



QUEENSLAND
FARMERS'
FEDERATION

Review of Rural Jobs & Skills Alliance

Request for Stakeholder Participation and Input

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1. Introduction

Rural Jobs Skills Alliance (RJSA) is an alliance of industry stakeholders, hosted by Queensland Farmers' Federation. RJSA plays a crucial role in ensuring a unified industry approach by providing strategic guidance to the Queensland government on skills and workforce planning matters. RJSA serves as a central point of reference for organisations tasked with developing, reviewing, and maintaining national training packages relevant to Queensland's agriculture and rural and related sectors.

RJSA operates in a complex environment. Complexities include:

- The diversity of agricultural sectors, each with its own unique labour and training requirements and challenges.
- Seasonal variations which means significant portions of labour is required for peak seasonal needs, sometimes with unexpected urgency in response to unexpected conditions.
- Agricultural work can be dangerous. Labour, including (perhaps especially) casuals, need to be adequately trained and supervised to ensure their safety.
- Complexities around government organisations that exist to provide support and assistance for Australian workforce needs across all industry sectors.
- Complexities and availability of registered training organisations and qualified and respected trainers and their capacity to provide training in regional and sometimes remote locations.
- An Australia-wide and industry-wide skills shortage that has followed Covid. Many non-agriculture industry sectors are competing for labour and the Queensland agricultural industry must be competitive in its coordinated attraction, training, and retention activities if it is to ensure workers into the future.
- The shortage of skilled workers since COVID.
- Agricultural technology is developing rapidly, and skilled employees and training must keep abreast.
- The degree that training is valued within the agricultural industry.

As the environment within which RJSA is complex it is appropriate to review the alliance from time to time. This review is being undertaken to ensure the RJSA's long term capacity in supporting agriculture and rural development. The review will involve analysing industry models of other skills alliances, conducting extensive stakeholder engagement, and developing a detailed business case for any proposed structural changes. The goal is to ensure a robust and adaptable RJSA that can effectively support the growth and development of agriculture and rural communities for the next decade.

This document has been prepared by the consultant who has been selected by QFF to undertake the review, Phil Currey (<https://www.philcurrey.com.au>), in collaboration with QFF/RJSA team members. The purpose of this document is to request stakeholder engagement to inform the review process.

2. Input requested

Please refer to the review methodology and then respond to input questions/topics.

2.1 Review methodology

If you have received this invitation to provide input directly from QFF/RJSA, please feel free to share it with others known to you who have experience and/or knowledge of agricultural workplace issues. We are keen to receive input broadly across the Queensland agricultural industry with as many informed observations and opinions as possible.

Submissions may be provided in writing by e-mailing to the consultant at phil@philcurrey.com.au or, if you prefer, can be provided verbally in a recorded zoom conversation. If we do conduct a recorded meeting, the same discussion topics will be followed for the sake of consistency.

Please provide your name and contact details in your submission and indicate whether your responses are on behalf of an industry sector, business, organisation or association or yourself as an individual.

Please provide a brief description of the process you employed to gather responses from stakeholders within your 'catchment' to inform your response if your response is on behalf of an industry sector or organisation.

The information provided from all submissions will be used to progress the review of RJSA. To do this, it will be shared with stakeholders. Information provided in submissions will be generalised before being shared so that responses cannot be linked to specific contributors.

The review process has a specific deadline for completion which means we need input to be received before the end of June 2024.

2.2 Input questions/topics

Industry stakeholders are invited to engage with stakeholders within your industry sector, organisation or businesses to inform responses to the following. Submissions may be provided in writing by e-mailing to the consultant at phil@philcurrey.com.au or, if you prefer, can be provided verbally in a recorded zoom conversation. The topics about which we invite stakeholder input include:

