



Submission to Jobs & Skills Australia – Food Supply Chain Capacity Study

May 2024



Industry Bodies, Associations and Associates



Australian Peak Shippers Association Inc. (APSA)



**Submission to Jobs & Skills Australia –
Food Supply Chain Capacity Study**

1.0 Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC)

- 1.1 AMIC is the peak body representing red meat and pork retailers, wholesalers, processors, and smallgoods manufacturers across the country. Our industry is one of the largest manufacturers in Australia today. We exist for a clear reason: to help our members achieve and maintain profitability and ensure our members are recognised for the crucial role they play in the agribusiness supply chain.
- 1.2 We are the only industry association representing the post-farmgate Australian meat industry. We work with members, governments, and industry groups to influence policy and provide technical and other services to the industry.
- 1.3 Our overriding goal is profitability for our members. To help our members achieve and maintain profitability, we work hard to solve our industry's key challenges and provide a range of services that make it easier for our members to run their businesses, from finding staff to complying with legislation.
- 1.4 The Australian Meat Industry Council is the voice of Australian businesses in the crucial and complex post-farmgate meat industry. Our 1500 plus members employ tens of thousands of people and are significant contributors to their local economies.
- 1.5 We are continually working towards a more competitive and prosperous meat and livestock supply chain that is good for members, good for industry and good for communities. We do this by advocating for effective and strategic policy, supporting our industry on important issues and providing members with tools to build and grow their businesses so they remain competitive and profitable within the Australian and global supply chain.
- 1.6 We note that, in some instances, with the level of detail currently available, we can only approximate the full extent of the implications of these changes, so we put forward this submission with the obvious caveat, that this is our best efforts to estimate the implications at this point in time.

Discussion Questions

2.0 A Shared Vision

For the Meat Industry, the food supply chain workforce needs to be secure, promoting job security, growth, productivity and the many differing career paths available. We must grow and support a local workforce whilst acknowledging the use of various visa programs that are currently in use. With the current workforce climate, it is imperative to continue using these visa programs in order to maintain required workforce levels.

The use of migrant labour may also need to be expanded before industry can rely on a local workforce. Without the appropriate skills our industry faces uncertainty of workers and will rely heavily on the various overseas programs. Whilst this is a solution, it is not a long-term solution and is costly to say the least. It is also very administrative and compliance heavy for most of our members and therefore the overseas options are not a wholistic solution for our industry. We must have avenues that allow us to engage new people to industry as well as, provide career pathways for our existing workforce.

2.1 Demand & Supply

There is a strong demand for all skill levels throughout the whole of the meat industry. It is reported that the higher skilled workers and/or high demand jobs, (not just within industry, but on industry), varying industry bodies and government departments all vying for these skilled employees for their roles such as auditors, government inspectors, policy experts, food safety experts, the list is endless. These employees come from within industry and have obtained high levels of knowledge and experience over many years. Unfortunately, it takes many years to train the current workforce to be able to step up into these varying roles.

The middle skilled roles (industry tradespeople and the like) are being lured to other industries that are able to pay much higher wages such as mining. This in turn leads to skills gaps, also it effects industry's ability to upskill suitable employees into the higher skilled roles. This is due to the inability to retain skilled workers that can assist with on-the-job training.

For the new to industry roles, there are many factors to consider here. Firstly, many of these roles are located in regional and rural areas throughout Australia, where there is not an abundance of locals available to be gainfully employed or are looking for careers in the industry. The national housing crisis also impacts in these areas, with very limited availability and high costs when they are available.

Secondly, the meat industry competes with many other industries for employees, not just in new to industry roles, but all skill levels, with unemployment being steady at around 3.7% there are simply not enough employees to fill roles.

Regarding attraction and retention within industry - there are many strategies and programs in use throughout industry, both nationally and in the states/territories. These programs are trying to raise industry awareness and increase the profile of careers within industry. There are programs dedicated to education from primary school up to university levels. Can more be done? Definitely. Many of these initiatives are reasonably new, and with the many different organisations doing their own thing, the risk of duplication, and missing key audiences is an extremely high concern.

The impact of innovation and technology in increasing within industry. The meat industry has always been very labour intensive however, industry has been investing significantly in this area. With current initiatives using robotics, virtual reality equipment, shadow robotics, there will be a shift change in some of the skills required. Industry will look to reskill current employees into these new opportunities, there will also be the need for specialist technicians to maintain these new initiatives. This could also create new roles within industry and aid in career progression.

