



Business Case to attract people to careers in food, wine and agribusiness in South Australia

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

May 2025

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Glossary

Acronym	Full name
ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACS	Australian Computer Society
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSP	Gross State Product
HE	Higher Education
JSA	Jobs and Skills Australia
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
PALM	Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme
PPSA	Primary Producers South Australia
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SAFPA	South Australian Forest Products Association
SME	Small-to-medium Enterprise
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WHM	Working Holiday Maker

Executive summary

Context and motivation

The South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions ('the Department'), in partnership with Primary Producers SA (PPSA), has engaged Deloitte Access Economics to develop a business case to attract people to careers in food, wine, and agribusiness in South Australia ('the business case', 'the report'). For this report, the sector of interest (agribusiness, food and wine) is denoted as 'agribusiness' or the 'agribusiness sector' throughout the report.

The scope of the business case includes:

- analysis and discussion of the challenges to attracting people to the workforce across the agribusiness sector, including forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.
- analysis and discussion of the existing work being undertaken by all tiers of government, education providers and industries to attract people into these careers.
- development of a project plan comprising recommendations and actions to address challenges and improve and reposition career opportunities. This includes an assessment of options for investment from the agribusiness sector and the potential productivity gains resulting from the investment.

The report is intended to inform measures to address workforce shortages in the agribusiness sector and regional South Australia more broadly. It focuses on how the agribusiness sector can continue to achieve outcomes for the sector through adopting a more coordinated approach to attracting people to agribusiness (with consideration of skills and education), the creation of opportunities in the regions, and pathways for overseas workers. A coordinated approach will be particularly important for improving and repositioning career opportunities, and to reduce barriers faced by businesses in their recruitment and retention.

The report was developed through four phases that included:

- Phase 1 – Research and analysis, which involved desktop research to understand strengths and issues with current initiatives to attract and retain workers, and data analysis of key indicators of issues and causes of workforce challenges for the agribusiness sector.
- Phase 2 – Consultations, which involved engaging with 10 businesses to discuss the workforce challenges they face and the initiatives they have introduced for their business.
- Phase 3 – Recommendations, which involved the development of recommendations and activities to support with attracting more people to agribusiness.
- Phase 4 – Reporting, which saw the development of this report, providing a comprehensive view of the key workforce challenges faced by agribusiness and recommendations for the agribusiness sector.

Workforce challenges have become a significant issue for the South Australian economy over recent years. The ability to attract people to the state, and to lift labour force participation, is critical in defining the state's economic speed limit. From 2020 to 2024 the state created 107,000 jobs (an employment lift of 12.7%). Skill shortages have at times been extreme, though job vacancies have eased marginally over the past 12 months as the cost-of-living crisis has slowed economic momentum. Nevertheless, workforce attraction and retention remain vital for South Australia's economic progress. South Australia's Economic Statement includes building South Australia's talent as a core mission, "to assist our transition to a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy".¹ This is vital not only for new industries such as hydrogen, or an expanded Defence industry presence, but also for the state's traditional powerhouse sectors including agribusiness. Given that South Australia's agribusiness sector is such a vital part of the state's economy, valued at \$17.1 billion revenue in 2023-24, attracting people to the sector, and then retaining them, is a

¹ Government of South Australia, [South Australian Economic Statement](#), n.d.

priority for government and industry.² As part of this report, a project plan has been developed (Chapter 4) with recommendations to address workforce challenges and improve career opportunities.

Key workforce challenges

There is compelling evidence that the South Australian agribusiness sector faces a workforce problem. While attracting and retaining workers has been challenging for some time, this has been further impacted by migrant reforms, particularly for skilled roles in regional and remote areas.

Evidence of the problem

There are multiple indicators of the workforce challenges faced by South Australian agribusiness. Three of the main indicators are as follows:

- Approximately 22% of agribusiness occupations in South Australia have persistently experienced **skills shortages** over the past four years, as shown in Chart i below. Exacerbating the workforce challenges in South Australian agribusiness, skills shortages elsewhere in the economy from 2022 (including in construction, mining and defence industries) have increased competition for some skilled positions.³
- The **retention rate** of farm workers between the 2016 and 2021 Census was a low 28.8%.⁴
- **Online job vacancies** in agribusiness occupations in South Australia remain elevated over long-term trends after doubling during COVID-19.

Chart i Proportion of occupations experiencing skills shortages



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia

Causes of the problem

There are a variety of underlying causes contributing to the workforce problems described above. The main causes pertain to the agribusiness sector itself, the education sector, and broader community perceptions of careers in agribusiness.

- **Causes related to agribusiness and adjacent industries:** While the agribusiness sector offers competitive wages and strong on-the-job training, it often competes with other industries such as mining and construction for a limited pool of regional workers. Seasonal fluctuations in work and a lack of regional housing also make attracting and retaining workers difficult. Agribusinesses face challenges hiring migrant workers to fill skills gaps, including a lack of awareness of sponsorship opportunities and application processing times.
- **Causes related to the education system:** Agriculture is under-represented in South Australian schools due to a shortage of agriculture teachers and a full curriculum; only 92 out

² Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, Primary Industries Scorecard 2023-24, 2025

³ Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation Shortage List, 2024

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Longitudinal Dataset, 2016-2021

of 765 schools in the state have agriculture programs.⁵ Consequently, students lack awareness about the industry and hold misconceptions about the nature of work, which discourages them from applying for suitable roles. Inequitable access to higher education is also a barrier to entry, particularly for First Nations people.

- **Causes related to the broader community:** Community members generally hold negative perceptions (and misconceptions) about working in rural industries which act as a deterrent to pursuing career opportunities. For example, 84% believe that most jobs are physically demanding, while only 34% believe workers in rural industries are paid a fair wage.^{6;7} Similarly to students, a lack of awareness of metropolitan-based opportunities in the sector is also contributing to a shortage of willing and qualified people applying for jobs.

Overall, attracting and retaining workers into the agribusiness sector faces significant challenges. The following sections detail initiatives that already exist to address the identified challenges and identify opportunities to achieve better alignment between initiatives to improve workforce outcomes.

Existing strategies, investments and initiatives

Many of these workforce challenges have already been recognised, and there are already strategies, investments and initiatives in place to address them. Nationally, there is a strong focus across government and industry in addressing current and future workforce challenges and needs. This has seen the emergence of several workforce strategies and action plans, designed to set the direction for workforce attraction and retention initiatives and investments. Major strategies include:

- The **National Agricultural Workforce Strategy**: Learning to excel developed by the independent National Agricultural Labour Advisory Committee (2021).
- The Commonwealth Government's response to the National Agricultural Workforce Strategy, through a **roadmap to attract, retain, upskill and modernise** Australia's agricultural workforce (2022).
- The Delivering **Ag2030 plan** which details the human capital investment required nationally for the sector to reach its ambition to become a \$100 billion industry by 2030 (latest edition published in 2022).⁸
- The Australian chicken meat **industry workforce strategy** that focuses on building people capability and a diverse and sustainable workforce (2023).
- The South Australian **Seafood Growth strategy** that has a focus on education and training to drive skills development for the industry (2021).

These nationally-driven government and industry strategies and plans are being supported by the 2025-26 Federal Budget which provides \$1.2 million for the Agricultural Workforce Package across 2025-26 and 2026-27. This funding is being used to provide targeted grants to industry-led projects to benefit the sector, and see the continuation of programs including National Farm Safety Week, and AgCAREERSTART pilot, and the skilled agricultural work liaison program.

In South Australia, recent strategies and plans have assessed critical skills needs across the economy, with focus placed on those identified as priority areas, including, early childhood, health, defence and hydrogen workforces. While no South Australian agribusiness workforce strategy exists, there is a plethora of attraction and retention initiatives which provide a range of support and resources.

Figure i categorises the types of attraction and retention initiatives rolled out nationally and state-wide that focus on attracting and retaining people to the agribusiness sector. These initiatives are described in more detail in Chapter 3 of this report to build an understanding of where efforts are being targeted.

⁵ Primary Producers SA, AgCommunicators, South Australian Agricultural Education Strategy, 2024

⁶ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Qualitative research results, 2023

⁷ Community trust in rural industries - Year Four National Survey

⁸ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Delivering Ag2030, 2022

Figure i Categories of attraction and retention initiatives

ATTRACTION		RETENTION	
01	Initiatives that focus on promoting the diverse range of career opportunities in primary industries. These initiatives showcase job opportunities, share information on career pathways, and provide resources to support people with exploring their options. <i>Example: Dairy Jobs Matter, Seafood Careers Australia, Career Mapping project.</i>	01	Initiatives that support with improving workforce professionalism and career progression to help retain workers and meet their needs. These include initiatives that offer career coaching, professional development programs and structure career pathways. <i>Example: AgUp Grants Program.</i>
Creating awareness of job opportunities		Enabling career pathways	
02	Initiatives that focus on providing students with practical experience and exposure to real-life primary industry settings. These initiatives focus on building the knowledge and interest of students, through targeted curriculum, site visits, guest speakers, and networking with industry. <i>Example: SA Lead Ag Teacher, Educating Kids About Agriculture, ExcITED 4 Careers in Agriculture.</i>	02	Initiatives that focus on providing graduate and new employees with structures supports so that they are more likely to remain in the sector. Such supports range from skill-building workshops, on the job learning, mentoring, and networking. <i>Example: Nutrien Ag Solutions graduate programs.</i>
Transitioning from education to work		Facilitating graduate support programs	
03	Initiatives that focus on supporting businesses to diversify their workforces, fill skill gaps and meet labour market demands. These include those that facilitate entry to Australia and those that provide ongoing supports. <i>Example: Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, Working Holiday visa (subclass 417), Community Support Program SA, SA Regional Workforce Agreement.</i>	03	Initiatives that focus on creating workplace cultures that adopt respectful, inclusive and sustainable behaviours and practices. This includes those that focus on promoting fair and ethical practices in the workplace and sectors. <i>Example: Cotton Industry Shift Project, Fair Farms Initiative.</i>
Enabling migration and overseas workers		Creating workplace culture and ethics	
04	Initiatives that focus on understanding and addressing community perceptions, to better inform how the sector attracts and retains workers. These initiatives focus on how to best position the sector and its workforce opportunities for different community groups. <i>Example: Community perceptions and worker experience program.</i>	04	Initiatives that support industry to continue to develop the workforce skills of those people within the sector, in order to sustain highly skilled and qualified workers. These initiatives often involve partnerships with industry and training providers to develop future focused skills that increase productivity, are scalable and sustainable. <i>Example: ForestWorks, GPA training, Regional Skills Training.</i>
Lifting community perceptions		Developing future focused skills	

While these initiatives are providing useful support to the agribusinesses sector and its workers in South Australia, there are several main gaps:

- Without a sector / state workforce strategy, initiatives may not be aligned to an overarching goal and/or have conflicting priorities, leading to duplication of effort and overlap.
- There are several industry focused branding / attraction campaigns that have achieved success in lifting perceptions of their industries (e.g., in red meat and forestry), however, only a few have been specific to South Australia and agribusiness (e.g., This is Wood Work).
- Whether programs to increase awareness of agribusiness in schools are accessible for students is unclear, and how consistently these are introduced across the state.
- While there are national resources that provide information on migrant and overseas worker options, there is still confusion among employers on which options are the best to select in the context of agribusiness.
- There is no single resource that is tailored to South Australian agribusiness that provides guidance and clearly lists the options for migrant workers and employers to navigate the migration process.
- Due to the range of workforce initiatives on offer by different stakeholders, and through a range of websites, there may be inconsistent messaging to businesses and workers in (or entering) the sector.
- Websites are mainly national and may not cover the breadth of opportunities available locally in South Australia, and tend to focus on specific industries within the agribusiness sector. There is no state-focused agribusiness website that consolidates information relevant to employers, current and potential workers, and students.

The following recommendations suggest actions to address the gaps and opportunities identified above.

Key recommendations

A summary of the recommendations that have emerged through the development of this report are outlined below. These recommendations reflect the significant opportunity for the agribusiness sectors to adopt a more coordinated approach to attracting people into South Australian agribusiness. Recommendations have been outlined as *themes* within this executive summary, with consideration of supporting actions, investment and prioritisation of recommendations discussed in more detail within Chapter 4 of the report.

Recommendation 1

Design a South Australian food, wine and agribusiness sector workforce strategy that addresses current and future workforce challenges and enables a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives.

Why? To enable a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives to address gaps in the workforce across the South Australian agribusiness sector and reduce any duplication of effort.

The report recommends designing a workforce strategy to facilitate a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives to address gaps in the agribusiness workforce across South Australia. This workforce strategy should build on the existing government and industry commitments, strategies and plans to support these sectors in South Australia to attract, retain, upskill and modernise its workforce.

The workforce strategy can be used as an 'organising framework' to drive a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives, determining future areas for investments, and monitoring workforce outcomes across the state and agribusiness sector. It should also play a role in clearly articulating the collective vision (government, industry, training providers, regions) for South Australia's agribusiness workforce, so that there is consistent messaging.

This recommendation is intended to support with solving several challenges that arise when there is no 'north star' and overarching strategy, including duplication that can occur from initiatives being introduced in isolation, lack of clear responsibility between state government, industry or training providers in driving initiatives, and confusion among businesses and industry on what supports are available. The strategy could consider a range of attraction and retention initiatives that are tailored to small and medium sized businesses, or to specific cohorts of potential workers.

Recommendation 2

Establish stronger partnerships with education providers to co-design and deliver initiatives that inspire and equip students to pursue careers in agribusiness.

Why? South Australia's agribusiness sector faces growing demand for a skilled, adaptable workforce, yet student awareness of career pathways into the industry remains limited. A stronger, more deliberate partnership between the agribusiness sector and education providers is essential to embed agribusiness into mainstream education, ensuring students can explore, understand, and transition into rewarding careers.

Once the workforce strategy is developed, this report recommends that the agribusiness sector then focus on fostering stronger partnerships with education providers to introduce scalable programs that strategically promote education pathways, career pathways and ongoing learning opportunities in agribusiness. This promotion will be important to build awareness among students while they are at school and/or in university or training. The programs introduced should be aligned to the initiatives within the workforce strategy and State Government policies. This approach must go beyond ad-hoc initiatives to deliver sustained, systemic engagement across schools, universities and RTOs. Some examples of programs that could be considered are outlined below.

At school the expansion of programs that provide work integrated learning opportunities for students should be considered, such as the EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture program. The EXCITED 4 Careers program was found to have positively shifted students' considerations of the agriculture industry.⁹ The role of the Lead Ag Teacher could also be expanded to further build partnerships with schools to deliver agriculture throughout the

⁹ Australian Government's National Careers Institute, Excited 4 Careers in Agriculture Summary Snapshot, 2024

curriculum. These programs and supports, in addition to current State Government initiatives, enable students to gain hands-on experience, develop industry connections and enhance their employability as a graduate.

At university, stronger partnerships could be formed to showcase the sector and its career opportunities in courses that are less focused on primary industries but are seen as critical skills for the broader agribusiness sector (e.g., engineering, technology, science). Other ways to interest students include promoting 'extra curriculars' such as the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association Global Case Study Competition which encourages students to collaborate across disciplines to solve real-world problems facing agribusiness through a global platform.

Recommendation 3

Develop an attraction campaign that focuses on communicating the collective value brought by the sector and the diversity of career opportunities.

Why? To create consistent messaging that is specific to South Australia and the agribusiness sector as a whole and focuses on lifting the perceptions of the sector and repositions career opportunities and pathways.

The report recommends developing an attraction campaign that focuses on educating and inspiring people to consider a career in the agribusiness sector. This campaign could be developed after the workforce strategy, so that it effectively communicates consistent messaging that is aligned to the sector's overarching position on how it intends to attract and retain workers to solve specific skills and business needs. This campaign could also drive attraction to the sector by highlighting the opportunities that the industry plans to offer, and by improving community perceptions of the sector. For example, where there are emerging job opportunities in the sector such as in agritourism, AgTech and artificial intelligence.

The attraction campaign could be communicated through the stronger partnerships established with education and training providers, so that they have clear messaging and materials to share information on the diverse career opportunities in the sector and the education and training pathways available to them. The campaign could also draw on existing work undertaken by state government to develop a communications campaign and 'industry toolkit' to support businesses with delivering key messages. These industry toolkits can be found on the South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions website but may require some revision to align with the workforce strategy and its messaging.

Other materials that could be developed as part of the attraction campaign include short video promotions where businesses and workers showcase the exciting and rewarding work, they do each day. A short video could also focus on how students are entering the agribusiness workforce through their education and training. Communicating a consistent message and a strong narrative through short videos (among other mediums) could be used to improve job advertisements, enhance first impressions, increase the sector's social media 'hiring' presence and generally increase interest in the sector.

Recommendation 4

Play a more significant role in supporting businesses to access information and supports that enable them to attract and retain migrant and overseas workers.

Why? To better support employers with understanding their options as it relates to hiring and retaining migrant and overseas workers, including the supports available to them, through one single resource tailored to their context and needs.

This report recommends that the agribusiness sector can play a more significant role in supporting businesses to access information and support that enables them to better understand their options when hiring migrant and overseas workers and retaining them. The report identifies that employers have acknowledged that migrant workers are important in supporting them to meet immediate business demands and solve for local skills shortages. However, there are many ways to access these workers which at times is confusing for employers.

The agribusiness sector can consider ways to consolidate information available on migration in a more digestible format, to support businesses to navigate their options as it relates to migrant recruitment, and the steps required to access and retain workers through various visas, schemes, and region-based labour

agreements. For example, this could be material providing information on which visas are most applicable in different agribusiness contexts, information on visa changes, or information on what is required of employers to support migrant workers. This consolidated information on migration could be stored in a centralised, digital platform so that employers and migrants are able to easily access this information. The digital platform could be the same one that hosts key information on the South Australian agribusiness workforce strategy, and may be interactive in nature (e.g., include an interactive geographical map outlining the coverage areas of all South Australian Designated Area Migration Agreements).

The intent of this recommendation is to resolve challenges faced by employers when hiring migrant and overseas workers, including a lack of knowledge of the diverse sponsorship opportunities available and the time taken, as reported by employers, in navigating these processes. These migration focused initiatives need to align with the attraction and retention initiatives outlined within the workforce strategy.

Recommendation 5

Implement strategies to drive attraction of underutilised workforces to careers in the food, wine and agribusiness sectors.

Why? To ensure that targeted strategies are included within the South Australian workforce strategy that focus on attracting female, First Nations and senior/retired/part time workers.

This report recommends that the agribusiness sector explore opportunities to attract and retain workers from underutilised cohorts. Specifically, the agribusiness sector could explore opportunities that support women to enter (or re-enter) the workforce, First Nations people to participate in meaningful and culturally aligned training and employment, and older/part time workers to remain engaged through flexible work arrangements.

For example, attracting women to jobs in the agribusiness sector could be done through introducing an industry sponsored mentoring program, where women can receive 1:1 mentoring from women working in the sector so that they are able to transition successfully to the workplace. An industry supported 'return to work' program for women who have recently had children but would like to return to work could also be considered.¹⁰

Strategies to attract First Nations people into the sector could consider both (1) training and (2) employment. For example, industry and RTOs could partner to develop training that is responsive to employment needs, but is carefully curated to create meaningful connections for First Nations people between their culture and employment opportunities in agribusiness. This training and the related employment opportunities could be specific to regional and remote areas where communities are located so that First Nations people can more easily access these and learn on-Country (e.g., removing barriers with transportation). Similarly, further consideration could be given to involving more First Nations people in the development and delivery of training so that they can draw those cultural connections to the classroom content.¹¹ For example, Tauondi Aboriginal College is already looking at how it can reintroduce more agribusiness courses that are specifically aligned to the culture of First Nations people.

Strategies could also be focused on attracting and retaining older and/or part time workers to the sector through the introduction of more flexible working arrangements or extra leave options. The intent is to enable older workers to better balance work with other leisure activities, while reducing possible fatigue. The sector could also explore further opportunities to redesign how work is performed so that it can optimise the performance of older and/or part time workers.¹²

Consideration and implementation of attraction and retention strategies for underutilised workforces will support the sector to contribute to South Australia's vision to build "an economy that is smart, sustainable and inclusive".

¹⁰ The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, [Actions: Recruitment and engagement strategies to attract women](#), 2022

¹¹ Jobs and Skills Australia, An essential ingredient. The food supply chain workforce, 2025

¹² Office of Industrial Relations, Ageing Workforce Report: Employer readiness to support the needs of Australia's ageing workforce, 2019

1 Context and motivation

National workforce shortages continue to make it challenging for agribusinesses in South Australia to attract people to the sector.

1.1 Purpose of this report

The South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions ('the Department'), in partnership with Primary Producers SA (PPSA), has engaged Deloitte Access Economics to develop a business case to attract people to careers in food, wine, and agribusiness in South Australia ('the business case', 'the report').

For the purpose of this report, the sector of interest (agribusiness, food and wine) is denoted as 'agribusiness' or 'agribusiness sector' throughout the report. Agribusiness is not predefined under the Australian and New Zealand Industry Classification, so for the purposes of this report agribusiness has been "built-up" from numerous industries. Similarly, multiple fields of education from the Australian Standard Classification of Education are used to define agribusiness related courses, and multiple occupations from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations are used to analyse agribusiness related occupations. More information on the industries, occupations and fields of education used in the data analysis of this report can be found in Appendix A. Where granular data has been unavailable, other definitions of agribusiness have been used and defined through footnotes.