1. Regarding workforce challenges:
 - a. What workforce challenges does your industry sector currently face?
 - b. If your industry sector has unique workforce issues, please explain what they are, why they're unique and how they're being managed at present.
 - c. How have the challenges changed since 2020 (Covid)?
 - d. How do you envisage the challenges currently facing your industry sector will change (improve or get worse) over the next 12 months, 3 years, 5 years?
2. RJSA's purpose and operational objectives are outlined briefly in this document and the [RJSA website](#):
 - a. To what extent is RJSA achieving its stated purpose and objectives as noted in section 3 of this document? Please explain what's being done well, and where opportunities for improvement might exist.
 - b. To what extent do you believe the current organisational structure, the 'alliance' framework under which it operates and the way it operates is the best fit-for-purpose structure for the agricultural industry. Please explain why.
 - c. Should the stated purpose and objectives for RJSA be expanded, and if so, in what ways?
 - d. What, if anything, do you believe could be done to improve the capacity of RJSA to identify and contribute to solutions for workforce issues?

3. The [Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Plan 2022-2027](#) sets out the issues, goals and actions proposed to ensure security of a Queensland agriculture workforce:
 - a. To what extent is this plan generally known and being adopted within the Queensland agricultural industry and/or the sector in which you operate?
 - b. To what extent is the plan relevant for your industry sector, organisation or business?
 - c. If you would like to offer comments about the plan, how it was developed or is being implemented, please do.
4. Future possible development of RJSA:
 - a. Please explain what an industry-led organisation focused on the workforce should do to complement what is already expected of, and provided by, individual businesses, government and peak bodies. What's the 'gap' that needs to be filled by an organisation like RJSA.
 - b. Please explain what it should establish as its priorities.
 - c. What opportunities to reduce cost and labour of industry peak bodies and employers exist for a central organisation to provide leadership in workforce issues for Queensland agriculture?
 - d. Please suggest any components of organisational frameworks that you believe should be considered if RJSA is to be developed into a different model/framework.
5. Future sources of funding:
 - a. If a more substantial organisation or increased responsibilities for the current RJSA are appropriate for the future, to what extent should it rely on industry funding?
 - b. What potential sources of funding can you identify for future agricultural industry workforce initiatives?
6. Please tell any other issues related to RJSA, workforce, its management or the contribution an industry-led alliance or organisation could do to reduce the impact of workforce issues on Queensland agriculture, not already included by you.

3. Internal Environment

The Rural Jobs & Skills Alliance (RJSA) is an alliance of industry members and the Queensland Government. It provides leadership and advice to government, service providers and other organisations on employment, skills, industry training and workforce planning issues on behalf of Queensland's agriculture industries.

The Queensland Government favours a single point of contact for industry workforce issues, and relies on industry organisations such as Construction Skills Queensland and Energy Skills Queensland, for example, for those industries. Similarly, RJSA is the single point of contact for the agricultural industry.

3.1 Legal entity

RJSA is an alliance of members. As such, no legal entity exists. This means RJSA has limited capacity to employ or negotiate contracts. Team members who undertake the work of RJSA are employed by Queensland Farmers' Federation.

3.2 Purpose

At the time of its establishment in 2015, the reason for its establishment was stated in the Government's media release as:

to help rural enterprises meet their seasonal employment needs, help people to acquire the skills required to satisfy potential employers and get more young people in rural and regional Queensland into apprenticeships that enhance their chances of long-term employment

At the same time, it was identified that RJSA would:

be the single point of reference for Queensland's agricultural sectors for workforce matters

and

lead the collection, analysis and publication of jobs and skills data from primary producers across Queensland and that information will be invaluable in filling skills gaps.

Today, the purpose of the RJSA is to ensure a sustainable agricultural and rural workforce for Queensland by identifying the agriculture workforce needs and seeking effective solutions. The RJSA, through its members, provides a Queensland Agriculture industry led voice on workforce issues including attraction, retention, and skilling issues. The RJSA, through its work, supports producers, agricultural businesses, government and training service providers, and other relevant stakeholders to make the best decisions on workforce related issues; and enables initiatives for them to attract, develop and retain the industry workforce needed to sustain growth.