2.2 Participation & Progression

There has been unfounded commentary recently from unions stating that use of Working Holiday Visa (417 visa) participants is stalling the upskilling and career progression within industry. AMIC strongly refutes this claim. Whilst the industry uses various visa programs, AMIC submits the 417 program actually helps with the upskilling and career progression. Typically, 417 employees are only able to be employed for a set period of time, therefore industry will utilise these employees in new to industry roles, but also multiskilling to cover various low-level tasks. This then allows for the upskilling of the current workforce into skilled roles, increasing skills and allowing for career progression.

Governments and unions must realise, with the low availability of a local workforce, industry needs to utilise the various available visa programs to remain operational. These programs must be supported and made accessible for industry by governments.

The meat industry has a long and successful history of engaging with migrant workers. Industry also acknowledges the importance of developing a local domestic workforce. When we look at solutions to address our shortage of workers and skills, the various visa programs are crucial for overseas and domestic markets. As this industry is mainly in regional locations, we come across many challenges. We compete with multiple sectors such as the Mining sector for employees and skills. There is a lack

of a domestic workforce within these regional communities, and the housing market in these areas are tightly contested. Another factor is the cost-of-living crisis across Australia at present.

While all these challenges are present, the meat industry will have a reliance of migrant employees to assist in filling skilled, semiskilled, and nonskilled positions. With ensuring the right skills are available, we have a chance at building workers and skills to support our industry where it is needed most and work towards a long-term sustainable workforce.

2.3 Education & Training

Within the meat industry we have our training package the AMP (Australian Meat Processing Training Package) within this there are 3 main areas of VET utilisation, incorporating traineeships and apprenticeships.

- Meat Processors (Abattoirs) – traineeships
- Retail Butchers – Apprenticeships
- Smallgoods – there is a Smallgoods Apprenticeship in SA, in all other states it is a traineeship.
- There are also various skillsets within the AMP.

The meat industry also incorporates many other qualifications, courses, micro credentials, specialist training, soft skills and on the job training.

It is critical for industry to utilise all aspects of education and training systems for many different reasons, such as compliance, market access, customer requirements etc, most importantly in ensuring a competent and suitability skilled workforce, which enables multi skilling and upskilling therefore future proofing the industry.

An area of concern is the disparity between the Skills Priority List (SPL) and funding/incentive arrangements DEWR and the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List (AAPL). For example, there are only two (2) meat industry occupations included on the AAPL, whereas in the SPL there are many other meat industry occupations listed as a shortage in all states and territories.

The Australian Apprentice Incentive System has always been somewhat flawed for the Meat Industry. The current arrangements only fund Certificate III qualifications for new to industry participants, and not our existing workforce, where we should be seeking to multi-skill and upskill the workforce.

Processors, Smallgoods Manufacturers and other enterprises have never been able to enrol existing employees into a Cert III qualification and attract funding/incentives. With the exception of Retail Butchers, as that qualification is an Apprenticeship. The Cert III qualifications for processors and smallgoods are Traineeships, and therefore do not attract incentives for existing employees.

Industry cannot, nor should not enrol new to industry participants straight into certificate III qualifications. These roles are essentially the tradesperson roles within industry, such as Boner/Slicer, Slaughter person, Quality Assurance Officer, and various other occupations. Employees require industry experience prior to undertaking these roles. Also noting these occupations are classed as skill level 3 on the ANZSCO list, therefore equating to 2-3 years of prior industry experience required before commencing these roles.

Industry Concerns

Removal of funding for Cert II AMP Qualifications:

- AMP20117- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Food Services)
- AMP20316- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs)
- AMP20415- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Meat Retailing)

It is understood government is focused on upskilling the workforce and thus far deems Cert II qualifications not important, as these qualifications are aimed at new to industry employees and therefore the responsibility should be on businesses to train these new employees (inductions etc). Additionally, there is historical reference to high numbers of cancellations in Cert II which also adds to the government's decision to remove Cert II funding. I would also like to note that relating to Cert II Meat Retailing, there has been little to no enrolments in this, as apprentice butchers are signed up into Cert III. We propose that if funding was retained, and with greater promotion of Cert II Meat Retailing, employee retention would improve therefore increasing completions rates in both Cert II and Cert III Meat Retailing.

As for the other two (2) qualifications,

- AMP20117- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Food Services)
- AMP20316- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs)

Industry uses these two (2) qualifications extensively. They are used during processors induction programs where businesses have relationships with RTO's or are an RTO themselves. The funding of these programs is the core business model for smaller specialised RTO's. Also, a majority of enterprises use the funding to deliver the Cert II training to all new employees during inductions whether the new employees are entitled to funding or not.