The scope of the business case includes:

- analysis and discussion of the challenges to attracting people to the workforce across the agribusiness sector, including forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.
- analysis and discussion of the existing work being undertaken by all tiers of government, academia and industries to attract people into these careers.
- development of a project plan comprising recommendations and actions to address the barriers and challenges and improve and reposition career opportunities. This includes an assessment of options for investment from the agribusiness sector and the potential productivity gains resulting from the investment.

The report is intended to inform measures to address workforce shortages in the agribusiness sector and regional South Australia more broadly. It focuses on how the agribusiness sector can continue to achieve outcomes for the sector, through adopting a more coordinated approach to attracting people to agribusiness, with consideration of skills and education, the creation of opportunities in regions and pathways for overseas workers. This coordinated approach will be particularly important in improving and repositioning career opportunities, and to reduce barriers faced by businesses in their recruitment and retention.

Deloitte Access Economics has adopted a four phase approach deliver on the Department's requirements. These phases have been outlined below as:

- Phase 1: Research and analysis
 - This phase included a literature scan of past and current work being undertaken by government, education providers and industry to understand barriers to attracting and retaining workers to careers in the agribusiness sector.
 - It also included analysing publicly available data to create a profile of the sector, and subsequently identify and contextualise the workforce barriers and challenges faced.
- Phase 2: Consultations
 - This phase involved engaging with 10 businesses in the agribusiness sector to identify the specific workforce barriers and challenges faced by industry.

- The consultations intended to dive deeper into the ‘why’, and also understand what initiatives individual businesses have put in place.
- Phase 3: Recommendations
 - Recommendations and corresponding actions were explored to support the Department to address barriers and challenges faced in supporting the sector to attract people to the workforce.
 - These recommendations are intended to be practical and pragmatic, considering what is achievable in the current landscape and what can be explored further by the Department today.
- Phase 4: Reporting
 - Findings from previous phases have been synthesised into this report, providing a comprehensive view of the workforce challenges in the sector as well as a range of recommendations for consideration.

Workforce challenges have become a significant issue for the South Australian economy over recent years. The ability to attract people to the state, and to lift labour force participation, is critical in the rate of economic growth the state can achieve. From 2020 to 2024 the state created 107,000 jobs (an employment lift of 12.7%). Skill shortages have at times been extreme, though job vacancies have eased marginally over the past 12 months as the cost-of-living crisis has slowed economic momentum. Workforce shortages continue to make it challenging for the agribusiness sector across South Australia to hire people to meet the demands of the sector and fill workforce gaps. These workforce challenges are having a direct impact on the extent to which businesses can fulfil the sustainability, productivity, and profitability needs of the sector into the future. The issues and causes of key workforce challenges are discussed further in Chapter 2.

South Australia’s agribusiness sector is a vital part of the state’s economy, which generated \$17.1 billion in revenue and accounting for 49% of the state’s merchandise exports in 2023-24.¹³ Attracting people to this sector is therefore a top priority for government and industry. As part of this report, a project plan has been developed (Chapter 4) with recommendations and actions to address barriers and improve career opportunities.

1.2 Economic context

This section describes the economic and demographic factors which influence workforce availability in South Australia’s agribusiness sector. Despite recent economic growth, the combination of low population growth, reliance on migration, and ageing rural demographics have limited workforce participation and therefore the potential to attract people to the sector.

1.2.1 Economic growth

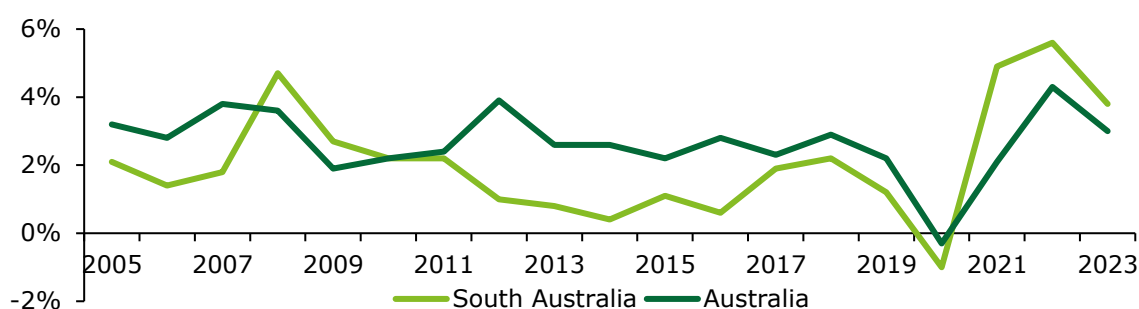
Strong economic growth post COVID-19 is likely to have exacerbated workforce challenges in South Australia due to greater competition for workers. South Australia’s economic growth rebounded more strongly in the three years following the pandemic than the nation overall. Gross State Product (GSP) in the 2021, 2022 and 2023 financial years grew 4.9%, 5.6% and 3.8% respectively, compared to 2.1%, 4.3% and 3.0% nationally (Chart 1.1).¹⁴ Competition for workers has been particularly acute within agriculture and mining, which draw from limited regional workforces.

However, elevated inflation since 2022 is likely to have dampened the effect of strong post-COVID-19 economic recovery on workforce shortages in the agribusiness sector in South Australia. The slowdown in growth follows three years of cumulated adverse shocks, especially from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Economic growth has also faced downward pressure from rising interest rates and capacity constraints. An upshot of these factors is that workforce shortages in the sector may have been slightly less severe than if these shocks did not occur, given that the shocks likely moderated labour demand.

¹³ Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, Primary Industries Scorecard 2023-24, 2025

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, National and State Accounts, 2024

Chart 1.1 Real annual growth in Gross State Product and Gross Domestic Product



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics National and State Accounts

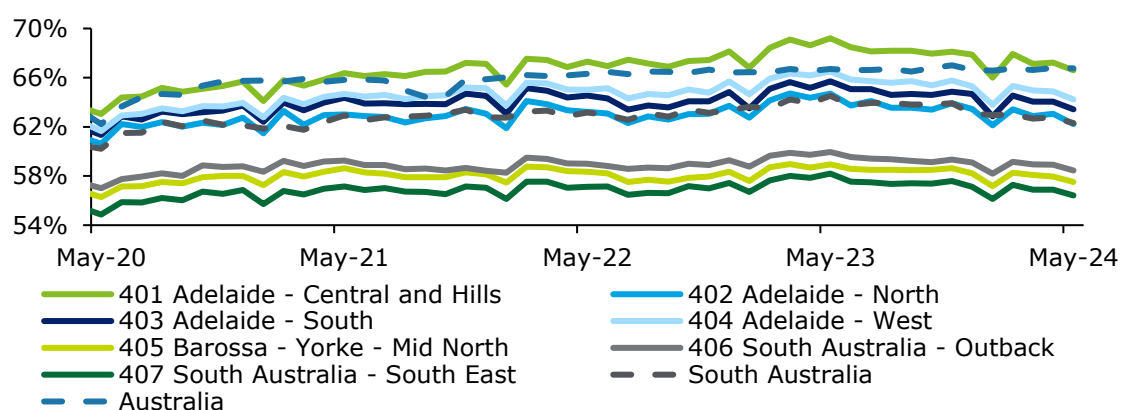
1.2.2 Population growth, workforce participation and unemployment

Population and demographic factors have acted as a handbrake on agribusiness sector workforce growth in South Australia in recent years. All regions in South Australia have recorded a lower rate of population growth than Australia over the past 12 years, which has reduced the sector's workforce growth potential. Regional population growth rates in South Australia have typically fluctuated between 0.5% and 1.5%, with the exception of the Outback, which has seen a declining population since 2022 and the lowest rate of growth in the state for the past 12 years.¹⁵

Net overseas migration has driven South Australia's population growth over the past decade, and particularly in the last three years. Without overseas migration, South Australia's population growth rate would effectively be zero. South Australia typically experiences negative net interstate migration. Although net interstate migration was positive in 2021 and 2022, it has again moved negative.¹⁶

Despite modest population growth in South Australia, workforce participation remains a major challenge for the agribusiness sector, particularly in rural areas of the state. On average, 56% of people in the Outback, Barossa – Yorke – Mid North and South East regions are in the labour force, compared to 65% statewide and 67% nationally (Chart 1.2). Lower labour force participation rates are likely linked to an ageing population and shrinking working age demographic (35-54), which has fallen from 44.5% to 41.0% in the 10 years to May 2024.¹⁷

Chart 1.2 Participation rate by SA4 region



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Detailed

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population 2022-23

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, National, State and Territory Population, Australia, 2024

¹⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Detailed November 2024

The rate of unemployment in South Australia is currently low, averaging 3.8% in the 12 months to June 2024, after falling consistently in all regions since the COVID-19 induced high in 2020.¹⁸ Tight labour supply makes it more difficult for the agribusiness sector to attract new workers, particularly for roles which require specialised skills. As employers compete for a more limited pool of suitable workers, factors such as working conditions and pay (discussed further in Chapter 2) become increasingly important.

The unemployment rate is marginally higher in the Outback and northern regions of South Australia compared to the rest of the state. However, the ongoing elevated vacancy rate in these regions relative to pre-COVID-19 potentially indicate a skills mismatch contributing to attraction challenges (among other factors), rather than a labour supply issue per se.

Overall, modest population growth (driven almost entirely by migrant intake), combined with comparatively low participation rates and a historically low unemployment rate have constrained the pool of available people to pursue careers in South Australia's agribusiness sector. Securing an appropriate workforce ultimately must go beyond these structural challenges and the sector must address structural barriers and other barriers such as perception issues. These are examined in detail in Chapter 2.

1.3 Policy context

The sub-sections below provide information on key aspects of the policy environment relevant to labour supply in the agribusiness sector. This includes the federal and state government position on the industry.

1.3.1 State government position on agribusiness, food and wine workforce challenges

In 2023, the South Australian Government released the South Australian Economic Statement: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive, including the mission to "Build South Australia's Talent". This mission acknowledges that competition for talent at a global, national and local level is increasing. As part of this statement, several factors are identified as limiting the state's ability to grow pools of suitable workers, including:

- the mismatch between location of jobs and workers willing to relocate.
- the gap in skills workers currently have and will require in the future.
- the barriers preventing workers from entering the workforce, particularly for minority groups.
- the perceptions of working in South Australia as opposed to other parts of Australia and/or the world.¹⁹

As such, the state has committed to developing a "dynamic workforce" and to "attract and retain" workers to businesses that focus on providing meaningful work. This includes a workforce with "future-ready skills", allowing South Australia to be known as an "ambitious and capable state" that leverages technology and drives innovation through industry and research collaborations.

The State Budget 2024-25 has a large focus on the \$2.3 billion investment from state and federal governments, over five years, in skills and training under the National Skills Agreement.²⁰ This investment includes \$53.1 million to increase the VET workforce and develop curriculum that is aligned to the South Australian Government's economic priorities. It also includes \$9 million to support learners, employers, and training institutes in regions to acquire the right skills to meet their local needs.

The policy direction for Skills in South Australia creates several opportunities to attract workers and learners into agribusiness, with a focus on (1) foundational skills (e.g., language and employability skills), (2) training pathways for First Nations people, and (3) training solutions that are flexible and responsive to the needs of industry. More specific to the sector, the State Budget

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Detailed November 2024

¹⁹ Government of South Australia, [South Australian Economic Statement](#), n.d.

²⁰ Government of South Australia, South Australia State Budget 2024-25

has assigned \$24.4 million over five years for net zero agriculture, developing and delivering innovative solutions and supporting the upskilling of the sector to reduce emissions by 2050.²¹

1.3.2 Commonwealth Government position on agribusiness, food and wine workforce challenges

In 2019, the Commonwealth Government mobilised an independent National Agricultural Labour Advisory Committee to develop the *National Agricultural Workforce Strategy: Learning to excel*. To follow was the Commonwealth's response through the *Roadmap to attract, retain, upskill and modernise the agricultural workforce*. Since then, the Commonwealth continues to support industry to attract workers into agribusiness jobs, so it can reach its goal of \$100 billion in production by 2030 (Ag2030).²² The 2025-26 Commonwealth Government budget highlights several investments that build on previous initiatives in agribusiness.²³ Investments that have implications on the workforce include:

- \$74.0 million in the sheep industry transition away from live exports.
- \$23.8 million to sponsor agricultural trade events.
- \$0.4 million for the continuation of the AgCAREERSTART program and new skilled agricultural work liaison program in 2025-26.
- \$6.8 million in 2025-26 to sustain non-regulatory agricultural export and trade functions, including international engagement in multilateral forums and technical market services.
- \$3.5 million over two years to develop a National Food Security Strategy.

Other areas outlined as important to the Commonwealth, in the delivering Ag2030 plan, include shifting perceptions of modern agriculture to attract more learners and workers into careers within the sector.

Migration and visas are also a key focus, with continued investment in the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme and the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) visa. However, the possible reconsideration of the regional requirement for the WHM (e.g. 88 days of specified work in regional or remote areas), as part of the regional migration review, could make it more difficult to attract workers to agribusiness.²⁴ Indeed, for the viticulture sector, this is already the case as only vineyard work counts towards the 88 days; winemaking is specifically excluded.

There are also four skilled migration visa options relevant to South Australia, including:

- Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190)
- Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491)
- Skilled Employer Sponsored visa (subclass 186)
- Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional visa (subclass 494)

Information shared by the South Australian Skills Commission indicates that the state only has access to 3,800 general skilled migrants per financial year.²⁵ There is an opportunity for South Australia to increase the migrant nomination number, which could help to alleviate skill shortages in agribusiness, and other sectors.

Delivering Ag2030 also highlighted the development of the Australian agriculture visa – a sponsored program providing access to critical workers across a range of agribusiness sectors, including horticulture, dairy, wool, grains, fisheries and forestry. While noted as having the potential to be the “biggest structural reform to the agricultural workforce in Australia’s history”, it is no longer an available product.²⁶ This was due to the PALM scheme being seen by the Federal government as a viable pathway that could include a new agriculture stream (as opposed to a standalone agriculture visa).

²¹ Skills SA, [Skilled. Thriving. Connected](#), 2024

²² Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Delivering Ag2030, 2022

²³ Australian Federal Budget 2025-26

²⁴ ABC News, [Fears backpacker working holiday visa changes could cripple regional businesses](#), 2024

²⁵ Migration SA, [South Australia's skilled migration nomination allocation for 2024-25](#)

²⁶ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Delivering Ag2030, 2022

1.3.3 South Australian university merger

South Australia has also seen the merger of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia into Adelaide University, a contemporary institution expected to drive a transformative and global education and research agenda. Acting Premier, Susan Close, stated that the university will “forever transform education, research and innovation outcomes” for the state and boost the economy. It is anticipated that the university will deliver world-class educational excellence and bring many domestic and international students to South Australia.²⁷

The university merger may have implications for the South Australian agribusiness workforce, though at this point in time the specific implications remain unknown. The merger may have implications for the number and depth of agribusiness related courses, and whether they will be more or less of a focus as part of Adelaide University’s future offering. Similarly, it is also uncertain if the merger will impact the number and size of regional campuses, which are key to teaching agribusiness and meeting local skills needs. Further consideration and collaboration between the university and the sector is required to determine how to ensure any changes to agribusiness courses will meet the needs of local businesses. This collaboration could also consider ways to promote pathways into agribusiness from more non-traditional courses, such as engineering and technology. In this way, while there remain uncertainties, the merger could also create opportunities to better support the South Australian agribusiness workforce.

1.4 Agribusiness sector in South Australia

This sub-section provides an overview of the agribusiness sector’s significant contribution to economic outcomes in South Australia. It is intended to provide context as to why it continues to be important to attract people to the sector.

1.4.1 Contribution to state economic output

The agribusiness sector is a cornerstone of the South Australian economy. Over the past 20 years, agribusiness^{28*} has contributed around 6% to the state’s annual GSP on average – significantly higher than the national average of 2.5% (Chart 1.3).^{29*} In 2022-23, the GSP contribution from agribusiness was \$7.7b, up 7% on the previous financial year.^{30*} The revenue generated from the wider agribusiness sector in South Australia at the point of sale to market (the “farmgate” revenue) totalled \$17.1 billion in 2023-24.³¹

International exports of agribusiness products (including agricultural commodities, wine and forestry) underpin the sector’s earnings. In 2023-24, international trade in these categories accounted for 49% (\$8.56 billion) of the state’s total overseas merchandise exports.³² This share is lower than the longer-term average due to tariffs imposed by China on wine, barley, beef and other agribusiness exports at the time.

²⁷ The University of Adelaide, [Transformative new Adelaide University launches to the world](#), 2024

^{28*} Industries included in estimates of GSP contribution utilise ANZSIC 1-digit industry Agriculture, forestry and fishing. Data for more granular agribusiness sectors (including food and beverage manufacturing) is unavailable.

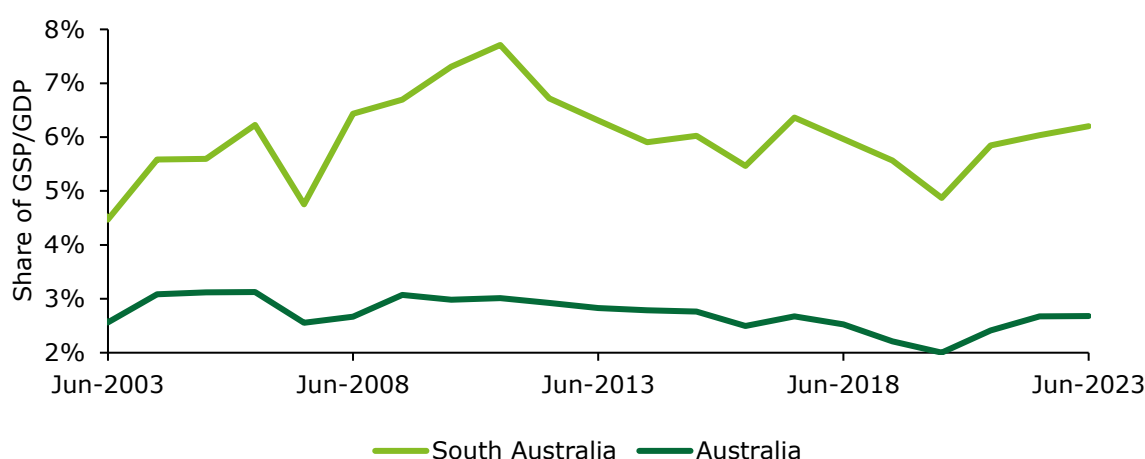
²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Industry gross value added, agriculture, forestry and fishing, chain volume measures

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, Primary Industries Scorecard 2023-24, 2025

³² Ibid.

Chart 1.3 Agribusiness contribution to GSP and GDP



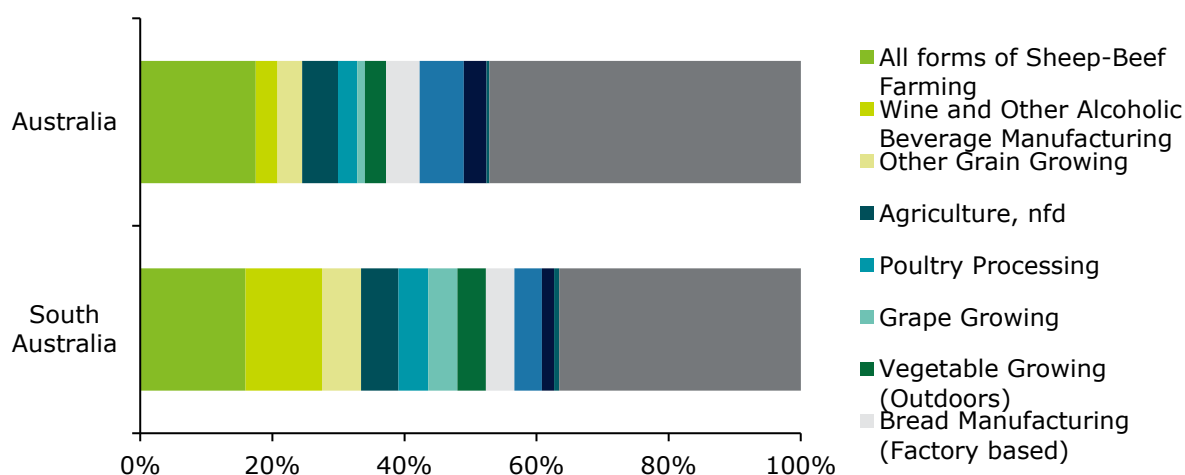
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian National Accounts: State Accounts 2022-23 financial year

1.4.2 Employment characteristics

Agribusiness accounts for approximately 8% of South Australia's employed persons, who work in a range of industries (Chart 1.4).³³ According to data from the 2021 Census, primary industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing) account for the majority (56%) of agribusiness employment, while food and beverage manufacturing and processing comprises the remaining 44%.³⁴

In terms of primary production, livestock and grain production employ 43% of workers in agribusiness. This is led by all forms of sheep, beef and grain farming (22% combined) and fruit and vegetable growing (including wine grapes) (13% combined). Grape growing employs a larger share of agribusiness workers in South Australia (4%) compared to Australia (1%).³⁵ On the food and beverage manufacturing side, food manufacturing is the largest source of jobs, accounting for 31% of agribusiness employment. Wine and other alcoholic beverage manufacturing employs 11% of South Australian agribusiness workers, compared to 3% Australia-wide.