3.3 Strategic plan

RJSA website includes a 2018-2021 strategic plan containing the following Objectives, goals and strategies. As this document is outdated, it has been replaced by an operational plan (2020-2022). The operational plan is designed to achieve three objectives and a subset of goals:

1. To provide advice, feedback, and recommendations to government for evidence-based policies and the development of programs designed to attract, develop, and retain a skilled workforce for agriculture and related industries.
 - a. To ensure that national training package developments are relevant to Queensland agriculture industries' needs.

- b. To provide advice to current Federal/State policies and programs aimed to address workforce issues to ensure they meet the needs of the Queensland agriculture industry.
- 2. To be the main reference hub for industry evidence identifying current and emergent workforce needs through a systematic approach to collate and analyse industry intelligence and data.
 - a. To ensure that relevant data on current and emerging industry skills & labour training requirements are appropriately curated, analysed and effectively disseminated.
- 3. To guide investment to implement programs to attract, develop, and retain a skilled workforce that will benefit Queensland agriculture's growth.
- 4. To be an industry-recognised body that engages effectively with stakeholders and informs relevant government agencies, service providers and other organisations about employment, skills, and workforce development programs that support Queensland agriculture's sustainable growth.
 - a. To identify stakeholders within and across the agribusiness supply chain and determine the most appropriate channels for engagement
 - b. To be an industry body recognised by Queensland agriculture, service providers, governments and other organisations as the main reference point with respect to employment, skills, training, and workforce planning.

3.4 Objectives

Objectives of RJSA are:

1. To provide advice, feedback and recommendations to government and other relevant stakeholders for evidence-based policies and the development of programs designed to attract, develop, and retain a skilled workforce for agriculture and related industries.
2. To be the main reference hub for industry evidence identifying current and emergent workforce needs through a systematic approach to collate and analyse industry intelligence and data.
3. To guide investment to implement programs to attract, develop, and retain a skilled workforce that will benefit Queensland agriculture's growth.
4. Be an industry-recognised body that engages effectively with stakeholders and informs relevant government agencies, service providers and other organisations about employment, skills, and workforce development programs that support Queensland agriculture's sustainable growth.
5. As such, RJSA is the main reference point to government and other stakeholders that provides accurate representation on behalf of the agriculture sector on the implementation of related workforces government policies and strategies such as the Queensland Workforce Strategy (2022-2032) and others.

3.5 Scope

The RJSA has a mandate to provide strategic advice, feedback and recommendations to the Queensland Government and other relevant stakeholders for evidence-based policies and the development of programs to attract, develop and retain a skilled workforce for agriculture and related industries.

To do so, the RJSA has led the development of the recently completed Queensland Agriculture Workforce Plan (2022-2027). Although the plan identifies strategies and actions to respond to workforce issues affecting the industry, its implementation requires support well beyond the RJSA. However, RJSA will have an active role in promoting the plan and support implementation. It will focus its attention on member identified priority issues that are able to be delivered yearly.

The Alliance will identify the priority of actions from the Plan that would be led by the Alliance. These priorities will be reviewed every year and progress will be reported.

The priorities identified will guide the yearly operational plan.

The preparation of the [Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Plan 2022-2027](#) has been an important achievement of RJSA.

3.6 Team

Queensland Farmers’ Federation hosts a number of employees who collaborate on workforce issues and projects. Whilst the budget for maintaining RJSA is quite small (the funding for the RJSA from 1 Jan 2023 – 30 June 2025 is \$420,000), funds from other government departments are available for several positions in QFFs workforce team and for projects that are undertaken by the team.

Team members employed by QFF to undertake workforce-related projects are listed below.

Team Member	Employer	Role
Adam Knapp	QFF	RJSA Chair (part time)
Renee Anderson	QFF	RJSA Project Manager (part time)
Rod Morris	QFF	DESBT Industry Skills Advisor - Agribusiness
Kym Wessling	QFF	DESBT Industry Workforce Advisor
Tim Bradley	QFF	RJSA Program coordinator

3.7 Members

Member organisations of the alliance are listed below.