Industry believes Cert II funding should not be removed, as these qualifications are the initial steps to having a successful career within the meat industry. They provide the core units for all additional qualifications in the industry, giving participants a thorough understanding of industry requirements.

We do recognise that high turnover relates to cancellations. Industry is focused on reducing turnover and promotion of careers within industry, completion of Cert II qualifications is an essential part of this, not forgetting when partaking in a Cert III qualification the Seven (7) Cert II core units must first be completed.

Restructure of Cert III Incentives (Federal Government Incentives) - this new structure will only fund two occupations within the Meat Industry, the two (2) occupations are:

- Butcher & Smallgoods Maker
- Meat Inspector (AAO)

This new structure comes from the Australian Apprentice Priority List, which does not relate to the ANZCO Skills Priority List where processing occupations, such as Boning/Slicing and Slaughtering are listed as a shortage in all states. Industry is greatly concerned that our (3) three main occupations along with a plethora of many other industry occupations that have substantial skills gaps do not attract any incentives or funding from the Federal Government. If we continue with this thinking it will lead to a reduction in upskilling and multiskilling throughout industry, therefore increasing skills shortages in both the short and long term.

The aim is to attract and retain our domestic workforce capabilities. This has a multipronged benefit in reducing reliance on an overseas workforce, reducing costs, and having less impact on housing demands, as local or domestic workers would already have accommodation.

AMIC note and welcome that the new funding model incorporates existing employees, whereas before new to industry employees were the only eligible employees/students for Certificate III Traineeships.

Recommendations

Industry recommends that all current federal incentives and funding remain, with the proviso of incorporating existing employees to attract incentives and funding in all industry related occupations.

All Certificate II funding should remain, as these qualifications are the initial steps to having a successful career within the meat industry. Industry recognise that high turnover relates to cancellations. Industry is focused on reducing turnover via the promotion of careers within industry, completion of Cert II qualifications is an essential part of this, not forgetting when partaking in a Cert III qualification the Cert II Seven (7) core units must first be completed.

Certificate III and aligned occupations, should be opened to include all associated occupations within industry, such as Boners/Slicers, Slaughters. Also, including occupations such as - Meat Process Workers, Meat Packer, Supervisors, Quality Assurance officers etc.

If the occupations lists are opened/broadened, and with the availability of incentives to existing workforce, industry will have greater flexibility to upskill and initiate multiskilling programs of the current industry workforce. Therefore, the follow-on benefits will allow for promotion of career paths for new to industry employees. Industry will then attract and could – potentially, have a strong ability to retain more people.

Additionally, the AMP contains many skill sets, industry believes there are many that should be funded. These are not a full qualification, although skill sets can deliver high training outcomes in condensed timeframes. Industry therefore would benefit from employees with higher specialised skills with less of an impact on operations. Also of great importance, some skill sets are requirements to gain Market Access to overseas markets. Industry strongly encourages for these Skill Sets to be fully funded throughout Australia.

Industry has much of its current workforce incorporated in labouring, knife hand and skilled meatworker roles. These employees may have been doing these roles for decades, they will have a wealth of knowledge that could be passed onto new to industry employees. Also, with the right skill sets and training, these existing industry employees could be upskilled to undertake more advanced roles within industry, such as Product Graders (Chiller Assessors & Meat Standards Australia Grader), Tutors, Quality Assurance Officers, and Quality Control Officers, (AAO's) Australian Authorised Officers, Leading Hands, Supervisors and so on.

These are all roles that industry is struggling to find adequate employees for. Industry can emphasise upskilling from within, and this will showcase the many careers path opportunities industry can deliver.

The meat industry is similar to all other industries, with shortages in leadership roles, supervisory, production management, quality assurance, human resource and training, administration, sales and shipping, etc, that's just in enterprises. There is also what's known as on industry roles, such as RTO's, Government, Auditors, Industry Bodies, the opportunities are endless. If industry trains/upskills our existing workforce for these higher skilled positions, we are allowing for the promotion of career paths for new to industry employees, therefore increasing participation & completions of Certificate II & III qualifications. This model will also incorporate the use of higher qualifications such as Certificate IV and higher.

This will only be possible if incentives/funding restored to cover all meat industry occupations, and government retains the new model of including the existing workforce.