Chart 1.4 Top 10 agribusiness sector employers in 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2021

Note: "Other" includes all other food and beverage manufacturing and processing, as well as forestry and aquaculture.

The agribusiness sector makes a significant contribution to the South Australian economy, across metropolitan, regional and remote locations. However, there are numerous barriers and challenges

³³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Detailed November 2024

³⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2021

³⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2021

which threaten the workforce underpinning the sector. These are discussed in Chapter 2 that follows.

2 Key workforce challenges

Attracting people into the agribusiness sector in South Australia is an ongoing challenge but is key to driving future growth in the sector. While retention is also an issue, this chapter focuses on attraction, particularly in regional areas of the state.

2.1 Attraction challenges for South Australian agribusiness

Employers in the South Australian agribusiness sector have had trouble attracting suitable workers for at least two decades. A key driver is skills shortages, particularly in scientific and technical occupations and in senior roles. Enrolments in higher education pathways have flatlined (e.g., in agriculture, environment and related studies), while declining visa sponsorship in the sector is also contributing to recruitment difficulty. Regional parts of South Australia in particular have faced challenges attracting suitable talent.

This chapter examines these challenges as follows. Sections 2.1.1 and 2.2.1 present evidence of the workforce challenges faced by businesses in South Australia, in terms of attraction and retention respectively. The following chapter (Chapter 3) details existing workforce initiatives to address the challenges presented in this chapter, while Chapter 4 explores ways to increase coordination between these efforts and improve workforce outcomes for the agribusiness sector in South Australia.

2.1.1 Evidence of attraction challenges

This section presents data on key indicators of attraction challenges, which include skill shortages, commencements and completions in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education (HE) courses, and online job vacancies.

Skill shortages

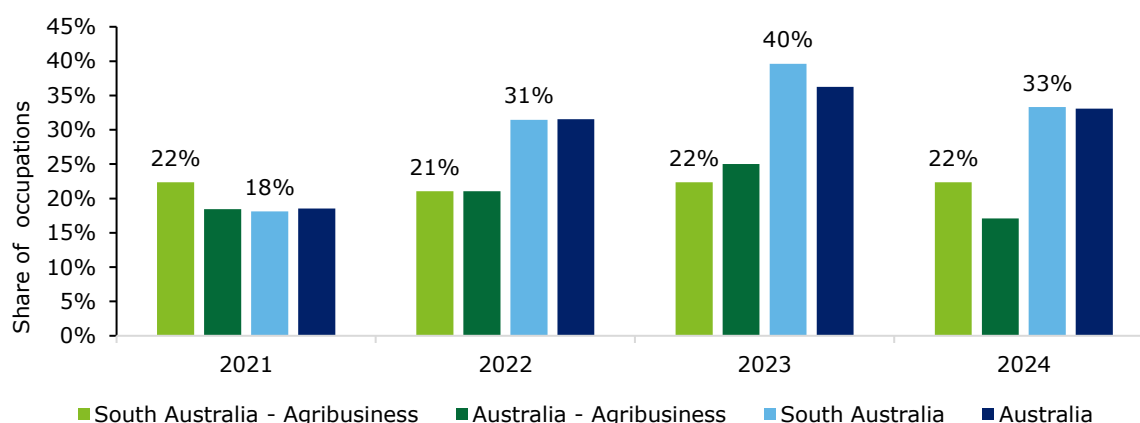
Almost a quarter of agribusiness occupations have been in shortage in the last four years with competition from other industries increasing recruitment difficulty. Occupations in the agribusiness sector which require technical and management skills are most commonly experiencing shortages.

As illustrated in Chart 2.1, approximately 22% of agribusiness occupations in South Australia have experienced skill shortages over the past four years, which is marginally higher than across Australia (except for 2023).³⁶ Notably, a smaller share of agribusiness occupations experienced skills shortages compared to all occupations in 2022, 2023 and 2024, both in South Australia and Australia as a whole. More severe skill shortages across the rest of the economy aggravating competition for workers could lead to greater recruitment difficulty for agribusinesses. Insights from stakeholders indicated competition for labour was an issue, particularly from the resource sector (such as mining and exploratory drilling) in regional areas, discussed further in the causes Section 2.1.2 below.

Importantly, while South Australian agribusiness currently shows less severe skills shortages relative to the rest of the South Australian economy, the data presented still shows the sector faces a persistent enduring challenge in meeting labour requirements.

³⁶ Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation Shortage List, 2024

Chart 2.1 Proportion of occupations experiencing skills shortages



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation Shortage List, 2024

Skilled and semi-skilled occupations have commonly experienced skill shortages over the period 2021-2024 in South Australia, evidenced by Jobs and Skills Australia data and stakeholder consultations. As listed in Table 2.1, agribusiness occupations that have been in shortage the longest include agricultural science roles (such as scientists and agronomists) as well as abattoir workers. Agriculture technology roles were also identified by stakeholders as experiencing more severe skill shortages, particularly those requiring engineering, robotics, mechatronics and other technology-driven backgrounds. Overall, however, most of the occupations experiencing skills shortages are also in shortage nationwide, suggesting the issue is not unique to South Australia.³⁷

Table 2.1 Occupations experiencing skills shortages for the 2012-2024 period

Occupations in shortage by 6-digit ANZSCO code	South Australian shortage status	South Australia duration in shortage	National shortage status
Agricultural and Agritech Technician	Shortage	4 years	Shortage
Apiarist	Regional Shortage	3 years	No Shortage
Animal Husbandry Technician	Shortage	2 years	Shortage
Aquaculture or Fisheries Technician	Shortage	2 years	Shortage
Baker	Shortage	4 years	Shortage
Pastry Cook	Shortage	4 years	Shortage
Horticultural Supervisor or Specialist	Shortage	1 year	No Shortage
Senior Piggery Stockperson	Shortage	3 years	Shortage
Meat Boner and Slicer	Shortage	3 years	Shortage
Slaughterer	Shortage	3 years	Shortage
Poultry Farm Worker	Shortage	1 year	No Shortage
Deck Hand	Shortage	1 year	No Shortage
Agronomist	Shortage	4 years	Shortage

³⁷ Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation Shortage List, 2024

Occupations in shortage by 6-digit ANZSCO code	South Australian shortage status	South Australia duration in shortage	National shortage status
Meat Inspector	Shortage	4 years	Shortage
Agricultural and Horticultural Mobile Plant Operator	Shortage	2 years	Regional Shortage
Arborist	Shortage	4 years	Shortage
Food Technologist	Shortage	4 years	Shortage

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation Shortage List, 2024

In terms of role types, priority areas listed by stakeholders include supervisor and/or management type roles, maintenance and/or operational roles. This was particularly prevalent for stakeholders in more regional locations where the local pool of labour is smaller. While on-the-job upskilling is common, one stakeholder noted that only so many workers can be trained this way, since the number of rostered supervisors imposes limits on in-house training capacity.

Skill shortages have become most evident to agribusiness employers in the recruitment phase. Stakeholders have noticed an increase in applications from unsuitably qualified candidates in the last 12 months, including some who also lack the necessary working rights to commence employment immediately in South Australia. This appears to be a longer-term trend. In a 2018 survey for example, across Australia, 80% of dairy producers and 78% of broadacre farmers reported a lack of required applicant skills as one factor behind recruitment difficulty.³⁸

In response to skills shortages making recruitment more difficult, many employers have relied more heavily on overseas workers through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, Working Holiday Maker (WHM) visas or employer sponsored (skilled) visas. This strategy has given employers access to a broader labour pool, particularly in sectors where local labour supply is insufficient, and when recruiting for low to unskilled positions. Stakeholders have noted that WHMs have been particularly advantageous for filling regional seasonal workforce needs, as visa holders are mandated to complete a specific period of work in regional or rural areas under the scheme. For example, in 2020, 60% of the horticultural workforce were working holiday makers.³⁹

While WHM visas, employer sponsored visas and the PALM scheme have alleviated labour shortages, stakeholders noted there are downsides to each:

- skilled visas often do not cover employers' specific skill needs and have a greater focus on management skills rather than technical capability.
- the WHM visa only lasts six months for some occupations; obtaining permanent residency to keep workers for longer can be lengthy process. For example, it took one stakeholder in the horticulture industry two years to secure a permanent residency visa for one of their key employees. Some occupations (e.g., plant and animal cultivation) migrant workers can be employed for up to 12 months with the same employer.
- while the PALM program lasts four years, obtaining permanent residency for workers (and therefore long-term employment) can also be challenging.

Lack of student commencements and completions

Rates of student participation in vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) affect future workforce skill shortages, recruitment difficulty and vacancies. First preference

³⁸ Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Demand for farm workers: ABARES Farm Surveys, 2018

³⁹ J Howe, S Clibborn, A Reilly, D Broek & C F Wright, Towards a Durable Future: Tackling Labour Challenges in the Australia Horticulture Industry, 2019

selections and commencements in agriculture related HE courses have flatlined since 2017, while VET, apprentice and traineeship commencements have declined since 2012.

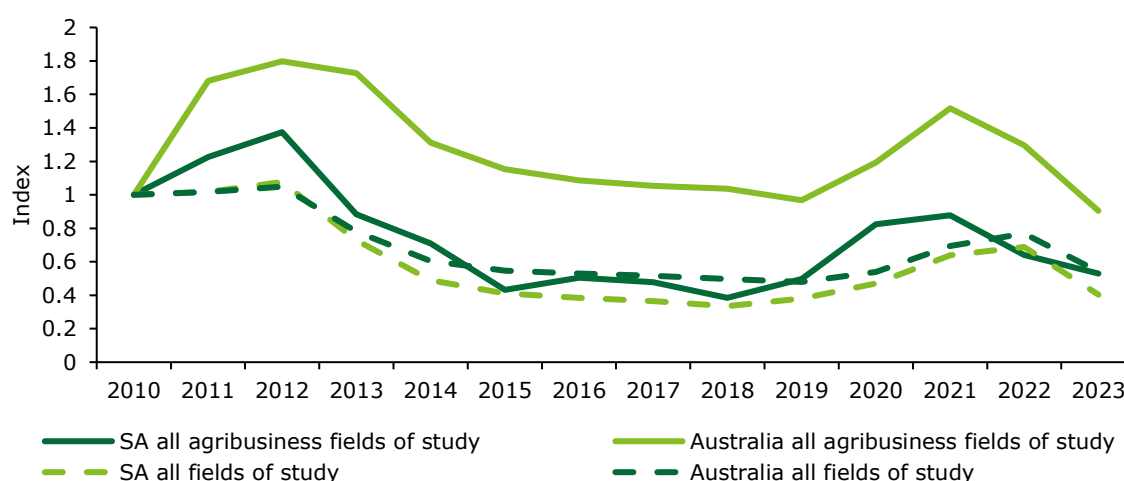
First preference selections of 'agriculture, environment and related studies' courses in South Australia have remained relatively stable at between 1.5% and 2% of total first preference applications over the past six years.⁴⁰ Notably, a greater proportion of females than males have enrolled in agriculture and related studies, which some stakeholders noted has flowed through to job applications.⁴¹

Enrolments in 'agriculture, environment and related studies' (e.g. viticulture or oenology) university courses in South Australia have changed little in the five years to 2021, despite mostly positive growth in total enrolments.⁴² On the other hand, the state has experienced a net decline in agriculture, environment and related course completions since 2018. This contrasts to national course completions for the same field of education, which have grown modestly over the same period.⁴³ Therefore, less agriculture and related studies graduates are completing university and entering the workforce, despite roughly the same number of students enrolling in these courses.

Commencements in agribusiness related VET, apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia have experienced a period of decline from 2012 (Chart 2.2).⁴⁴ While the COVID-19 pandemic period saw a recovery to almost 90% of 2010 levels, commencements in South Australia have since declined again to about 50% of their 2010 levels. This recent fluctuation may be partly attributed to the Commonwealth Government's Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) program, introduced at the end of 2020, which subsidised apprentice and trainee wages by 50% for the first 12 months before concluding in 2022.

In contrast, national agribusiness-related apprenticeship and trainee commencements have only experienced a 10% decline from 2010 to 2023. This was largely due to smaller reductions in horticulture and viticulture commencements at the national level, while South Australia experienced a more pronounced decline in these disciplines. Overall, South Australia's apprenticeship and traineeship commencements in agribusiness declined more sharply than the national average across the full 2010–2023 period, and also showed a weaker recovery following the 2020 peak.

Chart 2.2 Index of apprentice and traineeship commencements, index = 2010



Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis based on NCVER data.

⁴⁰ SATAC, [Undergraduate first preferences and total offers by broad field of study](#), 2023

⁴¹ Commonwealth Government Department of Education, [Selected Higher Education Statistics](#), 2022

⁴² Courses pertaining to food and wine manufacturing are not included in the data.

⁴³ Commonwealth Government Department of Education, [Selected Higher Education Statistics](#), 2022

⁴⁴ National Centre for Vocational Education Research, [Research and Statistics](#), December 2023

Consultations with stakeholders revealed that many businesses want to offer their existing workers apprenticeships and traineeships to upskill their workforce, but do not always see the value in existing VET programs, as they lack the flexibility needed to suit workplace realities and are not always future-focused. To address this, the South Australian Skills Commission has taken constructive steps – such as the establishment of an Agritourism Working Group. However, stakeholders emphasised that further action is required to ensure more training programs are fit-for-purpose and responsive to industry needs. One stakeholder raised that these barriers have resulted in education providers reducing the number of programs offered in agribusiness, with focus instead shifting toward ‘foundational’ skills aimed at supporting entry into the sector.

To counter declining VET/apprentice/traineeship commencements, some stakeholders have instead offered more formal on-the-job training, combined with clear progression pathways to greater responsibility and pay. For example, some stakeholders offer financial support to employees who complete qualifications or certificates relevant to business needs. One stakeholder, in collaboration with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), has developed its own traineeship to create a specific program that combines practical work experience with formal education. However, attraction challenges still exist.

Increase in online job vacancies

The number of online job vacancies in agribusiness occupations in South Australia doubled from May 2020 to the end of 2021 and remains elevated relative to pre-COVID-19. However, actual vacancies are likely much higher, since the prevalence of word-of-mouth and traditional print recruitment in agribusiness likely mean many vacancies are not captured in online vacancy data.

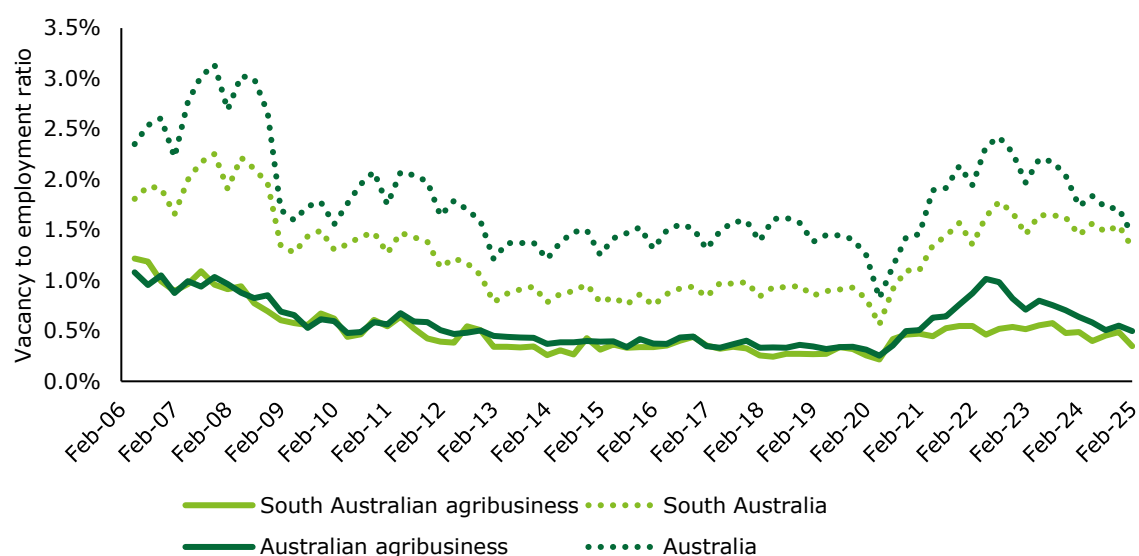
COVID-19 contributed to a doubling of online job vacancies in agribusiness occupations in South Australia from around 90 in May 2020 to a peak of 218 in May 2023. Prior to COVID-19, online vacancies had been steadily trending downwards. Online vacancies in agribusiness in South Australia remain elevated; as of April 2025, online vacancies in the sector totalled 129 in South Australia and 1,728 across Australia.

Actual numbers of vacancies in agribusiness occupations are also likely higher than indicated in Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) online vacancy data. Agribusiness employees tend to advertise for workers via more traditional means such as word of mouth and print advertising, a strategy which has not changed significantly over time. Pinion’s farm salary survey report, for example, revealed 62% of respondents used word of mouth or local contacts to find employees, whereas only 11% used Facebook/other social media, 11% used Seek, and 3% used other online.⁴⁵ The continued prevalence of non-digital forms of job advertising is likely causing the agribusiness vacancy/employment ratio to be lower than it otherwise would be, thereby understating the recruitment challenge present in South Australian agribusiness.

This is evident when comparing online job vacancy rates, which is the ratio of online vacancies to total employment. As illustrated in Chart 2.3, the online vacancy rate in agribusiness occupations in South Australia has trended well below the economy wide average over the past two decades. This indicates that agribusiness in South Australia has fared better than the rest of the economy in terms of attracting workers. However, the limited capture of vacancies in the sector within online vacancy data is likely contributing to this trend.

⁴⁵ Pinion Advisory, Farm Salary Survey Report, 2023

Chart 2.3 Online vacancy rate, agribusiness occupations and total occupations



Source: Deloitte Access Economics based on JSA and ABS data.

Lack of workforce diversity in the agribusiness sector

According to ABARES' 'Snapshot of Australia's Agricultural Workforce'⁴⁶, the agribusiness workforce lacks diversity compared to the national workforce. Women and First Nations people are particularly under-represented. Despite an increase in the share of these cohorts in most agribusiness industries from the 2016 to 2021 Census, their rates of representation are still below the economy-wide average. Table 2.2 summarises demographic variables across selected agribusiness industries.

Table 2.2 Workforce characteristics of selected agribusiness industries

Industry	Broadacre	Horticulture	Dairy Farming	Intensive Livestock	Aqua-culture	Wild Catch	Agri-business total ⁴⁷	All Industries
Directly employed	117,000	48,000	17,400	10,900	5,300	4,900	203,500	11,522,000
Average age	53	44	44	42	41	47	45	41
Female workers	30%	36%	34%	36%	26%	19%	30%	49%
First Nations workers	1.5%	1.7%	2.0%	3.1%	5.4%	4.2%	3.0%	2.1%
Need assistance with core activities	1.7%	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%	0.8%	1.4%	1.3%	0.9%
Australian Citizens	97%	72%	89%	82%	84%	92%	86%	59%

Source: JSA Food Supply Chain Workforce report, from ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021, 2016

⁴⁶ ABARES, [Snapshot of Australia's Agricultural Workforce](#), 2023

⁴⁷ Note: Summarises the agribusiness industries contained in this table, not the entire agribusiness sector.

2.1.2 Causes of attraction challenges

There are a range of underlying factors which drive the attraction challenges in South Australian agribusiness described above. Causes are examined in light of three primary stakeholders: the agribusiness sector and its adjacent sectors; the education system; and the broader community. Causes are categorised amongst these stakeholders in Table 2.3 below.

The discussion contained in this section draws on insights and data canvassed from publicly available sources and consultations with stakeholders.

Table 2.3 Causes of attraction by stakeholder summary table

Stakeholder	Causes/drivers
Agribusiness sector and adjacent sectors	Competition for labour from other industries Seasonal fluctuations in labour demand Regional location (isolation) Uncompetitive wages Changing role requirements
The education system	Lack of adoption into the curriculum Shortage of agriculture teachers Students' lack of understanding and negative perceptions about agribusiness careers Inequitable access to education for First Nations people
The broader community	Negative community perceptions about agribusiness careers

Source: Deloitte Access Economics

Causes that relate to the agribusiness sector and adjacent sectors

Competition for labour from other industries

Many stakeholders noted that the agribusiness sector competes with other sectors for a limited regional workforce. The mining, construction and defence industries were often cited as major competitors for skilled talent. Organisations within these industries can often afford to offer higher wages and benefits to attract workers than agribusinesses, which are more resource-constrained.⁴⁸ South Australia's recent strong economic growth and low unemployment rates (outlined in Section 1.2) have exacerbated competition for labour and skills shortages in agribusiness.

One stakeholder noted that the South Australian tuna industry lost 50% of its workforce in 2005 due to competition from oil and gas industries. However, it was noted that some workers who tire of the fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) lifestyle return to the agribusiness sector. Investment in the skills and development of local workers was mentioned by stakeholders as being vital for long-term workforce sustainability.