Organisation
Queensland Farmers’ Federation
AgForce Queensland
Cotton Australia
Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers
Canegrowers
National Timber & Hardware Association
Irrigation Australia
Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland
Australian Prawn Farmers Association
EastAUSMilk
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

3.8 Leadership

RJSA is led by a Steering Committee, made up of representatives of member organisations.

Name	Organisation	RJSA Role
Adam Knapp	Queensland Farmers Federation	RJSA Chair of RJSA Steering Committee
Renee Anderson	Queensland Farmers Federation	RJSA Project Manager & Committee Member
David Cameron	Irrigation Australia Ltd	RJSA Committee Member
Keiran Burns	DAF	RJSA Committee Member
Rachel Chambers	QLD Fruit & Vegetable Growers	RJSA Committee Member
Kim Hooper	Australian Prawn Farmers Association	RJSA Committee Member
Paul Sloman	Cotton Australia	RJSA Committee Member
Tanya Nagle	AgForce Queensland	RJSA Committee Member
Lynelle Rogers	East Aus Milk	RJSA Committee Member
Alicia Langfield	National Timber & Hardware Association	RJSA Committee Member
Burn Ashburner	Canegrowers	RJSA Committee Member
Brett Kelly	Nursery and Garden Industry (NGIQ)	RJSA Committee Member
Alexander Desser	Canegrowers	RJSA Committee Member
Ruth Thompson	AgForce Queensland	RJSA Committee Member

4. External Environment

The external government environment that governs and supports workforce issues in Australia is somewhat complex. It includes government and non-government organisation. An illustration of the Queensland agricultural workforce and skills ecosystem, provided by Qld DAF, is attached at the end of this document.

4.1 Government organisations and activities which influence agriculture

The principal organisations of relevance to this review are included below.

The Agricultural Workforce Forum

The Agricultural Workforce Forum was established late 2023 as a result of recommendations from the Agricultural Workforce Working Group and Agricultural Workforce Forum which existed October 2022-September 2023. The key achievement of the initial forum, as listed on the webpage https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/workforce-support#membership_2 included:

- *influential advocacy for fee-free TAFE courses in agriculture, the Food Supply Chain Capacity Study, and the Ag Trade Apprenticeship Project*
- *agreeing to principles underpinning labour hire licensing for consideration of the Commonwealth Minister of Employment and Workplace Relations*
- *representing the needs of the sector in key processes such as the Migration Review and the Employment White Paper.*

The forum that was established by the working group meets quarterly. Its members are:

- Senator the Hon. Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- Adam Fennessy PSM, Secretary of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (chair).
- David Jochinke, President, National Farmers' Federation.
- Michele O'Neil, President, Australian Council of Trade Unions.
- Richard Shannon, Executive Officer, NFF Horticulture Council
- Paul Farrow, National Secretary, Australian Workers' Union.
- Ann Gardiner, National Council Member, Australian Dairy Farmers.
- Tim Kennedy, National Secretary, United Workers Union.
- Patrick Hutchinson, CEO, Australian Meat Industry Council.
- Matt Journeaux, Federal Secretary, Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union.
- Clare McClelland, CEO, Australian Fresh Produce Alliance.
- John Azarias, independent public policy expert.

Jobs Queensland

Jobs Queensland (JQ) provides strategic advice to government on future skills needs, workforce planning and development, and apprenticeships and traineeships. Together with its partners, Jobs Queensland strives to shape a better future for the social and economic prosperity of Queensland <https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/>.

Jobs Queensland was established by an Act of parliament (Jobs Queensland Act 2015) to 'establish Jobs Queensland to provide independent expert advice to the Minister on matters relating to skills needs, workforce development and planning and the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland.'

The functions of Jobs Queensland are as follows -

- (a) *to give advice to the Minister about -*
- (i) *the skills it anticipates will be needed for particular industries and regional areas; and*

- (ii) *future workforce development and planning; and*
- (iii) *the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland;*
- (b) *to carry out and promote research relating to the matters mentioned in paragraph (a)(i) to (iii);*
- (c) *to promote public awareness of its function under paragraph (a).*

The Act indicates that Jobs Queensland consists of 7 – 12 members selected on the basis of their experience as an employer or employee and with particular industry experience.