2.4 Migration

Our industry utilises all the various migration settings to assist in a productive workforce, such as skilled visa programs utilising MILA and TSMIT, also the PALM scheme within the meat industry has been increasing in numbers, thus reducing its reliance on working holiday visa participants.

As industry is heavily reliant on access to migrant workers, and grapples currently with the associated housing and infrastructure requirements and needs that using migrant workers presents. It is clear to say our industry and no doubt others, are at a critical point, as there appears to be little focus on the solutions for the national housing crisis as it stands.

Businesses are feeling underwhelmed with the lack of commitment to this problem and are being forced to focus on their own solutions/options which is limiting at best, and in a lot of cases is simply out of reach for most businesses to go it on their own.

We acknowledge the economic and social benefits that the various migration programs offer, but more importantly acknowledge the challenges that comes with this population growth. Migration can and will continue to impact both supply and demand on housing and rental markets. Therefore, creating a vicious circle of events. Since the Covid pandemic we have seen the impacts of labour shortages, goods and services shortages, and a continued labour shortage, that has now lasted well past the Covid outbreak, rising inflation and interest rates and therefore housing shortages.

With the three (3) main areas of migration that industry utilises, each is deployed to address varying areas of employee and skills shortage,

Skilled Visa participants are tasked into key skilled roles, addressing those shortages.

PALM scheme - these participants initially start in new to industry roles however and will progress to higher skilled roles throughout the 3 - 4-year duration.

Working Holiday Visa participants are only able to be employed for a short, set period of time. Therefore, industry will utilise these employees in new to industry roles, but also use this cohort in various low-level tasks. This allows for the upskilling of the current and local workforce who are in lower skilled roles to progress into skilled roles, increasing skills and allowing for career progression.

Summary outline of the issues that our members currently face in relation to utilising migrant workers:

- The Skilled worker TSMIT increase, and the ability for them only to work in skilled roles.
- The unrest with bringing in foreign labour versus the opportunity of training and growth for domestic labour.
- The significant costs associated with skilled migrant workers over domestic labour, which is tied to the additional training required, housing, setting them up with services to support them and an increased TSMIT.
- The segregation in industry between local and foreign labour causing cultural issues and general unrest in business and communities.
- The level of IELTS competency and integration into workforce and community – is it at a sufficient level to ensure safety requirements and ensure obligations are understood?
- PALM scheme deed and guidelines is not sustainable. Many additional responsibilities placed on Approved Employer's (AEs) significantly increasing their costs.
- The level of responsibility on AEs for foreign labour with minimal support.
- Issues for providing housing and requirements.
- Ensuring that there are no exploitation of migrant workers and setting up the infrastructure to support that (multi-lingual materials and support services).
- The new requirement that unions address all PALM workers upon arrival when this is not across all workers. Unsure why this requirement even exists, as we are informed that this is undermining AEs and causing more harm than good.
- The general cost of living pressures.

The list is quite extensive, and it is exceedingly difficult to try and work through to determine what initiatives can be put in place to support a planned migration program.

THE ISSUES IN FURTHER DETAIL:

The Skilled worker TSMIT increase, and the ability for them only to work in skilled roles.

TSMIT is much greater than the MIA Meat Industry Award, this creates disadvantages for businesses who operate under the MIA.

With the Skilled worker TSMIT increase, this has cost implications on our employers, as it is not the only cost that they bear, there are a lot of foundational and set up costs that the employers take on as well.

There is also unrest and tensions due to migrant workers only working in skilled roles. For employers, they must work only in skilled roles, as it would be uneconomical to use them in non-skilled roles. A potential option going forward is to move the visa classes around to enable people to come into the country to provide more breadth of roles (not just skilled roles). The theory being then, that we continue to focus on upskilling the Australian workforce at the same time, whilst we utilise migrant workers in other supportive roles.

In addition to this, consideration of the application of the TSMIT payment whilst workers are undergoing training. A suggestion of a training remuneration that is at 75% of the TSMIT and once competent, they could then be increased to the full TSMIT amount. We acknowledge that this would also need an outer limit for duration for training, to ensure that the training payment was not extended beyond a reasonable timeframe.

Unrest with Foreign Labour:

The use of foreign labour can cause unrest in the facilities, especially if they are not of the same competency level, or if are getting paid more than their local counterpart.

It can also cause unrest with the training and development resources being dedicated to foreign workers over Australian workers. There may be some impetus to investigate the visas being spread around different classes so as to not lock in the Meat Industry to only being able to utilise expensive skilled migrant workers. All roles are important in the Meat industry, skilled and labourer type roles.

