



Supporting the agriculture sector and its workforce

December 2024

The agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors face long-standing challenges in attracting, retaining and developing a sufficient workforce, worsened by tight labour market conditions across the economy. These sectors are vital for local economies and provide thousands of jobs in rural and regional Australia.

To ensure the continued success and growth of the agriculture industry, the Australian Government is committed to supporting the agricultural workforce by investing in the skills of Australians, creating more job opportunities in regional areas and supporting secure pathways for overseas workers.



Work we do

We work collaboratively with industry and unions to ensure the short, medium and long-term workforce needs of agriculture are understood and considered across government.

Agricultural Workforce Forum

The Agricultural Workforce Forum (the Forum) brings together government, industry and unions to discuss agricultural workforce-related issues. The Forum allows direct collaboration with employer groups and unions on matters that impact agricultural workers.

The Forum has provided government with input on many issues, including the Regional Migration Review, Food Supply Chain Capacity Study, regional housing and the Agricultural Trade Apprenticeship scoping study. For more information, visit [Agricultural Workforce Forum](#).

Agricultural workforce projects

National Farm Safety Week

National Farm Safety Week is an annual campaign delivering critical farm safety information and awareness aimed at reducing injuries and fatalities on farms. Read more at [Farmsafe](#).

AgConnections – Skilled Agricultural Work Liaison pilot program

The AgConnections – Skilled Agricultural Work Liaison pilot program aims to encourage university students to consider a career path in agriculture. The pilot program will provide funding for universities to develop and run an agricultural work liaison pilot program over the 2025-2026 calendar years.

AgCAREERSTART

The AgCAREERSTART pilot program is a structured employment program to help young Australians start a career in agriculture in a gap year. Read more about AgCAREERSTART at [agcareerstart.com.au](#).

Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program

The Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences research program aims to better understand and respond to community perceptions and worker experiences within the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors. For more information, visit [Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program](#).

AgUP Grants Program

The AgUP grants program supported industry-led projects focused on creating opportunities for attraction, retention, upskilling and training. Projects include:

- Seafood Industry Australia Limited has partnered with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to deliver a digital national seafood industry platform that acts as a one-stop shop for workers in the seafood industry. For more information visit, www.seafoodcareers.com.au.
- Rural Business Tasmania Inc. has partnered with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture to deliver a training and development program focused on knowledge, leadership and extension skills.



Government engagement

We engage closely with other Commonwealth agencies to understand and represent agricultural workforce issues and ensure they are considered in relevant policies. Below are some of the key policies we engage on.

Overseas workforce

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is a key program for meeting workforce shortages in unskilled, low-skilled and semi-skilled positions in the agriculture sector, by enabling eligible Australian businesses to hire workers from 9 Pacific islands. For more information, visit [PALM scheme](#).

The Migration Strategy outlines a new vision for Australia’s migration system. For more information, visit [Migration Strategy](#).

Food Supply Chain Capacity Study

The Jobs and Skills Australia Food Supply Chain Capacity Study is due for release in early 2025 and will provide advice to government on how training, education and migration systems can work together to meet agricultural workforce needs. For more information, visit [Food Supply Chain Capacity Study](#).

Fee-Free TAFE in Agriculture

Fee-Free TAFE provides opportunities for Australians to access fee-free training in areas of skill needs, including in agriculture. Over 20,300 students have enrolled in an agriculture-related Fee-Free TAFE course as at 30 June 2024. Find out more about these opportunities at [YourCareer](#).

More information

Learn more about the [Agricultural Workforce](#).

Web agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/agricultural-workforce.