Government investment priorities in industries which compete with agribusiness for labour, particularly construction and clean energy, means labour availability will continue to remain tight for the agribusiness sector. In construction, the SA Government's 'A Better Housing Future Plan' aims to stimulate \$968 million of additional housing construction activity, supporting jobs across the state.⁴⁹ Furthermore, supporting the green energy transition is highlighted as one of three key missions in South Australia's Economic Statement.⁵⁰ The \$20 billion investment pipeline includes renewable energy projects across South Australia. Both the broader construction and energy industries will utilise skilled and unskilled labour in South Australia, and ultimately in part draw from the potential pool of labour available for the agribusiness sector.

Additionally, the resource sector anticipates an increasing demand for skilled workers in upcoming years, driven by the rise in mining project activities and the ongoing need for operations,

⁴⁸ Georgina Atkinson and Jo Hargreaves, [An exploration of labour mobility in mining and construction: who moves and why](#), 2014

⁴⁹ Department of State Development, [Jobs and Skills Outlook](#), 2024

⁵⁰ Government of South Australia, [South Australian Economic Statement](#), n.d.

shutdown and maintenance staff.⁵¹ More than half of the in-demand occupations in the resource sector will require VET qualifications.⁵² These occupations are likely to offer alternative careers to agribusiness with similar qualification requirements, thereby increasing competition for labour.

Current economic conditions and government policy priorities are likely to result in increased competition for labour which may make attracting workers into agribusiness more difficult.

Seasonal fluctuations in labour demand

Fluctuating labour demand according to seasonal conditions was cited by multiple stakeholders as a key attraction issue. Prospective workers are deterred by the cyclical nature of employment in some occupations. This relates not only to the seasonal nature of temporary jobs - such as those relating to harvesting, but also to year on year variation. For example, in the South Australian broadacre sector, the 2023-24 season saw 8.7 million tonnes of grain harvested compared to the record 12.8 million tonnes in 2022-23, the former requiring a much smaller temporary workforce.⁵³ Stakeholders noted that there is a need to retain workers through poor years even at the expense of profit to have workers on hand when needed. Larger farms have greater access to financial capital to retain workers through dry periods (and therefore attract workers in the first instance) compared to smaller farms.

Regional location (isolation)

Location of employment was also identified to play a significant role in recruitment challenges. Although its impact appeared to be most prevalent in the wine (52%) and broadacre (29%) sectors, stakeholder consultations indicated that it affects almost every sub-sector in South Australia.^{54,55} Most employers attribute these difficulties to two main factors:

1. **Rural living** poses unique challenges. Many stakeholders emphasised the feeling of isolation that many of their workers experience, which often drives employees to leave the area or even the industry altogether. Stakeholders highlighted the significant commitment to relocate to the regions, where there are more limited services and fewer opportunities for fostering community connections. Consequently, workers are inclined to shift into sectors like mining, as FIFO arrangements or the relocation to a mining town can be less socially isolating than being permanently located in a regional or rural area. Importantly, while many people perceive most agribusiness jobs to be situated in regional or remote areas, many opportunities exist in towns and cities. This issue is discussed further in the 'community perceptions' section below.
2. There is a general **lack of accommodation** in rural and regional areas, which is not unique to South Australia. Access to accommodation was ranked as having the highest impact on recruitment by 35% of Australian farmers in 2023, while stakeholders across South Australian sub-sectors cited both the cost and limited availability of housing as significant barriers.⁵⁶ One stakeholder noted that seasonal workers struggle to secure short-term rentals as landlords prefer long-term leases. To address this issue, some companies have provided their own accommodation options to staff, including by negotiating agreements with hostels, motels and caravan parks. Again however, this solution is only financially feasible for larger agribusinesses.

Wages

Although wages in the agribusiness sector are relatively competitive with state and national averages, they remain a significant barrier to attracting workers, especially when competing with higher-paying sectors such as mining. In 2018, 69% of dairy, 31% vegetable, 36% irrigated fruit and nut, and 29% of broadacre farm employers identified pay, conditions and competition as reasons for difficulty attracting workers.^{57,38} The issue was also notable in the meat and livestock

⁵¹ SA Department of State Development, Jobs and Skills Outlook, 2024

⁵² SA Department of State Development, Jobs and Skills Outlook, 2024

⁵³ Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, Primary Industries Scorecard 2023-24, 2025

⁵⁴ South Australian Wine Industry Association, SA Wine Industry Snapshots, 2023

⁵⁵ Meat and Livestock Australia, Attracting and retaining staff in the red meat industry, 2014

⁵⁶ National Farmers Federation, National Farmers Priority Survey, 2023

⁵⁷ Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Demand for farm workers: ABARES Farm Surveys, 2018

industry (14.7%), where low wages were the second biggest hurdle to hiring, after a shortage of skilled workers.⁵⁸

While the sector may continue to struggle to compete with other industries based on pay alone, stakeholder consultations suggested that non-wage benefits—such as on-farm accommodation, transportation, training, and meal provision—can help attract workers from other industries.

The gender pay gap is a barrier for women to enter and progress within the agribusiness sector. In the wine industry, for example, 2024 figures showed that women in winemaking roles earned \$14,000 less on average than their male counterparts; for female viticulturalists and grape growers, the gap totalled \$18,500 on average.⁵⁹ Once in the sector, women face a lack of promotion opportunities relative to men, which further limit pay and skills progression. Pay equality is crucial to attract and retain talented women in the wine industry (and broader agribusiness sector) and enable the sector to benefit from their expertise and skills, particularly in leadership roles.

Changing role requirements

The skills required by workers in agribusiness are rapidly changing. For example, a stakeholder in the viticulture industry noted that harvesting methods are becoming increasingly automated to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Autonomous tractors and artificial intelligence for predicting grape growth and weather patterns have also been implemented. While suppliers have passed skills onto employees, there is an ongoing transition to more digital skillsets amongst workers.

Many stakeholders consulted viewed RTOs and universities as not fully equipping students with the skills to meet future work needs. Some commented that course work should be more flexible so that skills can continue to be applied in a range of diverse and changing contexts.

Causes that relate to education

Lack of adoption into the curriculum

While food and fibre is included as a topic within appropriate school subjects to allow young Australians to understand and value primary industries, dedicated agribusiness education is under-represented in South Australian school curriculums. In South Australia, only 92 out of 765 schools have dedicated primary industries programs.⁶⁰

One study indicated that in the school settings, work-integrated learning (or work experience) and excursions are viewed as the most effective methods for career education of students.⁶¹ However, a busy/full curriculum (67%), lack of resources (financial or physical) (48%), lack of planning time (44%), and insufficient knowledge of agriculture careers (27%) were cited by teachers as key barriers to delivering agriculture career education. As a result, many topics related to agribusiness are significantly underrepresented in the school curriculum, resulting in limited opportunities for practical experience for most students.

Various workshops, presentations and industry visits have helped to address some of these barriers. Teachers also have access to resources from the Agriculture Teachers Association and extensive online educational information to help integrate agribusiness into their lessons, among other industry focused curriculum content. Approximately 88% of teachers advised these resources assisted their ability to improve connections to the sector and 62% found they had a large or very large increase in their confidence to provide accurate information on agribusiness jobs and the job market.⁶²

Shortage of agriculture teachers

A contributor to the lack of agribusiness education in school curriculums is the critical shortage of qualified teaching staff. According to a recent ABC article, South Australia's lead agriculture

⁵⁸ Meat and Livestock Australia, Attracting and retaining staff in the red meat industry, 2014

⁵⁹ Wine Australia, Women in the Australian wine sector, 2024

⁶⁰ Primary Producers SA, AgCommunicators, South Australian Agricultural Education Strategy, 2024

⁶¹ Agrifutures, Cultivating the next generation: The role of school-based educators in promoting agricultural careers, 2023

⁶² Agrifutures, Cultivating futures: Engaging secondary school students in the world of agricultural careers, 2023

teacher, Sue Pratt, estimates that to meet the current demand the state would need to produce an additional 15 teachers per year, with only 7 currently in training.⁶³ This shortage not only hampers the delivery of quality education but also limits students' exposure to potential career pathways within the agribusiness sector.

One stakeholder noted that there is a need for long-term funding for lead agriculture teacher roles. Roles are currently supported by the Sheep Industry Fund and the SA Grain Industry Trust, but there is a view that the cost should be shared with other stakeholders including government.

Students' lack of awareness and negative perceptions about agribusiness careers

A consequence of agriculture teacher shortages and limited learning is that student knowledge of agribusiness remains weak both in South Australia and nationally. In a survey of students in Western Australia, approximately 49% of high school students claimed to know nothing at all about agricultural careers, and 43% were uncertain about the types of jobs involved in the agriculture industry.⁶⁴ Furthermore, 50% of students had never heard of, or had any knowledge of 16 of the 26 agribusiness occupations listed in PIEFA's *Food Fibre and Our Future* survey, while 31% were unsure if farming in Australia relied on science and technology.⁶⁵ Many also thought they need to own a farm to work in agribusiness.

Negative perceptions around earnings potential, particularly for agricultural graduates, are also common among students.⁶⁶ Notably, students rated agriculture relatively low (2.24 out of 4) as a field where 'one can earn a lot of money', and 39% still think they could earn more in other sectors.^{67;64} However, students' perceptions of the agriculture industry improved when provided with more accurate salary information. For example, after learning agribusiness graduates typically start on higher salaries than economics and law graduates 70% of students expressed increased interest in pursuing a career in the industry.⁶⁴

Regional location also emerged as a significant disincentive. Approximately 44% of students were reluctant to move to rural or regional areas, identifying one of their top two concerns as being away from friends and family (28%), finding a job (23%), or access to essential services (19%).⁶⁴ Furthermore, overall reluctance to join the agribusiness sector is compounded by a general uncertainty about whether a career necessitates living in a rural area, with 32% unsure and 23% agreeing. However, when students were provided with more accurate information approximately 60% of students had significantly improved perceptions and interest in pursuing a career in agribusiness.^{68;69*} Factors such as lower cost of living (69%), a greater sense of freedom (69%) and being part of a community (63%) were also seen to be somewhat or very appealing aspects of regional living.⁶⁸

The lack of awareness about the sector and common misconceptions have driven a disconnect between what students find important in a career and what they associate with agriculture, highlighted in Figure 2.1. Many career attributes listed in the top left quadrant such as offering variety within roles, allowing creativity and offering job security are commonplace in agribusiness careers, yet were not considered to be associated with agriculture by students.

⁶³ ABC News, [South Australian schools want to bring back agriculture classes, but need teachers](#), 2023

⁶⁴ Shire of Manjimup, Southern Forests Seed Program, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Developing student interest in the agriculture sector, 2017

⁶⁵ PIEFA, PIEFA - Food Fibre and Our Future, 2020

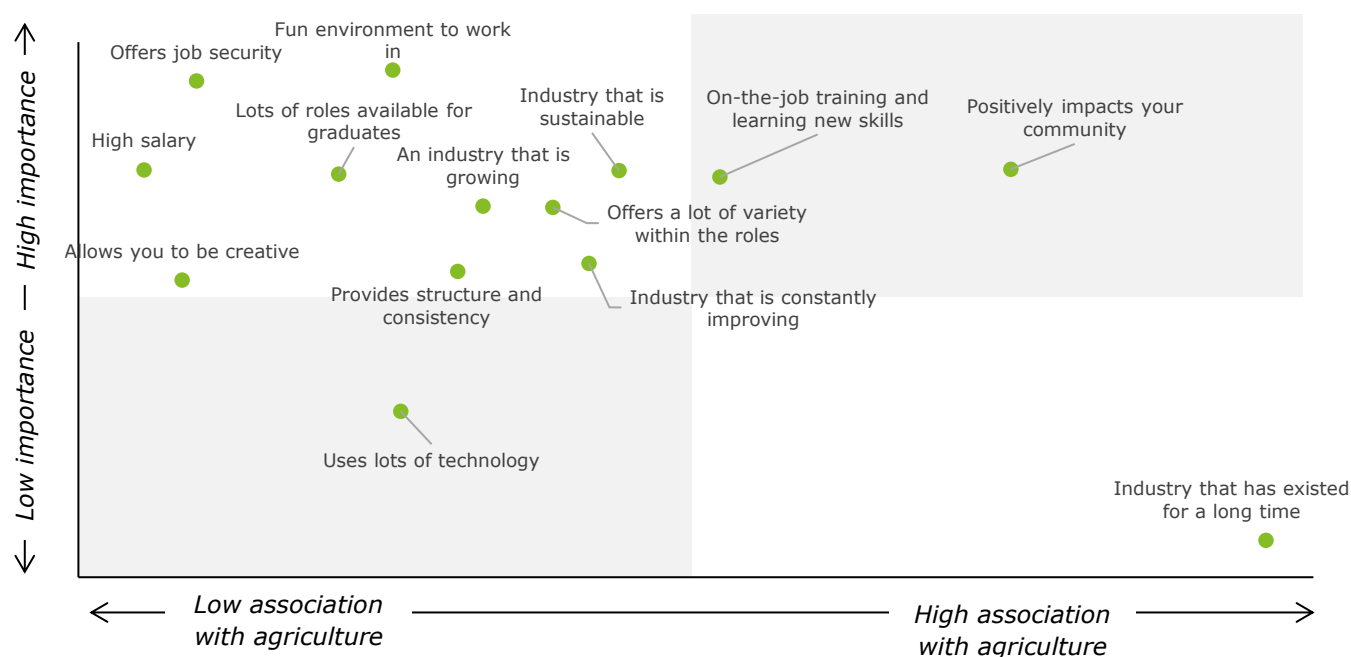
⁶⁶ Clare Peltzer, Attracting Youth Into Agriculture: Developing a strategic framework to encourage young people to pursue a career in agriculture, 2020

⁶⁷ The University of Queensland, Student Survey Report - Career motivations and attitudes towards agriculture of first-year science students at The University of Queensland, 2020

⁶⁸ Shire of Manjimup, Southern Forests Seed Program, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Developing student interest in the agriculture sector, 2017

^{69*} Students were told '46% of people working in agribusiness live and work in the city'.

Figure 2.1 Correlation between what students perceive as important when choosing a career versus associate with a career in agriculture



Source: Developing student interest in the agriculture sector, 2017.

Stakeholders mentioned that more positive perceptions of agribusiness and therefore interest in the sector stems from greater sectoral exposure. There are a number of such initiatives currently in place, including:

- apprenticeship programs with direct transition to full-time roles on completion
- engagement with schools, including promoting South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) credit opportunities
- 'agcommunicators', Ag career hub and Wine Australia's Careers in Australia's viticulture and wine sector website which expose students to career pathways
- Fleurieu AgFest and Adelaide Show programs
- competitions and expos like Schools Merino Competition and the Agriculture, Animal Science and Veterinary Science Careers Expo.

While these initiatives have been beneficial, stakeholders noted there is a need to provide ongoing funding to support their continuity and effectiveness. Some noted that participation can be resource-intensive, particularly where staff are required to travel to schools and regional communities to raise awareness and promote industry engagement. Furthermore, limited access to education and training opportunities in some rural and regional areas continues to constrain the development of local graduates—and, ultimately, the regional workforce. Stakeholders consistently reaffirmed that local workers are the most reliable and committed source of labour, underscoring the importance of investing in local training pathways.

Inequitable access to education for First Nations people

As illustrated in Table 2.2, First Nations participation in some agribusiness occupations is low compared to the economy-wide average. A key driver of this statistic is inequitable access to education for First Nations people, which acts as a barrier to entry into the agribusiness sector. A contributing factor is relatively limited access to education and training facilities, programs and resources in regional, remote and rural areas where many young First Nations people live. Another factor is a lack of financial resources to relocate to towns and cities where education facilities are located.

For First Nations employees already in the agribusiness sector, they are more likely to have lower levels of higher education attainment across all agricultural industries compared with the national

average. This contributes to their under-representation in middle management and senior-level roles.⁷⁰

JSA's 2025 Food Supply Chain Workforce report identifies several strategies to increase First Nations peoples' access to education and therefore participation in the agribusiness sector. Among them are targeted First Nations scholarships and grant programs to remove financial barriers to First Nations participation in tertiary education.⁷¹ To be more effective, initiatives such as this could be combined with social and structural transformation to improve cultural awareness and safety in the workplace, discussed further in the retention section below.

Inconsistent education standards/skills requirements across states

Differences in education and training systems and skills requirements between the states is a barrier for attraction of workers in agribusiness. PIRSA provided the example of Southern Mallee Council who have indicated difficulties in attracting and employing farm staff when large farm properties operate across state borders, when those states have different education standards or skills requirements.

In their respective agribusiness workforce strategies, South Australia's neighbouring states NSW, Victoria and WA place an emphasis on skills currency. For example, New South Wales' proposed 'Primary Industries Workforce Strategy 2025-2030' includes an action to 'maintain relationships between Government, training organisations and industry to ensure that education and training is responsive to industry needs and priorities.'⁷² None of the strategy documents explicitly mention harmonising skills requirements or developing a cross-state skills model.

The current national VET system allows the development of transferable skills which enable the occupational mobility of workers i.e. the flexibility to take up jobs across different occupations and jurisdictions. However, the specific ways in which key employability skills are interpreted and built into different qualifications (which vary by state) limit the extent of their transferability. There is an opportunity to adopt more generic construction of employability skills in agribusiness qualifications, combined with flexible technical skills specific to occupational 'clusters'.⁷³ For example, a 'broadacre agriculture' qualification could contain core soft employability skills such as communication and problem-solving, combined with standardised technical skills relevant to crop science and livestock husbandry. Greater standardisation of skills requirements across states could increase worker mobility and therefore ease attraction challenges for agribusinesses.

Causes that relate to the broader community

Negative community perceptions about agribusiness careers

Community perceptions significantly impact employers' ability to attract staff. In 2023, 21% of farmers stated that community perceptions had the greatest impact on their ability to access workers.⁷⁴ Many stakeholders noted that while this challenge has traditionally been more pronounced in physically demanding or confronting occupations—such as abattoir workers and deckhands—it is not limited to these occupations alone.

Overall, community members hold largely negative perceptions about rural industries, believing that most jobs are physically demanding (84%) and poorly compensated.⁷⁵ Only 34% of the community believe workers in rural industries are paid a fair wage.⁷⁶ Additionally, 48% of the community has concerns about worker exploitation and 43% of community members think that most jobs in rural industries are a risk to personal health and safety. One stakeholder in the meat processing industry noted that lower-skilled local workers would prefer to work in hospitality than meat processing, despite employers offering state-of-the-art facilities, a safe working environment, and comparatively better pay.

⁷⁰ JSA, An Essential Ingredient: The Food Supply Chain Workforce, 2025

⁷¹ JSA, An Essential Ingredient: The Food Supply Chain Workforce, 2025

⁷² NSW DPIRD, Proposed NSW Primary Industries Workforce Strategy 2025-2030, 2025

⁷³ NCVER, Cross-occupational skills transferability: challenges and opportunities in a changing economy, 2016

⁷⁴ National Farmers Federation, National Farmers Priority Survey, 2023

⁷⁵ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Quantitative research results, 2023

⁷⁶ Agrifutures, Community trust in rural industries - Year Four National Survey, 2023

Similarly to students, 45% of community members strongly agree that the need to live in a rural area for most jobs makes a career in rural industries less attractive.⁷⁵ Most community members attribute this sentiment to the 'rural-city divide,' citing social limitations, lack of accommodation, and insufficient supporting infrastructure as primary reasons against pursuing such careers.⁷⁷

Despite the general belief that rural industries offer meaningful careers for those who choose to work there (70%), most community members remain unlikely to consider a career in rural industries (50%) or seasonal work (81%).^{78;79;80} Driving this reluctance were physical barriers, prior commitments, limited understanding of available career paths, and negative perceptions (outlined above). Prior commitments and age remain key barriers for the general community to join the agricultural workforce, with approximately 12% unwilling to join due to family commitments and 19% as they perceive themselves to be too old.⁸¹

Beyond these practical concerns, broader issues relating to industry image, standards, and values continue to influence the community's employment decisions. These concerns—regardless of their accuracy—play a growing role in shaping candidate perceptions, as employees increasingly seek alignment between their personal values and their employers. For instance, concerns such as animal welfare, chemical use, genetically modified crops, greenhouse gas emissions, and trust in rural industries to act responsibly are commonly cited as deterrents to pursuing careers in the agribusiness industry. Furthermore, concerns about workplace culture remain a significant barrier to attracting new talent, with 34% of community members believing businesses still haven't taken sufficient action to address issues such as gender bias and racism.⁸²

Stakeholders also highlighted the difficulty of shifting these perceptions, noting that negative headlines (e.g. droughts, frosts or emissions) tend to dominate media coverage, while positive developments in the sector often go unnoticed. Many stakeholders raised that, generally, they are unclear as to why community members choose not to join their organisation, and that perceptions of the sector must play a role in this decision making.

As there are several factors deterring individuals from pursuing careers in the agribusiness sector, creating challenges for these businesses, stakeholders viewed branding and initiatives focused on increasing perceptions of the sector will be important.