Our experience is that the skilled meat worker is (in the beginning), not trained to the level and degree that they need to be. With TSMIT being set at \$70,000 there are concerns that unskilled workers are being paid more than the existing workforce and is setting a them and us culture within industry creating undue tensions. With wage parity, consideration needs to be given to how the TSMIT is affecting the disparity between domestic and PALM scheme workers.

We must introduce levels and visa classes below “skilled” according to their competency to ensure fairness and reduce the unease. When the workers arrive from overseas there is an expectation that they are of a set skill level. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The time to upskill and the cost to upskill, as well as lower levels of production make paying for skilled workers an impost for the employer.

Significant Costs:

There are significant costs in utilising a migrant worker. Costs to bring them to Australia, set up employment structures to support them, ensure that the company has the right infrastructure to support these employees, and ensure there is appropriate training and support services. With no other support in the community, the employer has no choice but to facilitate and coordinate services to support them. The employers willingly take on some shared responsibility, but there could be more support from the Government to aid a smooth transition.

There is also in addition to TSMIT, general cost of living pressures that will ultimately affect the employers and the employees. In our experience, the industry does what it can to support migrant workers and go above and beyond to make sure they can access appropriate food, housing, health, and support services.

Linked back to other items put forward in this submission, employers still struggle with the fact that there are workers that come in as skilled workers, still need a great deal of training and support over and above the Australian worker counterpart in order to ensure that they are safe and productive in the workplace. This is a costly exercise. Employers absorb issues with some of the migrant workforce being unsuitable also, being out of pocket to try and rectify the issues themselves or provide the means for them to journey home if the issues cannot be resolved.

Segregation in industry:

Segregation in industry are words to describe that in regional communities (as an environment) or even in the organisation (as another environment) that migrant workers tend to group together. This is not an issue except for the fact that it could cause unrest in the workplace and communities. Australian workers and Migrant workers segmenting themselves at work and in the community.

Employers have a lot of cost burden and one of the items (if they had additional support from Government) would be to spend money on culture building and helping migrant workers assimilate into the community and with their peers in the workplace.

Level of IELTS competency and skills competency:

It is our experience (member feedback from the industry) that the English language competency is not quite where it needs to be. This causes huge disruption for our employers when they are paying for a skilled worker, but yet have to spend weeks training them to the level and requirement that they need. It appears that it is more difficult for the workers to understand instruction in a second language, and

Australian workers have to constantly train, assist, and supervise someone that is supposedly comes in as a skilled worker.

This also relates to the fact that meat processors, abattoirs are complex and risky places to work. Some of the skilled workers coming to Australia are using knives and work around dangerous equipment, therefore an employer must ensure that they understand all of the safety precautions to apply them, and comprehension (based on the current IELTS score) can take up to three times as long compared to their Australian counterpart.

It is our submission that there should be, an additional level introduced (perhaps at 75% of TSMIT) whilst workers become technically competent and are comfortable working as part of the broader team and/or supply a level of visas to provide support services which will allow and prioritise the upskilling of Australian workers.

PALM scheme deed & guidelines are not sustainable:

It is well known the PALM scheme has strayed from its original remit of supplying labour to areas with critical shortages namely horticulture. It is now a political showpiece that government is instilling unattainable conditions and requirements that are additional to what a local workforce requires.

Industry has however progressed with PALM and now has one of the larger numbers of PALM participants in Australia. It is noted the original sector of horticulture is reducing their numbers due to the unworkable conditions.

The meat industries use of PALM is out of necessity, many employers are in regional areas with no local workforce available. We note the PALM workforce is complementing the industry workforce despite extravagant costs and conditions incurred. This is however not sustainable; industry is already raising issues with relevant government departments and will at some point need to readdress PALM utilisation or will walk away from the program for alternative options.

Issues for providing housing and requirements:

There are issues with housing requirements in the regional communities. Housing is difficult to obtain, and difficult to obtain close to plants. A lot of the workers cannot drive, so it is pivotal that employers find location and transport for them in order for them to come to work.

Housing costs – Employers are being required to absorb all of the costs. They are also trying to absorb their costs of rental increases, transport costs, and any multiplier effects of costs. Meat industry employers are constantly being asked to keep costs at a minimum.

Ensuring there are no exploitation of migrant workers and infrastructure:

There is much compliance required to ensure migrant workers are not exploited in any way. There is a huge cost impost in ensuring that this does not happen (not just of the practical costs) but also have experts navigate the multiple compliance requirements.

