Council sees this initiative very much as a team effort. We would welcome any thoughts and feedback you may have.

To request more information on any of the contents of this Newsletter, please phone or email the following personnel:

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