2.2 Retention challenges for South Australian agribusiness

Overall, retention is less of an issue than attraction in the South Australian agribusiness workforce. Metrics of retention indicate that longevity in the industry is common. However, more experienced workers (particularly farm owners and managers) are retained much more readily than less experienced and lower-skilled workers.

The following section is structured similarly to attraction. The first Section 2.2.1 presents evidence of retention trends, while Section 2.2.2 discusses potential causes as well as example initiatives mentioned by stakeholders.

2.2.1 Evidence of retention challenges

While data on the prevalence and severity of retention is more limited than attraction, there are two main indicators for which high quality data is available: rates of retention and job tenure. Qualitative data which describes employee intentions and retention in higher education complements these indicators.

Due to data availability, 'agribusiness' in this section of analysis refers to the ANZSIC 1-digit industry 'Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing'.

⁷⁷ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Qualitative research results, 2023

⁷⁸ Agrifutures, Community trust in rural industries - Year Four National Survey, 2023

⁷⁹ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program - Quantitative research results, 2023

⁸⁰ PIRSA, Real Work Real Experiences, Seasonal workers post campaign, 2021

⁸¹ PIRSA, Real Work Real Experiences, Seasonal workers post campaign, 2021

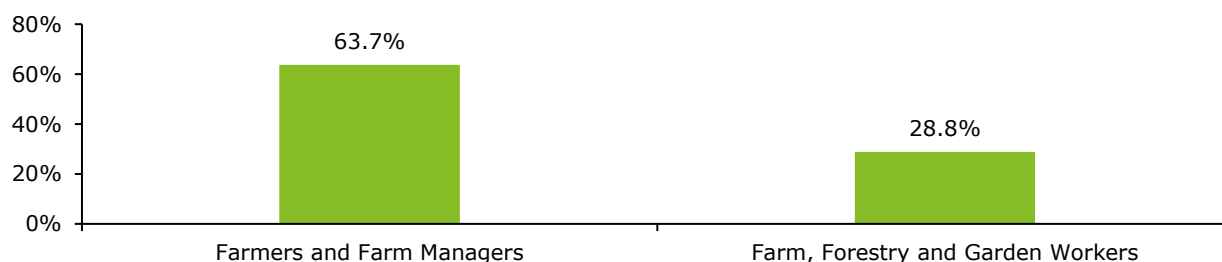
⁸² Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Quantitative research results, 2023

Rates of retention

While the retention rate for agriculture, forestry and fishing is above the state average, retention of workers in operational roles is much lower than employers and managers.

The South Australian agribusiness retention rate of 61% is 11 percentage points above the state average of 50%. However, stakeholders noted that this figure is positively skewed by the high proportion of employers (such as farm owners) who are deeply embedded in the industry. Separating employers (farm owners/farm managers) and farm workers at the national level shows that between the 2016 and 2021 Census, while 64% of employers remained in the same occupation, this was true for only 29% of workers which is below both the state and national averages (Chart 2.4).⁸³

Chart 2.4 Workforce retention rate from 2016 to 2021 in Australia by occupation (ANZSCO-3)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Longitudinal Dataset, 2016-2021

Note: The chart indicates the proportion of workers who remained in the same occupation (but not necessarily the same role) between the 2016 and 2021 Census.

Job tenure

The disparate retention rate between employers and employees is reflected in job tenure data. A smaller share of workers in South Australian agribusiness have been employed for zero to two years in their role, while a much larger share have served 10 or more years in their role, compared to all industries.

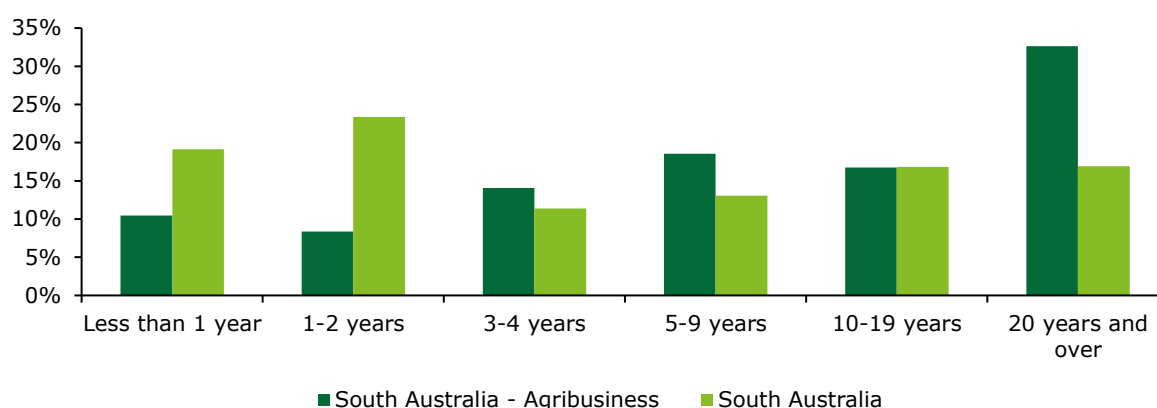
Data in Chart 2.5 indicates that workforce turnover is much more common for short tenures (up to two years). Around 18% of workers in South Australian agribusiness have been in their roles for up to two years, compared to 42% across all sectors.⁸⁴ Inferring from workforce retention rates by occupation (Chart 2.4), these employees are likely based in entry-level operational roles, such as farmhands, assistants and labourers.

Conversely, turnover is much less prevalent for people who remain in their roles for 10 years or longer, many of whom are farmers and farm managers. Approximately 50% of agribusiness workers have recorded job tenure of 10 years or more - almost double the state average of 17% (Chart 2.5). Stakeholders noted that employees who stay past two or more years in their role tend to develop an interest in diverse roles and are drawn to remain in the sector.

⁸³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Longitudinal Dataset, 2016-2021

⁸⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Participation, Job Search and Mobility, 2024

Chart 2.5 Job tenure in 2024, proportion of worker



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Participation, Job Search and Mobility.

Employee intentions

Qualitative data indicates that once settled in, employees are happy and committed to their roles.

Survey data lends to the findings discussed above that employees are much more likely to remain in the industry once they have served for at least two years. One survey focussing on agribusiness specifically found employees' intentions to remain in the industry are strong, with 61% having no plans to change roles and 95% moderately, very or extremely likely to remain working in rural industries.^{85;86} Many also anticipate a lengthy tenure in agribusiness sectors, with 54% expecting to stay in the industry for the next 10 years or more and only 16% intending to leave within the next three.⁸⁷ Sub-industries such as meat and livestock have observed similar trends, with 61% of employees anticipating a long-term future at their current place of employment.⁸⁸

Despite promising intentions among workers who have gained several years' experience, intentions among new starters is a primary retention issue.

2.2.2 Causes of retention challenges

This section explores the underlying causes of retention difficulty in the agribusiness sector by examining causes that relate to employee experience and expectations, and challenges faced by agribusinesses. These are summarised in Table 2.4 below. Some factors described below contribute to retention in the industry, rather than detract from it.

Table 2.4 Causes of retention difficulties summary table

Stakeholder	Causes/drivers
Employees	Limited flexible work options and work-life balance Changing job expectations Regional liveability Work culture and lack of inclusivity for First Nations employees Training, upskilling and career development
Agribusinesses	Seasonal variability Business scale and resource constraints

Source: Deloitte Access Economics

⁸⁵ Pinion Advisory, Employee Value Proposition, 2023

⁸⁶ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Quantitative research results, 2023

⁸⁷ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Quantitative research results, 2023

⁸⁸ Meat and Livestock Australia, Attracting and retaining staff in the red meat industry, 2014

Causes relating to employee experience and expectations

Agribusiness employees are more likely to remain in the sector when they find their work engaging, perceive fair working conditions, have access to educational opportunities, and enjoy the regional lifestyle. However, several challenges hinder retention in this sector.

Limited flexible work options and work-life balance

Despite 90% of red meat and livestock employees finding their work interesting, many are dissatisfied with certain aspects of their job.⁸⁸ These concerns span the broader industry and commonly include high-pressure environments, extensive time spent on the road, and inadequate pay.⁸⁹

However, possible solutions are beginning to emerge. Strong relationships with management are a key driver of retention within the red meat industry, with 93% of employees citing them as important. Flexibility is also a growing priority, with 26.2% of employers identifying flexible working hours as their most effective retention strategy.⁹⁰ Recent changes to the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022, combined with advancements in automation, are now making it more feasible to introduce flexibility across a broader range of positions in the sector. This is a significant development given offering flexible arrangements has traditionally been difficult in agribusiness due to the demanding nature of many roles—such as livestock care and seasonal operations—which often require round-the-clock availability.

Changing job expectations

Evolving employee expectations of their job, particularly among younger workers, are significantly impacting workforce retention. Survey findings indicate that in general, employees highly value flexibility, respect, work enjoyment, variety of work and the quality of equipment.⁹¹ Stakeholders emphasised that younger employees increasingly prioritise work-life balance, shorter work weeks, and reduced overtime, with many expecting compensation for being on-call. They also place greater emphasis on sustainability and moral values which shape their decisions about employment.

Furthermore, stakeholders reported a growing reluctance among younger workers to take on shift-based or unconventional hour roles, with some staying in positions for only 6–12 months before transitioning to more conventional jobs. Despite the availability of upskilling opportunities and career pathways, some younger employees show less willingness to invest the time and effort needed to advance into more experienced roles.

Survey data on retention strategies has found that the most prevalent strategies closely align with employee preferences. These strategies include role flexibility, accommodation, bonus systems, pay above the award, training/upskilling opportunities, regular communication, and employee inclusion in decision-making.⁹² Similarly in the red meat and livestock industries, the most effective methods were flexible working hours (26.2%), increasing salary (21.9%), providing training and qualifications (14.3%), and providing time off in lieu of hours worked (13.4%).⁹³ However, a lack of implementation of retention strategies remains a key issue in some sub sectors. For example, 31% of dairy employers are yet to implement any of these strategies and 18% have implemented just one.⁹⁴

Stakeholders shared a variety of examples of their retention efforts targeted to younger employees. In response to younger workers' values, some employers, like one in the viticulture industry, have introduced measures such as a "cultural code" that communicates company morals, general views, and sustainability commitments, aiming to align with employee expectations and foster retention. Another stakeholder created a compressed career pathway, which advances

⁸⁹ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Quantitative research results, 2023

⁹⁰ Meat and Livestock Australia, Attracting and retaining staff in the red meat industry, 2014

⁹¹ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program – Qualitative research results, 2023

⁹² Pinion Advisory, Employee Value Proposition, 2023

⁹³ Meat and Livestock Australia, Attracting and retaining staff in the red meat industry, 2014

⁹⁴ Dairy Australia, Workforce: The power of people on Australian Dairy farms, 2021

employees' responsibility and pay multiple times within six months as they develop skills and experience.

Regional liveability

The rural lifestyle is also a strong driver of retention in the agribusiness industry. One survey found approximately 76% of employees feel strongly connected to the land they live and work on, and 74% of rural community members in Western Australia are satisfied with their overall quality of life.^{95;96} There is a strong opportunity to promote the benefits of the lifestyle associated with working in the industry.

However, rural life does continue to have its drawbacks, such as isolation and key factors of liveability often not being met. For example, 45% of respondents don't believe their town can provide the health services they need and only 34% believe they have good job security.⁹⁷

Work culture and lack of inclusivity for First Nations employees

Poor work culture is another challenge faced by employees in the agribusiness sector. In a 2023 survey conducted by Agrifutures, approximately 47% of respondents felt that rural industries hadn't taken enough action to respond to work culture issues.⁹⁸ Stakeholder consultations suggested this could manifest in the form of 'old-school' leadership and be driven by a lack of gender diversity. Indeed, JSA has reported that agribusiness occupations with a strong gender imbalance are more likely to be in shortage, which is true for both male- and female-dominated occupations such as meat processors (83% male) and veterinary nurses (96% female).⁹⁹

For First Nations employees, insufficient cultural awareness and inclusion in the workplace is a major driver of low retention rates. A survey of over 1,000 First Nations employees in 2020 found issues surrounding cultural safety at work and experiences of workplace exclusion and racism.¹⁰⁰ For example, the survey found that among respondents:

- 28% felt culturally unsafe in the workplace
- 38% reported being treated unfairly because of their First Nations background
- 65% reported feeling the need to work harder than their non-First Nations co-workers to prove they could do their job
- 71% felt that there was an expectation that they (rather than their organisation) had to educate non-First Nations colleagues about First Nations people.

An opportunity exists for agribusiness firms of all scales to implement First Nations-focussed initiatives, which the survey found to reduce racism and attrition, and improve cultural safety.

Training, upskilling and career development

Agribusiness employees place high value on opportunities for learning and skill development. Industry reports indicate that investing in employee development fosters loyalty, boosts morale, and reduces turnover, as employees are more likely to remain with companies that support their growth.¹⁰¹ However, there is a notable lack of training opportunities across many sectors, particularly in the dairy industry, where only 39% of employees have attended educational training or events in the past year.¹⁰² One stakeholder noted their strategy of identifying PALM workers with the most potential and obtaining permanent residency visas to enable longer-term upskilling for both business and employee benefit. Another stakeholder raised that there are challenges with retaining young people in the sector, as students may be less likely to continue studying agribusiness post school if there are limited (or no) local training pathways. This has implications for local businesses who struggle to retain young people, which is important for business succession.

⁹⁵ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program - Quantitative research results, 2023

⁹⁶ Regional Australia Institute, Liveability in Australian mid-sized towns, 2020

⁹⁷ Regional Australia Institute, Liveability in Australian mid-sized towns, 2020

⁹⁸ Agrifutures, Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences Program - Quantitative research results, 2023

⁹⁹ JSA, An Essential Ingredient: The Food Supply Chain Workforce, 2025

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Agri Talent, Upskilling and reskilling – building a resilient agribusiness

¹⁰² Dairy Australia, Workforce: The power of people on Australian Dairy farms, 2021

Causes relating to agribusiness challenges

Despite agribusinesses' best efforts to support and retain their staff, seasonal variability and resource constraints can present challenges to retention.

Seasonal variability

Seasonal fluctuations create significant challenges for retention, as businesses must decide between absorbing financial losses, reducing employee hours or letting employees go during years of reduced output. This instability often drives workers to seek more secure employment options elsewhere and reflects the low sentiment for job security (27%) of employees in regional towns.¹⁰³

Business scale and resource constraints

Retention challenges differ between SMEs and corporates, and therefore require unique approaches to training, career development and the broader retention strategy. Larger agribusinesses are generally more profitable,¹⁰⁴ and therefore can dedicate more financial and human resources to implement comprehensive retention strategies, which include bespoke training programs for their employees, competitive salaries and more structured career progression pathways. In South Australia, this is particularly relevant in processing industries like wine and other alcoholic beverage manufacturing, where larger firms can leverage economies of scale to provide attractive working conditions.

Conversely, SMEs frequently rely on family labour and may struggle to compete with corporates in attracting skilled workers, due to limited financial resources and less formalised career development opportunities. In broadacre agriculture across Australia, for example, the smallest 10% of farms account for 0.5% of broadacre livestock and crop output, which underscores their limited economic footprint and capacity for competitive staffing.¹⁰⁵ For small farming businesses, fatigue from working long hours and poor farm viability can also challenge employees' willingness to remain in the business.¹⁰⁶

Business size also influences how demographic shifts affect workforce retention. Larger businesses may be better able to manage the impacts of an ageing workforce through succession planning and investing in skills development. Small businesses with family involvement, however, may face more complicated succession challenges. The lack of succession planning in many SMEs can affect the perceived job security and engagement of employees.¹⁰⁷

Importantly however, SMEs are well-placed to attract and retain employees by offering job variety and autonomy.¹⁰⁸ For SMEs with family members, succession planning is a critical retention strategy alongside training and development opportunities, and job security. For larger corporates, offering career options with formal qualification pathways are particularly important.¹⁰⁹ For businesses of all sizes, an expectation of a long term employment opportunity is critical to retention; pay by itself is not sufficient to provide financial security.

¹⁰³ Regional Australia Institute, Liveability in Australian mid-sized towns, 2020

¹⁰⁴ ABARES, Disaggregating farm performance statistics by size, 2025

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ MLA, Small employers – attracting and retaining staff in the pastoral livestock industry, 2011

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ JSA, An Essential Ingredient: The Food Supply Chain Workforce, 2025

3 Existing workforce initiatives

Nationally, there is a strong focus across the agribusiness sector to address workforce challenges to meet future workforce needs. This has seen the emergence of a plethora of attraction and retention initiatives targeted at different agribusiness sectors.

3.1 Existing strategies, investments and initiatives

There is a strong focus across the agribusiness sector in addressing current and future workforce challenges and needs. This has seen the emergence of several workforce strategies and action plans designed to set the direction for workforce attraction and retention initiatives and investments.

3.1.1 National workforce strategies and plans

Several workforce strategies and action plans have been released at a national level that have a more direct influence on initiatives and investments in agribusiness. These include:

- the **National Agricultural Workforce Strategy**: Learning to excel developed by the independent National Agricultural Labour Advisory Committee (2021).¹¹⁰
- the Commonwealth Government's response to the National Agricultural Workforce Strategy, through a **roadmap to attract, retain, upskill and modernise** Australia's agricultural workforce (2022).¹¹¹
- the Delivering **Ag2030 plan** which highlights the human capital investment required nationally for the sector to deliver its ambition to become a \$100 billion industry by 2030 (latest edition published in 2022).¹¹²
- the Australian chicken meat **industry workforce strategy** that focuses on building people capability and a diverse and sustainable workforce (2023).¹¹³
- The South Australian **Seafood Growth strategy** that has a focus on education and training to drive skills development for the industry (2021).

These nationally-driven government and industry strategies and plans are being supported by the 2025-26 Federal Budget which provides \$1.2 million for the Agricultural Workforce Package across 2025-26 and 2026-27. This funding is being used to provide targeted grants to industry-led projects to benefit the sector and see the continuation of programs including National Farm Safety Week, AgCAREERSTART pilot and the skilled agricultural work liaison program.

¹¹⁰ Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, National agricultural workforce strategy, 2020

¹¹¹ Federal Government of Australia, Building the Agricultural Workforce of the Future: The Commonwealth Government response to the National Agricultural Workforce Strategy, December 2021

¹¹² Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Delivering Ag2030, 2022

¹¹³ Agrifutures, Building people capability and a diverse and sustainable workforce - The Australian chicken meat industry workforce strategy, 2023

Spotlight: AgCAREERSTART¹¹⁴

The AgCAREERSTART initiative is a gap-year program designed to engage young Australians aged 17-25 in primary industries. Launched by the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) in collaboration with the Federal Government, the program connects participants with qualified farms across Australia for 10 to 12 months, providing them with hands-on experience, full-time wages, and a supportive environment to explore various agricultural careers.



Participants are matched with host farmers based on their interests and skills and receive a \$4,500 Training and Engagement Bursary as an incentive to enhance their learning and professional development. Additionally, farmers receive a \$2000 grant when adopting a student, and ongoing support from the AgCAREERSTART team to assist in offering training, career and wellbeing support.

The initiative has achieved notable success, with participation increasing year-on-year—around 30 participants in 2022, 70 in 2023, and 80 in 2024. The program resulted in a high proportion of graduates (83%) continuing their careers in the agriculture industry. By further enhancing or expanding this model, more students can gain essential insights into agricultural practices, equipping the new generation with skills and fostering a long-term passion for farming as a career choice.

3.1.2 South Australia's focus

The **Skilled. Thriving. Connected. policy direction** articulates how the state is partnering with the Commonwealth Government to deliver a \$2.29 billion investment in skills in South Australia.¹¹⁵ It lists several focuses that look to address areas of shortage. Those that create opportunities to attract workers and learners into agribusiness, include:

- **Foundational skills:** delivering language, literacy, digital literacy, numeracy and employability skills to increase those able to enter the workforce.
- **Closing the gap:** training and skills development that is culturally appropriate and supports First Nations people with developing skills to find meaningful work.
- **Place-based approaches:** working with regions to address specific skill challenges and co-design training programs that are flexible and future focused.

Each of the above focus areas were also raised by consultees as key focus areas for their businesses. These stakeholders noted several opportunities to increase training across these areas, including through (1) RTOs that focus on language and professional skills for migrant workers and/or minority groups, (2) culturally specific training to build meaning for First Nations people in agribusiness related roles, (3) training for businesses to support with introducing culturally safe working environments, and (4) increasing collaboration with local businesses through designing tailored courses to meet their immediate (and future) needs.

For example, one stakeholder noted that their business is partnering with a local RTO to provide staff with opportunities to receive practical work experience with formal education. The traineeship offers a two-year full-time paid role, and a nationally recognised Certificate III in Rural Operations upon completion. Providing this training has allowed the stakeholder to fill lower-level positions while simultaneously building a talent pipeline for the future. This is something that can be considered and possibly scaled across South Australia.