General Cost of Living pressures:

General cost of living pressures needs to be mentioned here, as whilst it is not a direct variable, it does directly affect the costs that an employer has to be burdened with in order to ensure Migrant workers are well looked after and supported. Housing, food, and transport is more expensive than ever, and the employer ultimately is responsible under current arrangements.

Demand for workers is increasing:

Simple practicality and cost burdens include transport to and from work, an initial amount of money for these employees to buy food and the time spent to find appropriate rental properties for the workers to be housed in whilst here working.

Low unemployment rates continue to ensure that job vacancies remain high. Migrants can play a role at meeting these shortages, but not without immediate action to support their arrival. Businesses need workers, but complex legislation and requirements are a cost burden in an already significant cost pressure environment.

All areas continue to struggle with housing and accommodation needs. Regional areas are experiencing less than optimal growth of available workers and hence are dealing with labour shortages. With housing an issue, the problem presents itself, where do they go? There needs to be increased local initiatives which need to be fostered and actioned with milestones for the short-term and support a longer-term solution.

It should not be an expectation that businesses be left to manage the housing crisis on their own. The employers are already footing the majority of the costs and requirements to support them. It is simply not tenable and could force further issues in many industries.

Conclusion:

The below 8 key actions are all valid actions:

1. Targeting temporary skilled migration to address skills needs and promote worker mobility.
2. Reshaping permanent skilled migration to drive long-term prosperity.
3. Strengthen the integrity and quality of international education.

4. Tackling worker exploitation and the misuse of the visa system.
5. Planning migration to get the right skills in the right places.
6. Tailoring regional visas, PALM scheme and the Work Holiday Maker Program to support regional Australia and its workers.
7. Deepening our people-to-people ties in the Indo-Pacific.
8. Simplifying the migration system to improve the experience for migrants and employers.

What is being done for the housing, accommodation and supporting services to be able to go hand in hand with these key actions. If it does not fit within these key actions.

In addition to this, there has already been significant change and real struggles under the government changes and IR reforms, leaving the average employer wondering what is next and how to cope. If the housing crisis remains unaddressed, its potential implications could be severely detrimental and significant to the Meat Industry and Meat industry providers (e.g., Labour Hire providers) in the short, medium, and long term.

In an already struggling industry, in a time where the cost of living is at an all-time high, and with a national housing crisis, all parties need to consider the housing, accommodation and the infrastructure that supports them.

We must also address the level of technical competency, and the level of English-speaking competency to ensure that they are equipped and ready when they start work in Australia. A potential option could be increasing the level in the test or ensuring that the skill level exists prior to passing the IELTS requirements, or providing access to additional training in Australia if the employer believes it might be an issue.

We must consider bringing other support roles and not put the full focus on skilled workers. This has a two-fold benefit, it allows the company to focus on the skills being taught in Australia (and stay in Australia) and mitigates risk that companies are fully paying TSMIT for workers that are not at the same level (which again costs the business).

We must consider the provision of an additional TSMIT level (e.g. 75%) whilst migrants train and become familiar with plant, organisational culture and norms, complex safety rules and technical style. Even with the skill being available in the worker, there are so many other variables/complexities in the way Australian companies work that need to be taught to allow them to be fully productive. TSMIT assumes that they are fully productive on day one. There should be a competency-based progression and training (to a maximum outer limit).

2.5 Biosecurity:

Within the red meat industry biosecurity is managed carefully by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF), through their various programs and occupations of veterinarians and inspectors, internally industry utilises Quality Assurance Managers/Officers, and Meat Inspectors to manage biosecurity risks. All the occupations mentioned are highly skilled and trained. Other industry occupations that may have less significant links to biosecurity issues are made aware via internal training programs.

Regarding training around biosecurity, the key takeaway is currency and relevance, ensuring those key occupations remain current with any industry developments. This is provided to industry by government departments, then industry is to ensure all relevant employees are made aware. There are various key qualifications that are linked to occupations mentioned above, as these are requirements and compliance for market access industry readily complies as well as provided feedback on relevance in various forums.

Other opportunities may be raising awareness in lower to mid-level industry roles, industry generally provides training and information to employees relating to food safety and cross contamination. In certain environments this will also include biosecurity aspects. Including biosecurity information during workplace inductions to new employees may be beneficial, however finding the right balance between required information/additional information and retention of that information will be key.

Thank you for allowing us to provide this submission. We trust that the points raised will be considered prior to any ultimate decisions. Our industry relies on appropriate measures and decisions to ensure longevity and a growth future.