Reviewing the member profiles listed at <https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/about-us/#the-members> suggests that the agricultural industry is not specifically represented.

Jobs and Skills Councils

Jobs and Skills Councils are listed on the website of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) <https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/jobs-and-skills-councils>.

Extracts from the website describe the purpose and structure of Jobs and Skills Councils.

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) have been established to provide industry with a stronger voice to ensure Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) sector delivers better outcomes for learners and employers.

A Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) is a not-for-profit company that is industry-owned and industry-led. They are part of a national network of 10 JSCs that provide leadership to address skills and workforce challenges for their industry. They:

- *align effort across industries to improve VET system responsiveness*
- *build stakeholder confidence*
- *drive high-quality outcomes for the VET sector, learners and business.*

JSCs will identify skills and workforce needs for their sectors, map career pathways across education sectors, develop contemporary VET training products, support collaboration between industry and training providers to improve training and assessment practice, and act as a source of intelligence on issues affecting their industries.

Each JSC works closely with Jobs and Skills Australia, drawing on its workforce analysis and projections to plan for their industry sector and creating a consistent approach to addressing skill gaps.

They bring together employers, unions and governments in a tripartite arrangement to find solutions to skills and workforce challenges.

JSCs are responsible for the following four core functions:

- *Workforce Planning*
Workforce Planning is the strategic centrepiece for JSCs and informs the other functions. Workforce planning will underpin intelligence-gathering for strategic priorities and will be a critical focus to guide strategic planning.
- *Training Product Development*
Training product development requires JSCs to develop training products in line with standards set by Skills Ministers to improve the quality, speed to market and responsiveness of training products.
- *Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring*

JSCs will partner with training providers and organisations to align workforce planning objectives and national training products with career advice and ‘on the ground’ training delivery.

- **Industry Stewardship**

JSCs will act as a source of intelligence on workforce issues affecting their industries and provide advice on national training system policies.

A complete list of Jobs and Skills Councils are listed on the website <https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/jobs-and-skills-councils> but the relevant JSC for agriculture is copied below

Jobs and Skills Council	Related Training Packages
<p>Skills Insight Agribusiness, Fibre, Furnishing, Food, Animal and Environment Care Covering industries of primary production — plants and animals — as well as textiles, clothing and footwear, forestry, timber and furnishing. Emerging industries include natural resources security and environmental management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACM Animal Care and Management • AHC Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management • AMP Australian Meat Processing • MST Textiles, Clothing and Footwear • MSF Furnishing • FWP Forest and Wood Products • RGR Racing and Breeding • SFI Seafood Industry • PPM Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry

Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network

The Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) has dedicated officers who provide advice on workforce services and initiatives to all Queensland agribusinesses, regardless of commodity or organisation membership.

This is a free service available to agribusinesses with operations in Queensland.

The services and initiatives include:

- workforce planning advice
- sourcing labour and skilled workers
- recruitment
- induction requirements
- funded training opportunities.

Agriculture workforce officers have links with employment and training service providers across Queensland. They can help agribusinesses understand available options and strategies to identify and meet future workforce needs. (<https://business.gov.au/expertise-and-advice/queensland-agriculture-workforce-network-qawn>)

4.2 Non-Government Queensland organisations which have similar purpose as RJSA in other industry sectors

The following organisations have been reviewed from their websites to provide insights into their purpose and organisational structures to generate ideas for future frameworks for RJSA. Information has been sourced (copied and pasted) from the websites of each organisation.

Energy Skills Queensland

Established in 2008, Energy Skills Queensland (ESQ) <https://energyskillsqld.com.au> is the leading, independent, not-for-profit organisation providing innovative solutions to enable a skilled and safe energy industry. Supporting the electricity, oil and gas, mining, renewable and telecommunications sectors, Energy Skills Queensland engages, researches and develops products and services that align to the current and future needs of our stakeholders.