¹¹⁴ ABC News, AgCareerStart program providing paid working gap year to city youth interested in an agricultural career, 2023

¹¹⁵ Skills SA, Skilled. Thriving. Connected, 2024

The South Australian Government has recognised the need to develop skills and grow workforces in a range of priority sectors, with several workforce strategies and/or action plans designed in collaboration with industry. For example, these include South Australia's Early Childhood Workforce Strategy, Rural Health Workforce Strategy, Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Action Plan, and Hydrogen Workforce Plan. Several of these industries have introduced different approaches to attract and retain workers, for example:

- The Construction Industry Training board has introduced a whole of sector website – [Trade Up](#) – that provides information on and promotes opportunities for people build their career in construction.
- Master Builders SA has introduced a similar website – [Born to Build](#) – which promotes career pathways and opportunities within South Australia's construction sector.
- The South Australian defence industry has also developed an industry focused workforce and skills action plan and introduced a website – [Find Your Place](#) – to create awareness of local careers in defence and space industries.

While there is no South Australian agribusiness workforce strategy and/or plan, there is a plethora of attraction and retention initiatives, providing a range of supports and resources. More information on current attraction and retention initiatives can be found in the sections to follow. The scan of initiatives compiled below should not be considered exhaustive of what is currently underway within the sector.

3.2 Attraction and retention initiatives

This section provides information on the current initiatives targeting attraction and retention. This is intended to provide an illustrative view of where effort is being focused, with consideration of target group, sector specificity, and ownership. Where appropriate, spotlights have been used to demonstrate interesting concepts from individual businesses and/or specific programs for the Department to explore further, as they have potential to be scaled and applied across the state.

3.2.1 Current attraction initiatives

There is a plethora of attraction initiatives providing a range of support to businesses, potential workers and students in South Australia and nationally. These initiatives can be grouped into four categories that point to specific areas of effort. These categories include:

- Creating awareness of job opportunities.
- Transitioning from education to work.
- Enabling migration and overseas workers.
- Lifting community perceptions.

More information on each category and its corresponding initiatives is outlined below.

Creating awareness of job opportunities categorises those initiatives that focus on promoting the diverse range of career opportunities in agribusiness sectors. These initiatives intend to showcase job opportunities through online and in-person forums, to share information on the diverse career pathways, and provide resources to support people with exploring their options.

At a national level, several industry bodies have introduced initiatives that look to create increasing awareness of job opportunities in their specific sector. For example:

- Dairy Australia has introduced the [Dairy Jobs Matter](#) campaign that highlights the environmental and social responsibility elements of working in the dairy industry and supports people to find a job in dairy that "matters".¹¹⁶
- Wine Australia has introduced the [Careers in viticulture and wine](#) website that showcases the range of career pathways for those new to the sector and/or with transferrable skills and experience.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Dairy Australia, Dairy Jobs Matter

¹¹⁷ Wine Australia, Careers in Australia's Viticulture and Wine sector

- Seafood Industry Australia (in partnership with the Commonwealth Government) has introduced the [Seafood Careers Australia](#) website that allows people to take a quiz to match their skillset to a role in the sector.¹¹⁸

These websites and campaigns are valuable in providing specialised information on careers within specific sectors and are helpful in aggregating job opportunities and/or supporting people to connect their skills to opportunities. However, as these websites are national, they may not explore the full breadth of opportunities available locally in South Australia and do not capture the range of sectors and/or jobs within agribusiness sectors. Commonwealth Government initiatives within this category have focused on providing information on local jobs – for example through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations [Local Jobs placed-based initiative](#) – or supports to businesses facing challenges with attracting people to open positions.¹¹⁹ There is an opportunity to leverage these platforms to create awareness of emerging jobs in the South Australian agribusiness sector, for example agritourism.

At a state level, initiatives within this category have focused on creating local opportunities, through the Department's South Australian Research and Development Institute, state government supports for regional workforce connector programs, and the industry driven SA Ag Careers Hub. A few stakeholders consulted as part of this process also raised that, locally, they are coming together with businesses to facilitate career expos that showcase the jobs on offer to those in their communities. While these expos were raised as good networking opportunities, it was unclear as to whether they encouraged people to apply for vacant jobs.

Spotlight: Seafood Careers Australia website

The Seafood Careers Australia Initiative is a website designed to connect job seekers with rewarding careers in the seafood industry. The website offers detailed information on a wide range of roles, training pathways, qualifications, and regional employment opportunities, while also promoting sustainable practices and worker wellbeing.

A key highlight of the initiative is its interactive career quiz, which helps users identify seafood industry jobs that best match their skills, interests, and lifestyle. The quiz links users directly to relevant occupations and provides insights into typical pay, relevant responsibilities, and qualification requirements. Users interested in exploring qualification requirements further can find an overview of all related courses and where they can complete them. Additionally, the site offers valuable insight into the day-to-day realities of various roles through engaging case studies featuring real people working in the industry.

Overall, the initiative makes the seafood sector more accessible and transparent, guiding individuals toward careers and supporting the industry's growth and sustainability across Australia.



Transitioning from school to work categorises those initiatives that focus on providing students with practical experience and exposure to real-life agribusiness settings. These initiatives focus on building the knowledge and interest of students, through targeted curriculum, site visits, guest speakers, and networking with industry.

There are several industry bodies, who at a national level, have created materials and supports for schools to build the knowledge of students. A few examples include:

¹¹⁸ Seafood Careers Australia, Seafood Careers Website

¹¹⁹ Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Local Jobs

- Primezone which allows schools to access free, curriculum aligned education resources on agriculture, food and fibre.¹²⁰
- Woolmark learning centre which provides learning pathways and digital course work that focuses on wool.¹²¹
- Forest learning which provides teachers with free resources aligned to the Australian curriculum, focused on forests and sustainable timber products.¹²²
- Cultivating futures which provides support to teachers through curriculum aligned lessons for subjects including agriculture, science, food technology, business and design technology.¹²³

While these materials and supports are helpful in the classroom, there may be duplication across their content. The range of industry-specific resources (per sub-sector) may also make it difficult for teachers, who are already time poor, to determine where to focus.

A few programs also target educators specifically to increase their ability to provide practical experiences and integrate agribusiness learning into the curriculum, including the SA Lead Ag Teacher and the Teacher Farm Experience program. These are important since many teachers struggle to integrate these materials within the existing curriculum because (1) it is already crowded, (2) they do not have personal experience in agribusiness, or (3) they struggle in more regional locations to access professional development and/or on-site supports.

There are several government and industry-driven programs that focus on providing students with practical experience and exposure to agribusiness settings. A few examples of these include:

- Cows Create Careers – a free program that engages and educates students about careers in the Australian dairy industry.¹²⁴
- AgCAREERSTART– a government and industry-led program that supports students to access a gap year working in the agriculture industry, upskilling themselves and networking across the country.¹²⁵
- EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture program – for K-10 students in regional communities across Australia to support them to explore interests in agriculture.¹²⁶
- Cotton Gap – for students and school leavers to gain exposure to a range of career opportunities in the cotton industry.¹²⁷
- Educating kids about agriculture – driven locally by PPSA to educate kids through hands-on, on-farm or in-school experiences.¹²⁸
- Limestone Coast Technical College – will offer senior secondary students an agri-tech industry training program designed to showcase career pathways and foster greater interest in the sector.¹²⁹
- Career Education and Pathways Strategy – is a State Government policy that promotes VET as a viable alternative to university and connects students and teachers with career pathways in food, wine, agribusiness, and primary industries.¹³⁰

It is unclear how accessible these programs are to students in schools located in regional areas of South Australia. However, stakeholders see these programs as important as students from a family without a background in agribusiness or a school does not have a specialist subject are likely to remain disconnected from the sector.

The Commonwealth Government continues to fund a range of initiatives focused on driving experiences and exposure for students, including the AgConnections skilled work liaison pilot

¹²⁰ Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia, Primezone

¹²¹ Woolmark, Woolmark Learning Centre

¹²² Forest Learning

¹²³ Agrifutures, Cultivating the Next Generation

¹²⁴ Dairy Australia, Cows Create Careers

¹²⁵ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, AgCAREERSTART

¹²⁶ EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture program

¹²⁷ Cotton Australia, Cotton Gap

¹²⁸ Primary Producers SA, Educating Kids About Agriculture

¹²⁹ Technical Colleges SA, Limestone Coast Technical College

¹³⁰ Department for Education South Australia, Career Education and Pathways Strategy

program, the AgCAREERSTART program, and the National Farm Safety Week activities. The Department of Education is also developing a series of career videos to provide students with updated information on what it is like to work in agribusiness and the pathways to the sector. Likewise, the University of Adelaide produced a similar tool in collaboration with Ag Institute Australia to provide more information on student opportunities in agribusiness.

PPSA is currently developing a new education strategy which analyses the current challenges the sector faces in educating and attracting the next generation of agribusiness workers. The report will outline action areas, initiatives and budgeting estimates that the organisation believe are required to strengthen agribusiness education across the state. These initiatives (along with expos and networking events, awards and grants) will help to build awareness, and encourage and inspire students to take up opportunities in the agribusiness sector.¹³¹

While these initiatives help students to gain broad exposure to agribusiness, and access real-world experiences and opportunities to connect directly to the sector, they do not appear to be rolled out consistently across schools in South Australia. There is currently an overwhelming choice of programs available which can make it more difficult for schools to engage with the right programs for their students.

Another key barrier to a successful school-to-work transition is the limited access to higher-level education and training opportunities in some rural and regional areas. This constraint continues to limit the development of local graduates—and, by extension, the regional workforce. For example, TAFE campuses in the Riverland currently offer no courses in agriculture or horticulture, despite agriculture and especially horticulture representing a significant part of the local economy. Expanding access to regionally relevant training and qualifications in such areas would improve the ability of local agribusinesses to develop a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers.

Stakeholders consistently reaffirmed that locally trained workers are often the most dependable, invested, and likely to remain in the sector and job long term, making the case for greater investment in regional education infrastructure even more compelling.

Enabling overseas and migrant workers and **lifting community perceptions** are the two remaining categories of attraction initiatives.

Enabling overseas and migrant workers focuses on initiatives that support businesses to diversify their workforces to fill skills gaps and meet labour market demands. These initiatives include those that facilitate entry to Australia and those that provide ongoing support. The PALM scheme is one avenue that employers can use to access overseas workers. There are also a range of skilled visa programs available. These are seen by employers as critical to supporting them to deliver on their business needs amidst a tight local labour pool. However, the processes in place for visas are often difficult to navigate. A sector-specific website or document that applies these programs to a South Australian agribusiness context could greatly benefit employers seeking to fill labour gaps with overseas workers.

¹³¹ Primary Producers Australia, SA Ag Education Strategy, 2024

Spotlight: 'Real work real experiences' PIRSA seasonal workers campaign ¹³²

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia's (PIRSA) "Real Work, Real Experience" initiative commenced in December 2020 and was a marketing campaign aimed at attracting seasonal workers to regional areas. The campaign utilised a variety of platforms, including TV, social media, newspapers, radio, and outdoor signage, to reach potential applicants. It emphasised the enjoyable and rewarding nature of seasonal work while also highlighting additional incentives available under the program, such as up to \$6,000 for Australian workers engaged in seasonal agriculture and up to \$2,000 for visa holders and students participating in regional work.



At the conclusion of the campaign, PIRSA conducted a state-wide survey to assess its effectiveness and reach. While the impact on local residents was limited—only 14% indicated that the advertisements made them more likely to consider seasonal or regional work—the campaign significantly influenced international students. More than 50% of students reported that the ads increased their likelihood of applying for seasonal work, with nearly 46% actively submitting applications.

Although the initiative experienced varying levels of success, the insights gathered from the survey will be valuable for future advertising campaigns aimed at the agribusiness sector in South Australia. These campaigns may be more likely to attract those outside of Australia as they provide information on opportunities for holiday makers and international students.

Lifting community perceptions focuses on initiatives that seek to understand and address community perceptions, to better inform how the sector attracts and retains workers. These initiatives are intended to also understand how to best position the sector and its workforce opportunities for different stakeholders. Several sector campaigns have been developed for specific industries, at a national level, including More to Meat and This is Wood Work. Both communicate key messages in an authentic, visually appealing way to resonate with stakeholders and promote positive perceptions of working in these industries. AgriFutures' Community Perceptions and Worker Experiences program could be leveraged and applied at a state level to develop a South Australia attraction campaign focused on lifting perceptions of working in agribusiness locally. More information on this opportunity can be found in Chapter 4.

¹³² PIRSA, Real Work Real Experiences, Seasonal workers post campaign, 2021

Spotlight: This is Wood Work campaign

The 'This is Wood Work' campaign, launched by the South Australian Forest Products Association, aims to reshape perceptions of the forest and timber industries while showcasing diverse career pathways in South Australian forestry. Using an interactive website featuring real stories from local individuals, the campaign resonates strongly with targeted communities, fostering engagement and interest.



To drive traffic to the website, a multi-channel advertising approach has been used, including physical ads, television ads, and social media campaigns. Notably, the campaign has expanded its reach to TikTok to engage younger audiences who might overlook traditional platforms. To effectively reduce costs and enhance efficiency, advertising efforts have specifically focused on the southeast of South Australia (where the industry is most prevalent) to ensure that the message reaches the intended demographic of school leavers and young job seekers.

Another notable distinction of this campaign is its strong emphasis on transparency regarding job roles and wages. By offering this key information alongside a comprehensive 'celebration' of the industry, potential employees can gain a clearer understanding of their priorities. Furthermore, by prioritising the customer journey, the campaign ensures that individuals who interact with the platform receive timely responses and acknowledgment. These strategies not only improve the user experience but also fosters trust, encouraging more people to explore career opportunities within the timber and forestry sectors.

By leveraging the insights gained from this campaign and other engagement initiatives such as "More to Meat," the agribusiness sector can enhance its knowledge and continue to develop effective attraction strategies, particularly in industries that have yet to adopt a similar approach.

3.2.2 Current retention initiatives

There are also several retention initiatives worth noting, as these seek to provide support to businesses to retain skilled talent already within the industry. These initiatives can be categorised into four specific areas of effort, as follows:

- Enabling career pathways.
- Facilitating graduate support programs.
- Creating workplace culture and ethics.
- Developing future focused skills.

A brief overview of each category and example initiatives are provided below.

Enabling career pathways includes initiatives that support with improving workforce professionalism and career progression to help retain workers and meet their needs. These include initiatives that offer career coaching, professional development programs and structured career pathways. For example, the AgUp Grants Program provides funding to industry and academia to develop programs that provide mentoring and upskilling opportunities, professional development programs, and wrap-around supports to those in the sector. This has been a focus for many individual businesses, with stakeholders reporting that they will look to create clear career pathways and points of progression for those workers that they see as having long-term potential in their business and the sector.

Facilitating graduate support programs include initiatives that focus on providing graduates and new employees with structured supports so that they are more likely to remain in the sector. Such supports tend to be at an individual business level, and include skill-building workshops, on the job learning, mentoring and networking. More information on business-driven programs, such as

Nutrien Ag Solutions graduate program, can be found in the section to follow. Graduate programs have the dual benefit of attracting new entrants and retaining them in the sector.

Creating workforce culture and ethics are initiatives that focus on creating workplace cultures that adopt respectful, inclusive and sustainable behaviours and practices. These initiatives include those that focus on promoting fair and ethical practices in the workplace. For example, the Cotton Industry Shift Project and Fair Farms initiative are both examples of programs that focus on shifting mindsets and behaviours to create better workplaces. This has been a focus of some individual businesses, who are adopting modern and innovative technologies to increase their ability to facilitate sustainable work practices and ergonomic work environments.

Spotlight: Sundrop client and sustainability enhancing food production and careers

Sundrop Farms, located in Port Augusta, South Australia, is a leader in sustainable agriculture, utilising innovative technology to grow high-quality crops in arid conditions. The farm employs a Concentrated Solar Power system to harness solar energy for electricity and desalination, converting seawater from the nearby Spencer Gulf into fresh water. This method significantly reduces reliance on fossil fuels and minimises water usage, highlighting the company's commitment to environmental sustainability.

In addition to its agricultural achievements, Sundrop Farms is recognised for its employment programs that create a supportive and inclusive workplace. By combining cutting-edge practices with a focus on sustainability and employee development, Sundrop Farms sets a benchmark for modern agriculture, demonstrating how technology can enhance food production in challenging climates while fostering sustainable careers within the sector.



Developing future focused skills include initiatives that support industry to develop the skills of the existing workforce so that it can continue to access highly qualified and skilled workers into the future. These initiatives often involve partnerships with industry and training providers to develop future focused skills that increase productivity, are scalable and sustainable. For example, identified programs include ForestWorks that offers skills development services for the forest, wood, paper, timber and furnishing industries. Other individual businesses, such as Viterra, have designed certified traineeship programs to continue to build a talent pipeline for the future.

Spotlight: Viterra designs a certified traineeship program¹³³

In 2022, Viterra, in collaboration with the RTO Regional Skills Training, created a new traineeship program that combines practical work experience with formal education. The traineeship offers a two-year full-time paid role, and a nationally recognised Certificate III in Rural Operations upon completion.

The program has received 363 applications to date, reflecting the strength of its clear pathways for career progression and the opportunity it offers individuals to begin their careers while continuing their education. So far, 20 trainees have commenced or completed the program, supporting Viterra in filling entry-level roles and building a strong pipeline of future talent.

Other industry groups may look to leverage this model with similar RTO providers to broaden their labour pool.



A high-level overview of attraction and retention initiatives reviewed can be found in Appendix B. While this summary is not a comprehensive list of initiatives, it canvasses those that have been considered relevant to this work.

3.2.3 Identified gaps in existing attraction and retention initiatives

While the attraction and retention initiatives discussed in the sections above provide useful supports to businesses and workers in South Australia, they have revealed several gaps. These gaps are outlined below:

- There is no combined sector/state workforce strategy and/or action plan, which means that the plethora of initiatives available may not be aligned to an overarching goal. Without this, initiatives to attract people to the sector and state may have conflicting priorities, as well as duplicate effort and resources.
- Due to the range of workforce initiatives on offer by different stakeholders, and through a range of websites, there may be inconsistencies in messaging to businesses and workers in (or entering) the sector. Websites are mainly national in scope and may not cover the breadth of opportunities available locally in South Australia. These websites also tend to focus on specific industries within the agribusiness sector. There is no state-focused agribusiness website that consolidates all information relevant to employers, workers, prospective workers, and students.
- There are several materials that have been created to build knowledge and awareness of the agribusiness sector among students; however, as they are sub-sector focused it is expected that there may be duplication across their content. It is also unclear how accessible these programs are for schools and their students, and how consistently these are introduced across the state.
- While there are national resources that provide information on migrant and overseas worker options, this topic is complex and always evolving. There is still confusion among employers on which options are the best to select in their context. While these resources require regular updated, the new information can be difficult to navigate. There is no single resource that is tailored to South Australian agribusiness that provides guidance and clearly lists the options for migrant workers and employers.
- There are several industry-focused branding and attraction campaigns that have achieved success in lifting perceptions of their industries (e.g. in red meat and forestry), however, only a few have been specific to South Australia and agribusiness (e.g., This is Wood Work).
- While there are individual businesses exploring how innovative technology can increase worker productivity, create positive working environments and enable climate friendly work practices, implementation is varied. Agribusiness sectors could explore different ways to implement technologies that support with addressing the workforce needs of the sector.

¹³³ Viterra, Viterra boosts career pathways in regional SA with traineeship program

- The limited access to higher-level education and training opportunities in some rural and regional areas continues to constrain the development of local graduates—and, ultimately, the regional workforce. For example, TAFE campuses in the Riverland currently offer no agriculture or horticulture courses, despite these sub-sectors being major components of the local economy. Improving local access to relevant training could improve the ability of local agribusinesses to develop a more sustainable pipeline of skilled workers.

To address these gaps, and the areas of opportunities they create, recommendations have been detailed in the chapter to follow.

4 Key recommendations

Five recommendations have been developed to address identified workforce barriers and challenges in agribusiness, and improve and reposition career opportunities.

There are five recommendations, along with several supporting initiatives, to encourage the agribusiness sector to partner and adopt a more coordinated approach to:

- deliver attraction and retention initiatives,
- establish partnerships with education providers to co-design and deliver initiatives,
- develop an attraction campaign that focuses on communicating the collective value brought by the sector,
- supporting businesses to access information and supports that enable them to attract and retain migrant workers and contingent labour, and
- implement strategies to drive attraction of underutilised workforces to careers in food, wine and agribusiness sectors.

Each recommendation includes a series of actions, included within a project plan to provide indicative sequencing and timing for delivery.

By addressing workforce challenges, these initiatives may lift the productivity of the agribusiness sector. While the main avenue for productivity growth in agribusiness is likely to be technological advancement and adoption – as evidenced in previous periods of high productivity growth¹³⁴ - previous studies have also shown productivity increases from:

- Higher educational attainment within the workforce (Recommendation 1.1): By increasing the share of higher-educated workers by 10 percentage points, productivity growth increased by 1.09%.¹³⁵
- Increased skilled migration (Recommendation 2): Regions with a 10% higher migrant share on average have a 1.3% larger regional wage difference.¹³⁶
- Increased workforce diversity (Recommendation 6): Companies within the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity, and gender diversity are 35% and 15%, respectively, more likely to have financial returns above their industry medians.¹³⁷

4.1 Recommendations and actions

Recommendation 1

Design a South Australian food, wine and agribusiness sector workforce strategy that addresses current and future workforce challenges and enables a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives.

