



Department of
Primary Industries

Tocal
COLLEGE

Always in Transition!

Producing technical human resources for the
Australian agricultural sector

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Rationale

The rationale behind agricultural education in Australia has changed over time

This presentation will describe how it has developed because past practices affect the ability to reform and change

Australia

- A Federation of six states and two territories which have legislative control of agriculture and education
- National Government has taxation powers
- There is an increasing role of the National government in education by influence and mutual agreement territories
- Agricultural industries pay levies matched on a dollar basis by national government which fund research and development and a small amount of education/extension depending upon industry fund.



Past – Education

- Little employment in rural areas not related directly to agriculture. Rural Australia always had a very narrow economic base - unlike USA or Europe
- Many agricultural colleges for both young farmer and professional education which all operated independently. These tertiary courses in were agriculture popular
- Very low levels of post secondary qualifications in Australian farming. Qualifications no barrier to entry
- Most training informal on-farm, father to son or boss to worker
- No formal short courses for farmers instead informal field days.

Contextual Issues influencing Investment and Reform

Issues involving the key elements of the AIS are important – these are:

- Government Influence
- Industry Influences
- Education Influences

Present – Industry

- Consolidation of small farms into larger farms, up to six or more farms can now one large farm.
- Dramatic reductions in labour with major increase in mechanisation.
- Shortage of skilled people in agriculture
- Decreasing number of small full time farmers More part time farmers entering agriculture as adults often retirees or successful in business

Present - Government

- National Vocational and Education Training (VET) System established (1990s) which introduced Competency Based Training
- Agrifood Skills Australia is the key element of the reform

Agrifood Skills Australia

- One of 11 National Industry Skills Councils
- Links Industry, Education Providers and Government
- Coordinate the writing of Competencies called Training Packages which direct training nationally
- Gathers Industry Intelligence and uses it to develop training packages and advise Government

Gathering Industry Intelligence

- Board (9) includes Industry members but is skilled based
- Network of state industry advisory boards with liaison managers(8)
- Industry standing committees (5)
- Skills providers reference group
- Government initiatives (inc. state governments)
eg green skills, employability skills

Agrifood Skills Australia staff and a consultant prepare an annual environmental scan of the industry.

Qualifications– Levels and Types

Certificate I – IV

Diploma and Advanced Diploma

Agriculture with specialities eg Horses, Dairy,
Business management

Conservation and Land Management with
specialities eg Weeds,

Structure of Qualifications

- Competencies or defined units of work go together to make a qualification
- Certificate IV in Agriculture requires a pass in 12 competencies, at least 16 are attempted
- Short courses are usually based on competencies
- Those with experience can gain a qualification based on Recognition of Prior Learning through work place assessment

Funding

Government purchases qualifications from the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) who delivers the training or recognition service.

Government also purchases individual competencies or Skill Sets (part qualifications)

This is a demand driven model compared to when the government just funded the institution which was supply driven

Challenges

- Provide quality training under a demand driven model where the low numbers, widely spread and not always motivated to undertake training.
- Attracting students to agricultural courses
- Improve connections between School, VET and University Sectors

Challenges continued

- Revitalise aging workforce in all areas of agriculture, on farm, research, extension, education
- Encourage young people to enter careers in agriculture
- Expand elearning but strong uptake of the internet but ITC in rural areas problematic

Challenges continued

- Maintain quality with increasing delivery of VET training by small private and not-for-profit organisations
- Try to have VET training funded on a National basis for small dispersed industries eg Bees

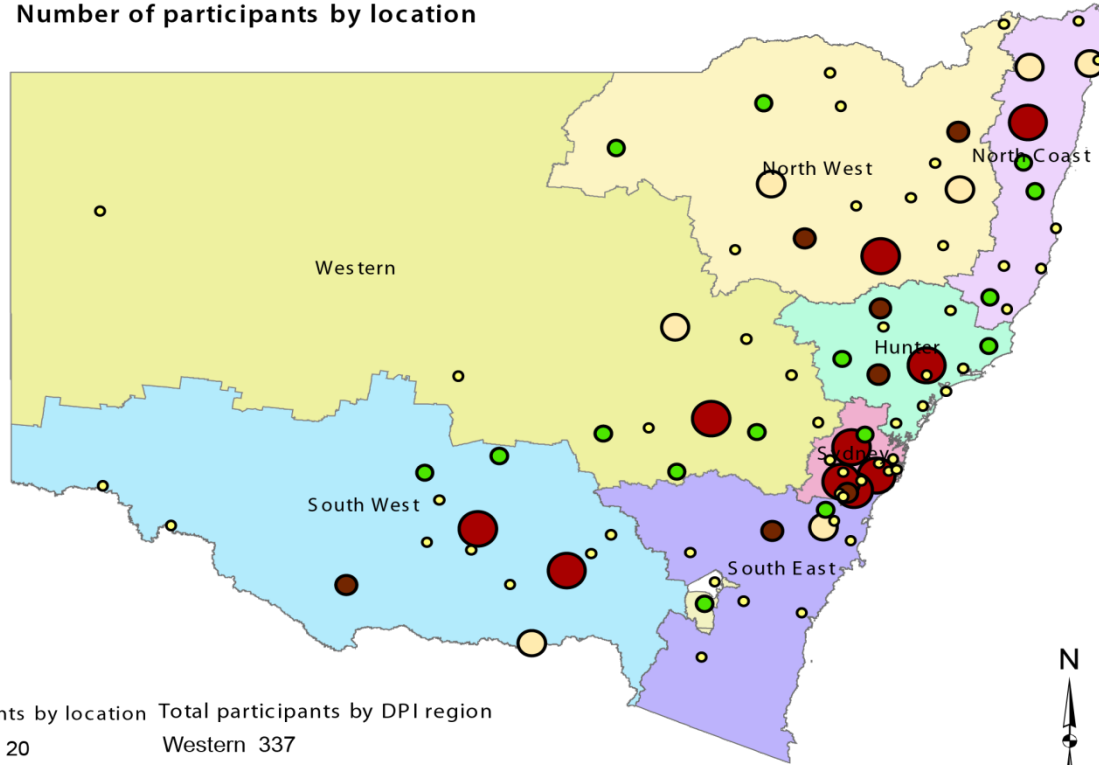
Tocal College

- Full-time, part-time and short courses (PROfarm), elearning, events, publications and venue at both campuses
- Post School Agriculture, Land Management and related studies
- 300+ graduates per year
- CB Alexander campus on 2250ha property with extensive farms; other campuses and offices

PROfarm

- PROfarm is a brand name for all short courses run by NSW DPI by its technical specialists, Industry experts as well as staff within Tocal College.
- Strong web based promotion
- Courses anywhere in NSW and interstate
- Business and costing model allows for range of funding user pays to fully subsidised
- Backed up by extensive range of publications/e-books

PROfarm annual participation 2011
Number of participants by location



Legend

Participants by location		Total participants by DPI region	
●	1 - 20	●	Western 337
●	21 - 35	●	Sydney 764
●	36 - 50	●	South West 624
●	51 - 100	●	South East 250
●	101 - 372	●	North West 555
		●	North Coast 373
		●	Hunter 564

Concluding Comment

- The reforms were absolutely necessary
- Australia's constitution is a barrier to reform, some may say an important brake!
- There have been challenges but the disadvantages have been outweighed by the advantages
- There is more reform yet to come