Energy Skills Queensland support industry, government, training organisations and other stakeholder groups through:

- The provision of industry intelligence, including workforce planning, research and analysis
- Sourcing funding to deliver skills development and employment programmes
- Educational design and programme development
- Facilitation of engagement activities such as industry leader and training groups

Energy Skills Queensland prides itself on delivering the following benefits to the people we work with:

- Innovative and agile solutions that add value
- Deep technical knowledge and industry subject matter expertise
- Networking and collaboration opportunities

From the most recent annual report Energy Skills Queensland is an Incorporated Association with continuous disclosure obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Act 2012 (Cth).

ESQ shows a team of 17 employees on its website plus a Board made up of representatives of significant employer representative groups.

Construction Skills Queensland

Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ) <https://www.csq.org.au/> is an independent, not-for-profit, industry-funded body supporting employers, workers, apprentices, trainees and career seekers in the building and construction industry. Its purpose is to provide the Queensland building and construction industry with the information and skills it needs for a strong and sustainable future.

The Board of Directors is appointed by the Queensland Minister for the training and skills portfolio, as the sole shareholder of the company, and comprises an independent Chair and representatives from the building and construction industry and government. Directors are appointed for a three-year term. The Board provides CSQ with strategic direction and advice and ensures that the levy funds are invested through equitable, transparent and fiscally responsible governance and in line with the needs of industry.

Construction Skills Queensland provides the Queensland building and construction industry with the skills and information it needs for a strong and sustainable future. Each year, CSQ develops a training and investment plan for the industry. This year, CSQ will be investing \$50M to support the industry. Programs and services include:

Pathways into industry (\$2.7m in 2023/24)

- Working with schools, students and industry to promote and trial building and construction careers
- Directly supporting potential workers to enter the industry
- Helping keep our industry supplied with talent
- Monitoring emerging technology and new practices to prepare industry for the jobs of the future

Building and Civil programs (\$34.7m in 2023/24)

- Addressing labour and skills demands to keep large projects moving on time
- Providing tailored qualifications and services for residential and commercial builders, workers and subcontractors
- Providing new skills and services to meet the large pipeline of infrastructure and renewables projects and needs of civil workers and businesses

Business capability and wellbeing (4.7m in 2023/24)

- Enabling best practice workforce planning on Queensland's construction projects
- Helping sole traders and small businesses prosper
- Supporting a safe, healthy and diverse industry
- Enhancing participation in and completion of apprenticeships and traineeships

Industry, corporate and support services (\$7.9 m in 2023/24)

- Research and data
- Marketing and communications
- Finance and administration

Manufacturing Skills Queensland (MSQ)

According to the website <https://msq.org.au/>:

the manufacturing industry functions in a rapidly changing operational environment with skill and labour shortages, technology advancements, and workforce challenges.

MSQ's aim with support from the Queensland Government is to ensure the industry has a diverse and sustainably skilled workforce ready to embrace new and emerging technologies and respond to economic opportunities or challenges.

We'll be focused on attracting, retaining, and developing capability in the sector. Through industry engagement, evidence-based research and partnerships, MSQ is working to create the skills pathways for the future of manufacturing in Queensland.

The Queensland Government provides funding to MSQ to support its skills development and training programs. MSQ works closely with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) and the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW) to deliver our objectives. We advise the government through industry committees and forums and advocate through policy submissions and direct briefings with Ministers.

Manufacturing Skills Queensland has only recently been established. Details can be found at <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/employers/engage-government/manufacturing-skills-queensland>

Details from the website include the following.

To strengthen and grow Queensland's manufacturing sector and create secure local jobs, the Queensland Government is investing in skilling Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government has committed \$16.5 million to establish Manufacturing Skills Queensland (MSQ) – an independent, not-for-profit industry body that will support employers, workers, apprentices and trainees in the manufacturing industry.

MSQ will identify key skills required in the manufacturing sector and work with industry, workers, unions and businesses to deliver training programs to Queenslanders to prepare them for work in the sector.

The Queensland Government has appointed Paul Cooper as Director and Chair along with 6 experienced employer, employee and government representatives as board directors.