¹³⁴ Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Australian Farm Productivity – Broadacre and Dairy Estimates, 2024

¹³⁵ S Kampelmann, F Rycx, Y Saks & I Tojerow, Does education raise productivity and wages equally? The moderating role of age and gender, 2018.

¹³⁶ OECS, Migration and regional productivity: Evidence from individual wages in Australia, 2023.

¹³⁷ McKinsey, Diversity Matters, 2015

***Why?** To enable a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives to address workforce gaps across the South Australian agribusiness sector and reduce any duplication of effort.*

The report recommends designing a workforce strategy to facilitate a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives to address gaps in the agribusiness workforce across South Australia. This workforce strategy should build on the existing government and industry commitments, strategies and plans to support these sectors in South Australia to attract, retain, upskill and modernise its workforce.

The workforce strategy can be used as an 'organising framework' to drive a more coordinated approach to delivering attraction and retention initiatives, determining future areas for investments, and monitoring workforce outcomes across the state and agribusiness sector. It should also play a role in clearly articulating the collective vision (government, industry, training providers, regions) for South Australia's agribusiness workforce, so that there is consistent messaging.

This recommendation is intended to help solve several challenges that arise when there is no 'north star' and overarching strategy, including duplication that can occur from initiatives being introduced in isolation, lack of clear responsibility between state government, industry or training providers in driving initiatives, and confusion among businesses and industry on what supports are available. The strategy could consider a range of attraction and retention initiatives that are tailored to small and medium sized businesses, or to specific cohorts of potential workers.

***What?** There are several actions that can be taken to further explore and implement this recommendation, as outlined below.*

To implement a workforce strategy that provides a more coordinated approach to attracting people to the sector, state government can work with industry to:

- Clearly articulate the collective vision (government, industry, training providers, regions) for South Australia's future agribusiness workforce.
- Identify the specific focus areas that can be used to guide investments in the workforce, to achieve the collective vision and ensure a targeted approach is being taken to attract, retain and grow skills needed now and in the future.
- Determine what current and future workforce skills are required to support growth and productivity across agribusiness, including the extent to which there are gaps in the existing workforce.
- Deliver other initiatives that support with communicating and implementing the strategy, and contribute to achieving its outcomes that focus on attracting and retaining current and future workforce skills, including improving community perceptions of the sector and highlighting the diverse career opportunities available.

***Who?** The strategy should articulate the shared commitment and responsibility across key stakeholders to help address barriers to attracting and retaining people to the sector and identifying opportunities for potential productivity gains.*

The design of a sector and state-focused workforce strategy can be driven by state government in partnership with industry, and with investment from industry, training providers and regions. This investment would be through providing time and resources to ensure the strategy is fit for purpose and will meet South Australia's agribusiness workforce needs.

For example, investment could involve:

- State government coordinating the design of the workforce strategy, ensuring that all key stakeholders provide input and are clear on their contribution.
- Industry investing time to co-design the strategy by actively engaging in its development and providing key inputs to ensure that it meets future workforce needs. Guidance and templates to support workforce planning at an enterprise level could also be designed as part of this process.
- Regional stakeholders investing time in stress-testing the strategy, with a focus on drawing links to local initiatives and what is possible to achieve in different parts of South Australia.
- Training providers providing key resources as they relate to education and training initiatives, and engaging with industry to determine what needs to change to develop the skills needed now and in the future.

This investment, with state government having a strong coordination role, may lead to several benefits that could produce productivity gains. These benefits could include:

- Time savings through streamlined workforce initiatives implemented across South Australia, which makes accessing and engaging with initiatives easier for local businesses.
- Cost savings through removing duplication of workforce initiatives that focus on achieving the same outcomes but are being delivered by different stakeholders. This could generate productivity gains by producing more coordinated workforce initiatives with less cost.
- Clearer agreement across state government, industry, regions and training providers on responsibility for the delivery of various workforce outcomes, to eliminate confusion and drive implementation. This may well result in time and cost savings that improve productivity. It also may achieve clearer accountability over the performance of initiatives and efforts to refine them to improve attraction outcomes.
- Enhanced attraction, retention and development initiatives that target identified current and future workforce skills gaps.
- Increased engagement and satisfaction from businesses, as well as current and future workers, who have confidence in the state's approach to solving workforce needs, and increasing visibility of available supports and how to access these.

Supporting initiatives: A digital platform has been identified as key to support the implementation and delivery of the workforce strategy after its development.

The digital platform initiative is intended to be implemented once the workforce strategy has been developed, to support with its implementation and delivery.

1.1 Build a digital platform that consolidates key agribusiness information on education, employment and employer opportunities and supports.

Consideration could be given to the development of a digital platform that consolidates key agribusiness information relating to the workforce strategy for education providers, employers and potential workers. This platform is intended to make it easier for stakeholders to navigate information on the sector, workforce supports and resources, career pathways/job opportunities, and upcoming events.

The digital platform would house the agribusiness workforce strategy and short videos that share stories on what people love about working in the sector. It should be interactive and engaging, with videos and journey maps to support future workers to visualise the diverse range of opportunities on offer and to support education and industry partners to communicate these.

Spotlight: South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Action Plan (2024)

South Australia has introduced a South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Action Plan that provides a coordinated approach to how the state will build, grow and retain its skilled defence workforce. The plan contains 22 initiatives that are intended to meet current workforce demands while planning for the future. These initiatives have been designed through collaboration with industry and government.

This co-investment is being driven by the need to grow the defence workforce by approximately 11,000 roles by 2040. Initiatives range from those that seek to attract people to the sector, to those that look to engage students while they are at school.

This plan has offered the sector a central point of coordination where government, in partnership with industry, can deliver on these initiatives.



Recommendation 2

Establish stronger partnerships with education providers to co-design and deliver initiatives that inspire and equip students to pursue careers in agribusiness.

***Why?** South Australia's agribusiness sector faces growing demand for a skilled, adaptable workforce, yet student awareness of career pathways into the industry remain limited. A stronger, more deliberate partnership between the agribusiness sector and education providers is essential to embed agribusiness into mainstream education, ensuring students can explore, understand, and transition into rewarding careers.*

Once the workforce strategy is developed, this report recommends that the agribusiness sector focusses on fostering stronger partnerships with education providers to introduce scalable programs that strategically promote education pathways, career pathways and ongoing learning opportunities in agribusiness. This promotion will be important to build awareness among students while they are in school or higher education. The programs introduced should be aligned to the initiatives within the workforce strategy and State Government policies. This approach must go beyond ad-hoc initiatives to deliver sustained, systemic engagement across schools, universities and RTOs. Some examples of programs that could be considered are outlined below.

At school, the expansion of programs that provide work integrated learning opportunities for students should be considered, such as the EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture program. The EXCITED 4 Careers program was found to have positively shifted students' considerations of the agriculture industry.¹³⁸ The role of the Lead Ag Teacher could also be expanded to further build partnerships with schools to deliver agriculture education within the curriculum. These programs and supports, in addition to current State Government initiatives, enable students to gain hands-on experience, develop industry connections and enhance their employability as a graduate.

At university, stronger partnerships could be formed to showcase the sector and its career opportunities in courses that are less focused on primary industries but are seen as critical skills for the broader agribusiness sector (e.g., engineering, technology, science). Other ways to interest students include promoting 'extra curriculars' such as the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association Global Case Study Competition which encourages students to collaborate across disciplines to solve real-world problems facing agribusiness through a global platform.

¹³⁸ Australian Government's National Careers Institute, Excited 4 Careers in Agriculture Summary Snapshot, 2024

It is important to acknowledge the South Australian Department for Education is already exploring and implementing a range of initiatives and resources that enable stronger partnerships with education providers. These could be further considered and/or expanded for the agribusiness sector.

***What?** Several actions can be taken to further explore and implement this recommendation, as outlined below.*

To foster stronger partnerships with education providers to introduce scalable, strategic programs that promote education and career pathways and catalyse enduring change, the agribusiness sector can:

- Co-invest in the expansion and scaling of proven programs, such as EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture, to ensure students across South Australia, particularly in regional areas, have consistent access to hands-on, work integrated learning experiences.
- Co-develop targeted initiatives in tertiary institutions, especially in non-agricultural disciplines such as engineering, technology, science and business, to raise visibility of agribusiness as a viable and attractive career path.
- Identify key stakeholders from schools, universities and RTOs who can play a lead role in partnering with the agribusiness sector to raise awareness of and implement the programs.
- Form a state-level Education and Workforce Partnership Group, comprising representatives from government, industry, and education providers, tasked with identifying scalable models, coordinating delivery, and aligning initiatives with sector needs and workforce forecasts.
- Deliver a joint communications strategy, linked to a wider agribusiness attraction campaign, enabling schools, universities, and training providers to actively promote sector opportunities through tailored content, events and engagement.
- Provide ongoing funding to support the Lead Agricultural Teacher function, to ensure dedicated leadership, coordination, and sector expertise in promoting agricultural education across the state.
- Establish shared monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, enabling data-driven decision making, accountability for outcomes, and a compelling case for ongoing investment.

***Who?** It will be important for the agribusiness sector to introduce strategic programs, while making it clear the role that industry and training providers play in the delivery of these programs, and in communicating career opportunities more broadly.*

The agribusiness sector can partner with education providers to introduce programs that focus on a diverse range of career opportunities. This investment would be through time, input, policy alignment and resources to ensure the attraction campaign is delivered with impact.

For example, investment could involve:

- Investing funds to support development programs that can be scaled across education sectors in South Australia.
- Investing time, knowledge and resources to co-design and deliver programs, mentor students, and embed real-world relevance into learning experiences.
- Facilitating connections with education providers, as key implementation partners, to integrate programs, host industry events, and link students to pathways.

Investment from the agribusiness sector may lead to several benefits that could produce productivity gains. These benefits include:

- Stronger partnerships, increasing the reach, consistency, coordination and visibility of agribusiness pathways across the state. .
- Enhanced student employability with earlier, deeper engagement in agribusiness careers, leading to a faster, more confident transition into the workforce.
- Informed investment decisions, through robust evaluation data on program performance and impact.

- A stronger, more resilient agribusiness workforce pipeline, positioning South Australia as a national leader in skills development for the sector.

Spotlight: EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture¹³⁹

EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture is an initiative developed by CQUniversity and supported by a National Careers Institute Partnership grant, which aims to increase awareness and interest in agricultural career opportunities among K-10 students in regional and rural communities.

The program utilises Holland's RIASEC model to facilitate students' exploration of agricultural careers through a series of hands-on activities and workplace excursions. By employing this model, the initiative helps students connect their personal interests and strengths to various potential futures in agriculture. Furthermore, collaboration with industry partners and universities broadened the knowledge share throughout the program, which contributed to its overall success.

In 2023, 32 schools across Australia participated in the initiative, and approximately 69.7% of students and teachers reported a better understanding of agricultural work and the range of occupations it encompasses. The positive feedback and engagement suggests that EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture could be expanded further to reach more students, enhancing their awareness of opportunities.



Recommendation 3

Develop an attraction campaign that focuses on communicating the collective value brought by the sector and the diversity of career opportunities.

***Why?** To create consistent messaging that is specific to South Australia and the agribusiness sector as a whole, focused on lifting perceptions of the sector and repositioning career opportunities and pathways.*

The report recommends developing an attraction campaign that focuses on educating and inspiring people to consider a career in the agribusiness sector. This campaign could be developed after the workforce strategy, so that it effectively communicates consistent messaging that is aligned to the sector's overarching position on how it intends to attract and retain workers to solve specific skills and business needs. This campaign could also drive attraction to the sector by highlighting opportunities such as emerging roles in agritourism, AgTech and artificial intelligence, and by improving community perceptions of the sector.

The attraction campaign could be communicated through the stronger partnerships established with education and training providers, so that they have clear messaging and materials to share information on the diverse career opportunities in the sector and the education and training pathways that enable students to access these. The campaign could also draw on existing work undertaken by state government to develop a communications campaign and '[industry toolkit](#)' to support businesses deliver key messages. These industry toolkits can be found on the South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions website but may require some revision to align with the workforce strategy and its messaging.

Other materials that could be developed as part of the attraction campaign include short video promotions where businesses and workers showcase the exciting and rewarding work they do each day. A short video could also focus on how students' education and training provide a pathway into the agribusiness workforce.

¹³⁹ Australian Government's National Careers Institute, EXCITED 4 Careers in Agriculture program Summary Snapshot, 2024

Communicating a consistent message and a strong narrative through short videos (among other mediums) could be used to improve job advertisements, enhance first impressions, increase the sector's social media 'hiring' presence and generally increase interest in the sector.

***What?** There are several actions that can be taken to further explore and implement this recommendation, as outlined below.*

To implement an attraction campaign that excites and educates people, the agribusiness sector can:

- Develop a compelling narrative that highlights the sector's positive attributes and key messages that showcase the potential career opportunities and addresses any misconceptions.
- Design engaging and visually appealing creative assets, such as logos, visuals, and taglines that align with the narrative and key messaging.
- Build high-quality content, including articles, short videos, and social media posts, that educate and inspire audiences to consider career pathways in the sector.
- Form partnerships with industry associations, universities, RTOs and schools to distribute content through a range of avenues.
- Track the attraction campaign to see what people are engaging with (e.g., on social media) and the demographics of viewers.

***Who?** The attraction campaign should be led by the agribusiness sector with responsibility distributed across all stakeholders.*

The agribusiness sector can deliver an attraction campaign that supports the sector to lift perceptions of agribusiness and communicate the diverse career opportunities. This investment would be through providing time and resources to ensure the attraction campaign is delivered with impact.

For example, investment can involve:

- Investing funds to support the development of the attraction campaign (e.g., used to support staffing the development of the campaign and/or access specialist expertise).
- Providing key input to develop the attraction campaign (e.g., content for short videos and social media posts), resolve concerns and/or perceptions that impact the choice to work in the sector.
- Providing people resources to develop and deliver the attraction campaign.

This investment from the agribusiness sector may lead to several benefits that could produce productivity gains. These benefits include:

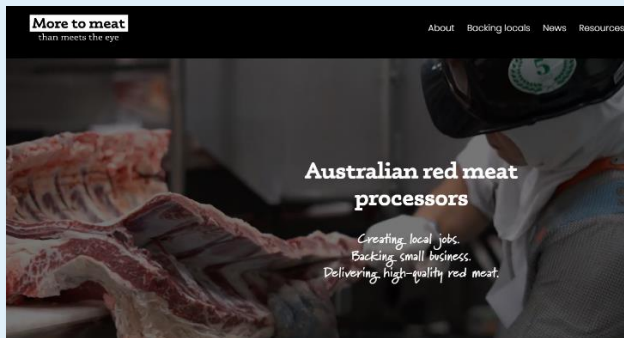
- Time savings through streamlined communication and/or key messaging across the agribusiness sector.
- Increased talent pool that can be used to access to more candidates and match them to critical skill sets. Time can be saved through the centralised nature of this talent pool, e.g. via people expressing interest through the attraction campaign (e.g., website that has an expression of interest section).
- Strengthened public image of agribusiness occupations, achieved by industry drawing on its knowledge of the sector to lead the design of this campaign. This could increase workers' sense of pride in the industry and the business they work for, and therefore lead to productivity gains.

Spotlight: More to Meat than meets the eye campaign to raise perceptions and increase jobs¹⁴⁰

More to Meat is a campaign run by the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC) aimed at promoting the essential role of red meat processors in regional communities across Australia. Launched in August 2022, the campaign highlights the significant contributions of the red meat processing industry to local economies.

Using outdoor billboards, regional newspaper ads, social media, and video content, the initiative showcases personal stories from employees about their career experiences and progression. This outreach seeks to attract new talent and raise awareness of the industry's importance.

According to the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC), public support for red meat processors has risen dramatically from its implementation. Almost all of those who have seen the campaign say it has convinced them to think differently (83%), and two-thirds say they are more likely to support the industry (63%). This suggests the campaign's messaging and advertising is successfully changing perceptions of the industry, and similar methods could be beneficial if adopted more widely across the agribusiness sector.



Recommendation 4

Play a more significant role in supporting businesses to access information and supports that enable them to attract and retain migrant and overseas workers.

***Why?** To better support employers with understanding their options as it relates to hiring and retaining migrant and overseas workers, including the supports available to them, through one single resource tailored to their context and needs.*

This report recommends that the agribusiness sector can play a more significant role in supporting businesses to access information and support that enables them to better understand their options when hiring migrant and overseas workers and retaining them. Employers have acknowledged that migrant workers are important to meet immediate business demands and solve for local skills shortages. However, there are many ways to access these workers which at times is confusing for employers.

The agribusiness sector can consider ways to consolidate information available on migration in a more digestible format, to support businesses to navigate their options as it relates to migrant recruitment, and the steps required to access and retain workers through various visas, schemes, and region-based labour agreements. For example, this could involve providing information on which visas are most applicable in different agribusiness contexts, visa changes, or what is required of employers to support migrant workers. This consolidated information on migration could be stored in a centralised digital platform so that employers and migrants can easily access this information. The digital platform could also host key information on the

¹⁴⁰ Australian Meat Processor Corporation, More to meat campaign's latest research results

South Australian agribusiness workforce strategy (discussed above), and could be interactive in nature (e.g., include an interactive geographical map outlining the coverage areas of all South Australian Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs).

The intent of this recommendation is to resolve challenges faced by employers when hiring migrant and overseas workers, including a lack of knowledge of the diverse sponsorship opportunities available and the time taken, as reported by employers, in navigating these processes. These migration focused initiatives need to align with the attraction and retention initiatives outlined within the workforce strategy.

***What?** There are several actions that can be taken to further explore and implement this recommendation, as outlined below.*

To play a more substantive role in supporting businesses to access information and supports, the agribusiness sector can:

- Develop an agribusiness guide that consolidates information for businesses on the types of migration employment options available (e.g., visas, schemes, regional agreements) that are suitable for the sector and in South Australia.
- Develop materials, including fact sheets, checklists and FAQs that complement the agribusiness guide, to provide further support to businesses to navigate the range of migration employment options and their processes.
- Create an online platform to host these materials and socialise the platform with employers and their businesses through industry forums (refer to recommendation 1).

***Who?** The development of information on migration should be driven by the agribusiness sector to make it more accessible.*

The agribusiness sector can play a lead role in equipping businesses with information to more easily understand and access migrant workforce options. This investment would be through input to ensure that the advice provided to businesses is aligned with state and Commonwealth Government migration policy, schemes and agreements.

For example, investment can involve:

- Providing guidance and/or information as it relates to regional migration agreements.
- Facilitating connections with Commonwealth Government stakeholders who can provide information and/or review advice to ensure its alignment with policy, schemes and visas.
- Investing workforce resources to develop tailored information for businesses.
- Taking actions to promote the guide and share it with businesses across South Australia.

This investment may lead to several benefits that could produce productivity gains. These benefits include:

- Increased decision-making capacity and/or speed for businesses selecting a type of migration option based on work duration and type of skill set.
- Increased understanding among businesses on options for accessing migrant workers, and how to complete these processes, to fill critical workforce gaps. This may support with matching migrant workers to vacant positions.
- Increased retention of skilled workers through the transition from temporary visas to permanent visas, as businesses have clear guidance on how to undertake this process and when.

***Supporting initiatives:** Other initiatives have been identified as key to support the sector with attracting and retaining migrant workers.*

To support with building awareness of the information available on migrant hiring options, and with accessing this information, the following initiatives could also be considered and explored further.

2.1 Establishing a dedicated point of contact that is knowledgeable and can support businesses with filling vacancies through skilled migration pathways.

This recommendation could see a specific contact point, that is knowledgeable and understands migration requirements in South Australia, who can provide additional guidance and support to what is in the sector specific resource. This role could provide guidance on accessing and understanding the relevant skilled migration visa options, including those which are relevant to SA:

- Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190)
- Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491)
- Skilled Employer Sponsored visa (subclass 186) – Labour Agreement stream
- Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional visa (subclass 494) – Employer Sponsored and Labour Agreement streams.

This contact could also provide supports to navigate skills shortage classifications and how businesses can align their workforce needs to eligible occupations. A dedicated contact could also be assigned to a specific region, as a service for regional employers to provide end-to-end support to identify the right visa pathways, complete applications and understand compliance obligations.

It could be worth exploring existing roles (e.g., the Migrant Resource Centres) to see if it makes sense for these stakeholders to expand their existing services to include more targeted supports for employers navigating skilled migration pathways.

2.2 Facilitating regional workshops and roadshows to improve employer understanding of sponsored visa programs.

Regional workshops could be facilitated in partnership with Regional Development Australia (RDA), Local Government Areas (LGAs), Migrant Resource Centres in Regional Areas and the Department of Home Affairs to clarify the requirements of employers sponsoring skilled migrants, and to increase awareness of how different visas help businesses recruit internationally (or retain skilled temporary visa holders already working locally). These workshops could also be used to raise awareness of the consolidated information available to employers looking to attract or retain migrant workers, as well as other supports available in regional locations.

An annual roadshow could also be coordinated in partnership with the Department of Home Affairs, the South Australian Government, and RDA to provide updated information to employers and key stakeholders on migration related policy changes, DAMAs, and skilled migration trends.

It could be helpful to have a dedicated liaison to work with relevant South Australian Government departments and other stakeholders to coordinate engagement and communication with regions and ensure that information on events is promoted, published and accessible.