This new body will engage with government to assist in current and future workforce planning and the development of an Annual Training Plan for the manufacturing sector.

MSQ will ensure Queenslanders have the right skills to work in the manufacturing sector, will assist businesses to enhance Queensland's manufacturing capability and ensure that local manufacturers are engaged with government procurement processes.

5. Possible future framework for agriculture

The frameworks under which Energy Skills Queensland, Construction Skills Queensland and Manufacturing Skills Queensland have been established and operate appear to be similar. Of particular relevance are:

- The three organisations are not-for-profit entities.
- At least two are very closely aligned with relevant government departments (industry-specific and Department of Employment, Small Business and Training).
- They are managed by Boards that are made up primarily of industry experience representing both employees and employers.
- They all work closely with government.
- They employ a significant number of team members, many more than RJSA does at present.
- They manage significantly larger budgets than RJSA does at present.
- They have a reasonably consistent set of priorities:
 - They connect, communicate and collaborate different participants within their industry sectors. This is a very relevant priority for Queensland agriculture as the workforce needs can be very different for each sector and activity (eg. horticulture, sugar, dairy, cotton, agritourism, vertical integration, on-farm value-adding, beef, sheep, pork, chickens). Despite the differences, sectors and activities face similar challenges such as seasonal variations, labour shortages, visa requirements etc.
 - Developing and facilitating pathways for young employees to be attracted, trained and enter the workforce.
 - Ensuring VET courses and providers are teaching the skills required.
 - Conducting industry research to identify needs so that recommendations are evidence-based.
 - Being a central point of contact, perhaps in collaboration with Jobs and Skills Australia and Jobs Queensland, to provide advice and policy recommendations to state and federal government.

Manufacturing Skills Queensland has only recently been established with considerable financial support from the Queensland Government. Perhaps a similar proposal from the agricultural industry might be received favourably by the Queensland Government.

5.1 Relative significance of Queensland agriculture as an industry

Understanding the size of the workforce and each of the above-named organisations and comparing them with Queensland agriculture may provide insights into whether a similar framework is appropriate for agriculture.

Industry	Workforce
Energy (combination of electrotechnology, telecommunication, gas and mining industries)	106,000
Construction	264,000
Manufacturing	182,000
Agriculture	64,000

Source: Jobs Queensland industry profiles

Employment figures are difficult to quantify precisely as multiple industries may be included in a single skills entity, especially energy. The other consideration that needs to be recognised is that ‘Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing’ data sets typically refer to jobs and economic performance estimates of primary production, being farmers, forestry workers and fisher-people. They may not include the value-added jobs that rely on the commodities produced by the primary production part of the agricultural industry. They may also overlook many contractors who operate within the agricultural industry. DAF (<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/news-media/campaigns/data-farm/employment-business>) reports the following:

Queensland’s agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food industries are central to our economy, regions and communities.

At a glance:

58,100 direct employment in 2022–23

363,000 total supply-chain employment

67,100 AFF and value chain businesses

The figure of 363,000 reported by DAF as ‘total supply-chain employment’ includes food and beverage services (cafes, restaurants, take-aways), food and beverage manufacturing, texture, clothing and footwear manufacturing, wood processing manufacturing, food, beverage and tobacco wholesaling and food retailing including supermarkets. A proportion of these total supply-chain jobs rely on the production of Australian food and fibre commodities. If COVID taught us anything, Australian processing of agricultural commodities should increase to ensure Australia achieves and maintains full food security.

Jobs Australia recently called for submissions to contribute to developing a shared vision for the food supply chain workforce including production, manufacturing and distribution. Perhaps a future Queensland agricultural industry workforce organisation could consider adopting a whole-of-chain approach, justified by the simple reality that downstream actors are customers requiring agricultural commodities and value-added products and without stability at the production (farm) level of agriculture, many downstream jobs may be in jeopardy. This may simply mean collaborations with other jobs & skills organisations representing the interests of food, beverage, ingredients processing/manufacturing, food service, retailers, distribution, warehousing and transport industry sectors.