2.3 Exploring opportunities to increase the migration number assigned to South Australia.

The South Australian Skills Commission noted that South Australia receives 3,800 general skilled migrants per financial year, of which:

- 3,000 are Skilled Nominated visas
- 800 are Skilled work Regional visas

The agribusiness sector could explore opportunities to increase the migration number nominated to enable access to more skilled migrant workers.

2.4 Developing a statewide skilled migration workforce register to share skills needs.

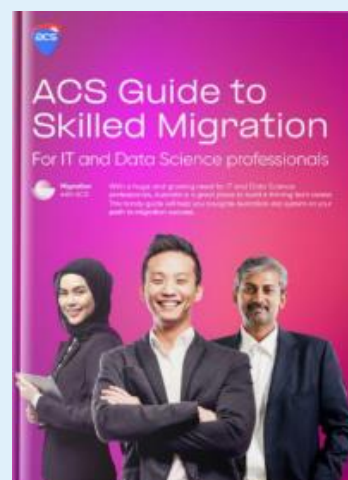
The development of a statewide skilled migration workforce register could be further considered and explored. This register could enable employers to access a live, centralised register to determine if there are migrant workers (who already have visas) looking for work and with the required qualification / skill set. Employers could also use this register to share / advertise available positions and skill needs.

Spotlight: ACS Guide to Skilled Migration (for IT and Data Science Professionals)

The ACS Guide to Skilled Migration is a vital resource from the Australian Computer Society (ACS) for international IT and Data Science professionals looking to migrate to Australia. It outlines the key steps in the migration process, particularly focusing on the ACS Migration Skills Assessment, which is essential for obtaining a skilled work visa in this industry.

By assisting applicants in understanding the qualifications and experience required for various roles, the guide simplifies the migration journey, making it more approachable and encouraging for a greater number of applicants. Furthermore, by educating potential migrants on the requirements for obtaining a visa, it alleviates some pressure off businesses to communicate what is needed.

The agribusiness industry could leverage the structure and insights from this guide to develop a similar resource for incoming agribusiness applicants. Such an initiative would streamline the process and potentially attract more skilled migrants. Additionally, creating a guide for employers could help them understand how to effectively utilise and benefit from incoming migrant workforce.



Recommendation 5

Implement strategies to drive attraction of underutilised workforces to careers in the food, wine and agribusiness sectors.

Why? To ensure that targeted strategies are included within the South Australian workforce strategy that focus on attracting female, First Nations and senior/retired/part time workers.

This report recommends that the agribusiness sector explore opportunities to attract and retain workers from underutilised cohorts. Specifically, the agribusiness sector could explore opportunities that support women to enter (or re-enter) the workforce, First Nations people to participate in meaningful and culturally aligned training and employment, and older/part time workers to remain engaged through flexible work arrangements.

For example, attracting women to jobs in the agribusiness sector could be done through introducing an industry sponsored mentoring program, where women can receive 1:1 mentoring from women working in the sector so that they can successfully transition to the workplace. An industry supported 'return to work' program for women who have recently had children but would like to return to work could also be considered.¹⁴¹

Strategies to attract First Nations people into the sector could consider both (1) training and (2) employment. For example, industry and RTOs could partner to develop training that is responsive to employment needs, but is carefully curated to create meaningful connections for First Nations people between their culture and employment opportunities in agribusiness. This training and the related employment opportunities could be specific to regional and remote areas where communities are located so that First Nations people can more easily access these and learn on-Country (e.g., removing barriers with transportation). Similarly, further consideration could be given to involve more First Nations people in the development and delivery of training so that they can draw cultural connections to the classroom content.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, [Actions: Recruitment and engagement strategies to attract women](#), 2022

¹⁴² Jobs and Skills Australia, An essential ingredient. The food supply chain workforce, 2025.

One example, Tauondi Aboriginal College is already investigating how it can reintroduce more agribusiness courses that are specifically aligned to the culture of First Nations people.

Strategies could also be focused on attracting and retaining older and/or part time workers to the sector through the introduction of more flexible working arrangements or extra leave options. The intent is to enable older workers to better balance work with other leisure activities, as well as to reduce possible fatigue. The sector could also explore further opportunities to redesign how work is performed so that it can optimise the performance of older and/or part time workers.¹⁴³

Consideration and implementation of attraction and retention strategies for underutilised workforces will support the sector to contribute to South Australia's vision to build "an economy that is smart, sustainable and inclusive".

***What?** There are several actions that can be taken to further explore and implement this recommendation, as outlined below.*

To further explore opportunities to attract (and retain) underutilised workforces, the agribusiness sector could:

- Undertake further research to determine which regions in South Australia require the most targeted support to attract and retain underutilised workforces.
- Explore the types of attraction and retention initiatives that are best suited to these specific locations in terms of their workforce and employment needs.
- Consider establishing a working group to continuously discuss different approaches to increasing participation of these workforces in the agribusiness sector.
- Consider how these initiatives should be reflected in the broader South Australian food, wine and agribusiness sector workforce strategy, and their alignment to Commonwealth Government strategies (e.g., the development of a National Statement on First Nations in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry that considers the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the National Skills Agreement).

***Who?** This recommendation could be led by the agribusiness sector and integrated within the South Australian agribusiness sector workforce strategy.*

The agribusiness sector can collaborate to explore and introduce a range of initiatives to support with attracting and retaining these workforces.

For example, investment by key stakeholders in this exploration could involve:

- Providing key input to explore and develop initiatives that are tailored to underutilised cohorts of workers.
- Providing human resources to undertake this exploration task, workshop potential initiatives and consider these in the context of the broader workforce strategy.
- Providing funding to deliver these initiatives once they have been agreed on by the sector.

This investment may lead to several benefits that could produce productivity gains. These benefits include:

- Increased talent pool that can be accessed by employers in regional and remote locations.
- Strengthened support programs for underutilised workforces, increasing their productivity on entering and working in the sector.
- Increased number of skilled workers entering the workforce, having completing training that resonates with their culture and is responsive to their needs.

¹⁴³ Office of Industrial Relations, Ageing Workforce Report: Employer readiness to support the needs of Australia's ageing workforce, 2019.

Spotlight: Queensland Women in Agriculture Leadership Program

The Queensland Women in Agriculture Leadership program is funded by the Queensland Government's Women in Industry grant. The program encourages women in the sector to undergo 12 months of training to support them to take on leadership roles. The program is based on the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management, and gives women opportunities to attend online and in-person training, networking events and receive mentorship from other women in the sector.

This program focuses on retaining women in the sector by providing them with support to progress into leadership roles. It is also a helpful initiative to attract women to the sector, as it shows opportunities are available for those who would like to take on leadership positions in the future.

4.2 Project plan

A project plan has been developed to provide an indicative sequence of each recommendation and its corresponding actions. The project plan considers the delivery of each recommendation over two horizons. The first horizon looks at what can reasonably be looked at in the short-term (6-12 months). The second horizon focuses on those actions that should be completed in the longer-term (1+ years). Figure 4.1 below captures the project plan, including those actions across initiatives that can be undertaken concurrently as they look to leverage work across each recommendation.

Figure 4.1: High-level project plan

Recommendation	Action	Short-term (6-12 months)	Long-term (1 – 2 years)
Recommendation 1: Workforce strategy	1.1 Articulate the collective vision for SA's future agribusiness workforce.		
	1.2. Identify specific focus areas that can be used to guide investments and initiatives.		
	1.3. Determine what current and future workforce skills are required.		
	1.4. Deliver other supporting initiatives that support with communicating and implementing the strategy.		
Recommendation 2: Partnerships with education providers	2.1. Co-invest in the expansion and scaling of proven programs.		
	2.2. Co-develop targeted initiatives in tertiary institutions.		
	2.3. Identify key stakeholders from education providers to promote programs and opportunities.		
	2.4. Form a state-level Education and Workforce Partnership Group		
	2.5. Deliver a joint communications strategy, linked to a wider agribusiness attraction campaign.		
	2.6. Provide ongoing funding to support the Lead Agricultural Teacher function.		
	2.7. Establish shared monitoring and evaluation mechanisms		
Recommendation 3: Attraction campaign	3.1. Develop a compelling narrative that highlights the sectors positive attributes.		
	3.2. Design engaging and visually appealing creative assets.		
	3.3. Build high-quality content, including articles, short videos and social media posts		
	3.4. Form partnerships with industry associations, universities, RTOs and schools to distribute.		
	3.5. Track the attraction campaign to see what people are engaging with		
Recommendation 4: Migrant and overseas worker information	4.1. Develop a primary industries sector guide that consolidates information for businesses.		
	4.2. Develop materials to provide further supports to businesses to navigate migrant options.		
	4.3. Create online platform to host materials and socialize with businesses.		
Recommendation 5: Strategies to attract underutilised workforces	5.1. Undertake further research to determine which regions in SA require most targeted support.		
	5.2. Explore the types of attraction and retention initiatives best suited to specific locations and cohorts.		
	5.3. Consider establishing a working group to continuously discuss different approaches to increasing participation		
	5.4. Consider how these initiatives should be reflected in the broader SA sector workforce strategy		

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Appendix A Defining agribusiness

Table A. 1 Agribusiness related industries

	ANZSIC code Industry name
010	Agriculture nfd
011	Nursery and Floriculture Production
012	Mushroom and Vegetable Growing
013	Fruit and Tree Nut Growing
014	Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming
015	Other Crop Growing
016	Dairy Cattle Farming
017	Poultry Farming
018	Deer Farming
019	Other Livestock Farming
020	Aquaculture
030	Forestry and Logging
040	Fishing, Hunting and Trapping nfd
041	Fishing
042	Hunting and Trapping
050	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Support Services nfd
051	Forestry Support Services
052	Agriculture and Fishing Support Services
110	Food Product Manufacturing nfd
111	Meat and Meat Product Manufacturing
112	Seafood Processing
113	Dairy Product Manufacturing
114	Fruit and Vegetable Processing
115	Oil and Fat Manufacturing
116	Grain Mill and Cereal Product Manufacturing
117	Bakery Product Manufacturing
118	Sugar and Confectionery Manufacturing
119	Other Food Product Manufacturing
121	Beverage Manufacturing
141	Log Sawmilling and Timber Dressing
149	Other Wood Product Manufacturing
A00	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing nfd

Table A. 2 Agribusiness related occupations

ANZSCO code	Occupation name
121111	Aquaculture Farmer
121311	Apiarist
121312	Beef Cattle Farmer
121313	Dairy Cattle Farmer
121314	Deer Farmer
121315	Goat Farmer
121316	Horse Breeder
121318	Pig Farmer
121321	Poultry Farmer
121322	Sheep Farmer
121323	Mixed Cattle and Sheep Farmer
121399	Livestock Farmers nec
121511	Cotton Grower
121512	Grain, Oilseed, Pulse or Pasture Grower / Field Crop Grower
121513	Sugar Cane Grower
121599	Broadacre Crop Growers nec
121611	Flower Grower
121612	Fruit Grower
121613	Nut Grower
121614	Production Nursery Grower
121615	Turf Grower
121616	Vegetable Grower (Aus) / Market Gardener (NZ)
121617	Wine Grape Grower
121699	Horticultural Crop Growers nec
121711	Broadacre Crop and Livestock Farmer
121799	Mixed Production Farmers nec
133511	Production Manager (Forestry)
234113	Forester / Forest Scientist
234115	Agronomist
234212	Food Technologist
234213	Wine Maker
311112	Agricultural and Agritech Technician
311113	Animal Husbandry Technician
311114	Aquaculture or Fisheries Technician
311311	Fisheries Officer
311312	Meat Inspector
351111	Baker
351112	Pastrycook

ANZSCO code	Occupation name
362511	Arborist
363111	Aquaculture Supervisor
363112	Fishing Leading Hand
363113	Forestry Operations Supervisor
363114	Horticultural Supervisor or Specialist
363115	Senior Broadacre Crop and Livestock Farm Worker
363116	Senior Broadacre Crop Farm Worker
363117	Vineyard Supervisor
363199	Senior Aquaculture, Crop and Forestry Workers nec
363211	Senior Beef Cattle Station Worker
363212	Senior Cattle and Sheep Farm Worker
363213	Senior Dairy Cattle Farm Worker
363214	Senior Piggery Stockperson
363215	Senior Sheep Farm Worker
363299	Senior Livestock Farm Workers nec
363311	Shearer
363312	Wool Classer
711313	Sawmilling Operator
711314	Other Wood Processing Machine Operator
721111	Agricultural and Horticultural Mobile Plant Operator
721112	Logging Plant Operator
831211	Meat Boner and Slicer
831212	Slaughterer
842211	Cotton Farm Worker
842214	Grain, Oilseed, Pulse and Pasture Farm Worker (Aus) / Field Farm Worker (NZ)
842217	Sugar Cane Farm Worker
842222	Vineyard Worker
842311	Beef Cattle Farm Worker
842312	Cattle and Sheep Farm Worker
842313	Dairy Cattle Farm Worker
842314	Livestock Husbandry Worker
842315	Piggery Farm Worker
842316	Poultry Farm Worker
842317	Sheep Farm Worker
843111	Forestry Worker
843112	Logging Assistant
899211	Deck Hand
899212	Fishing Hand

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of all agribusiness related occupations in shortage. Occupations that may experience industry crossover, but work primarily outside agribusiness have not been included, i.e. Veterinarians who primarily work with household pets

Table A. 3 Agribusiness fields of education

Field of education code	Field of education name
0501	Agriculture
0503	Horticulture and viticulture
0505	Forestry studies
0507	Fisheries studies
0599	Other agriculture, environmental and related studies

Appendix B Current and previous initiatives

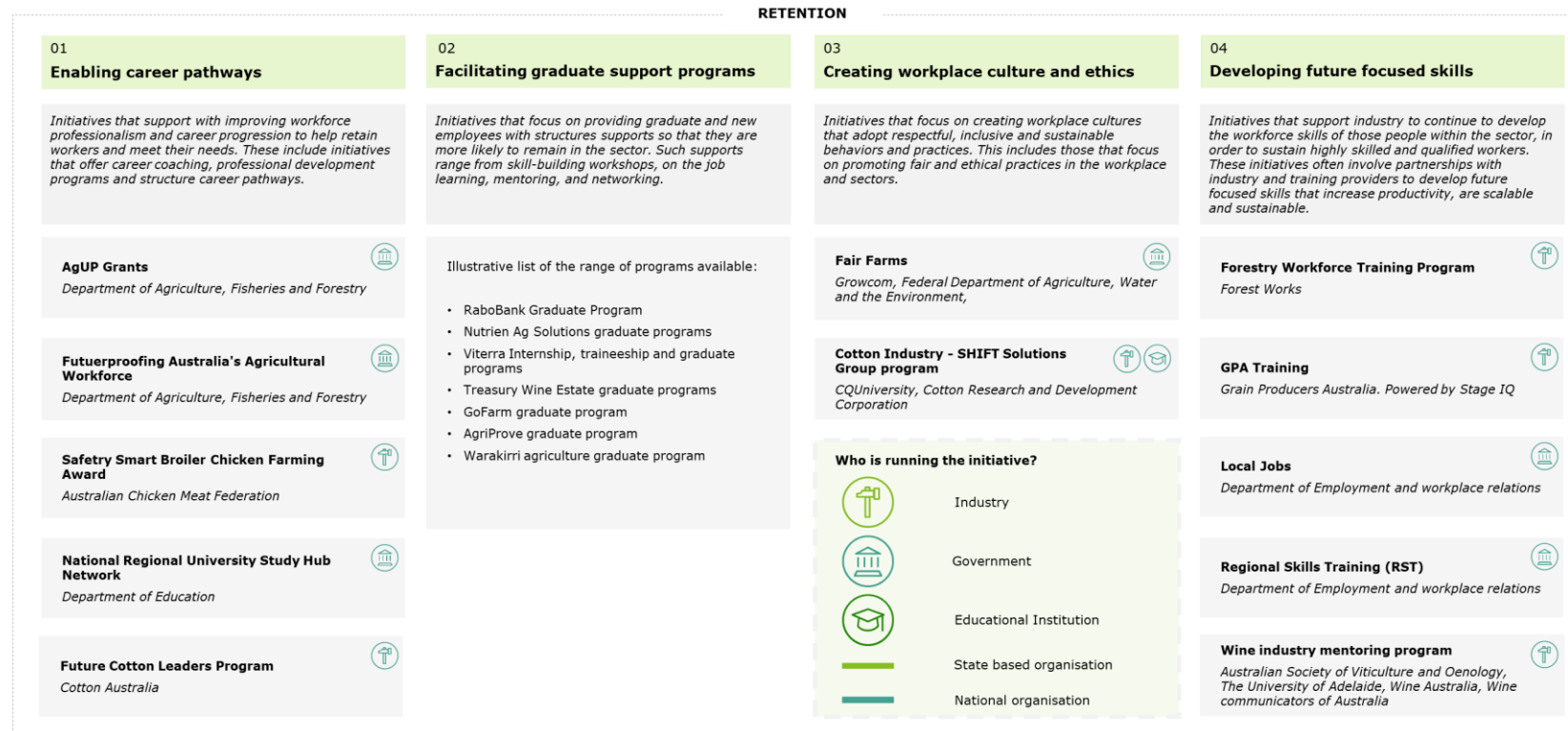
B.1. Previous initiatives

Previous and current Initiatives considered

Attraction initiatives analysed

ATTRACTION			
01	02	03	04
Creating awareness of job opportunities	Transitioning from education to work	Enabling migration and overseas workers	Lifting community perceptions
Initiatives that focus on promoting the diverse range of career opportunities in primary industries. These initiatives showcase job opportunities, share information on career pathways, and provide resources to support people with exploring their options. SA Ag Careers Hub AgCommunicators, National Careers Institute Careers in Viticulture and Wine Hub Wine Australia Your Career Website National Careers Institute SARDI Opportunities Department of Primary Industries and Regions Career Mapping Project National Careers Institute Regional Workforce Connector Program Regional Development Australia Accelerating Regional Employment Program Regional Development Australia Dairy Jobs Matter Dairy Australia Seafood Careers Australia Seafood Industry Australia and Australian Government Thriving Regions Fund Department of Primary Industries and Regions Aboriginal Fisheries Career Pathway Program Department of Primary Industries and Regions Local Jobs place-based initiative Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Who is running the initiative? - Industry - Government - Educational Institution - State based organisation - National organisation	Initiatives that focus on providing students with practical experience and exposure to real-life primary industry settings. These initiatives focus on building the knowledge and interest of students, through targeted curriculum, site visits, guest speakers, and networking with industry. Regional Careers Tours Study Adelaide Wool 4 School Australian Wool Institute Cows Create Careers Program Dairy Australia Educating Kids About Agriculture program Primary Producers SA Educating Kids About Agriculture program Primary Producers SA AgUP Grants Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Woolmark Learning Centre Australian Wool Institute Agricultural, animal and vet sciences career expo AgCommunicators Science Investigation Awards AgCommunicators IntoAg AgInnovate Wine industry work experience program Agcommunicators, Wine Australia and the University of Adelaide Teacher Farm Experience Program Rabobank AgCAREERSTART National Farmers Federation, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Farm VR experiences Think Digital Eyre Peninsula internship in applied grains research Agricultural Innovation & Research Eyre Peninsula Graeme Pope: Pigs in Schools The University of Adelaide Flexible Industry Pathways TAFE SA Growing the Future - mentoring program AUASA Primezone Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia Farm Safety Project Regional Development Australia Forest Learning Australian Forest Education Alliance (AFEA) Horizon Scholarship AgriFutures School Wether Challenge Australian Wool Institute, Merino South Australia Cultivating futures: Engaging secondary school students in the world of agricultural careers AgriFutures ExcITED 4 Careers in Agriculture Australian Government's National Careers Institute E.W. Stevens Trust Primary Producers SA Ag Trade Apprenticeship Project Skills Insights Cotton Gap Cotton Australia 2024 Student Compendium The University of Adelaide, Ag Institute Australia Junior Heifer Expo and SA Sheep Expo Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA Inc Skilled Agriculture Work Liaison Pilot Program Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Limestone Coast Technical College Department of Education Career Education and Pathways Strategy Department of Education	Initiatives that focus on supporting businesses to diversify their workforces, fill skill gaps and meet labour market demands. These include those that facilitate entry to Australia and those that provide ongoing supports. Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 2024-2025 Permanent Migration Program Department of Home Affairs (DHA) Working Holiday Visa (Subclass 417) Department of Home Affairs (DHA) South Australian Regional Workforce Agreement South Australian Government / Commonwealth Government Community Support Program SA Australian Migrant Resource Centre Skills for Education and Employment Program Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	Initiatives that focus on understanding and addressing community perceptions, to better inform how the sector attracts and retains workers. These initiatives focus on how to best position the sector and its workforce opportunities for different community groups. Royal Show Education Foundation Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA Inc Community perceptions and worker experience program AgriFutures Australia Agricultural Town of the Year Award Department of Primary Industries and Regions More to meat Australian Meat Processor Corporation This is Wood Work South Australian Forest Products Association Industry Toolkit Department of Primary Industries and Regions Real Work Real Experiences Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Figure B.1 Retention initiatives analysed



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