



**Victorian
Skills Authority**

Heyfield Agriculture

Final Report Co-design Workshops

4 April 2024



Jobs, Skills,
Industry
and Regions

Executive summary

This report outlines a strategic model that seeks to address the inadequate supply of skilled Agricultural workers in the Heyfield and district.

The challenge had been broadly identified through a working group which was set up as part of DEECA's Forestry transition and facilitated through the Wellington Shire Council.

In late 2023, the group engaged the Victorian Skills Authority to undertake a Human-Centred Design (HCD) Process which occurred across two workshops held in December 2023 and February 2024. Participants ([Attachment 1](#)) represented a diverse range of stakeholders, including Agriculture sector, farmers, Education providers, employment brokers, community members and all levels of Government.

The Agriculture Hub concept recommended in this report is a combination of the design thinking conducted by small groups as part of the workshop and focuses on 4 key elements of Training, Advocacy, Marketing/Promotion and Employment Brokerage.

Key Elements of the Heyfield Agricultural Hub:

- Training – Coordinating research and training for current and future industry workforce.
- Advocacy – Enabling opportunities to advance the Agricultural industry in Heyfield.
- Marketing and Promotion – Raising awareness of promoting opportunities in the agriculture sector in Heyfield through a range of engagement activities.
- Employment Brokerage – Brokering connections between workforce and employers in the Heyfield agriculture industry.

The VSA recommends further development and testing of the Agricultural Hub, including socialising the model with key stakeholders, identifying opportunities for local partnerships, investigating potential for a Gippsland-wide responses, and developing a sound governance model and implementation plan (see [Next steps](#)).

About the Victorian Skills Authority

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) was established by the Victorian Government in July 2021 in response to the recommendations of the Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy Review.

The VSA has a critical role to play in understanding and communicating the skills needed to ensure Victoria can meet current, emerging, and future skills and industry demands that enable inclusive growth and prosperity for all Victorians.

Working together with key stakeholders across industry, employers, providers, unions, communities, and learners, the VSA seeks to deliver skills-led solutions, drive reform, and collaborate to improve skills and employment outcomes.

Background: the Heyfield Agriculture Group

An announcement was made in May 2023 regarding a revised timeline for Victoria's native timber transition, bringing the move away from native timber harvesting to 1 January 2024.

Local Development Strategy grants are available to ensure affected communities are well supported through the native timber transition. With this in mind, an Agriculture Training and Skills working group was established in Heyfield to explore how a training and skills solution may assist with Heyfield's transition from forestry to agriculture. The primary purpose of an Innovation Working Group ("Working Group") was to develop innovation opportunities that will support sustainable economic development, job creation and social and economic prosperity in Heyfield and District with the long-term aim of fostering a thriving, collaborative innovation system in the district. ([Attachment 10 – Vision Board](#))

A representative from the Victorian Skills Authority was invited to the second meeting of this group where it was identified that a facilitated co-design model would provide some structure to the group.

The Process

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) employed a Human-Centered Design (HCD) methodology (referenced in [Attachment 2](#)), emphasizing deep empathy for users, stakeholder collaboration, and a blend of divergent and convergent thinking.

The Co-Design process engaged a diverse array of stakeholders, including representatives from the Agriculture sector, farmers, education providers, employment brokers, community members, and various levels of government.

The first workshop commenced with an exploration of existing knowledge ([Attachment 3](#) – what we know), delving into topics such as employment barriers, workforce attraction, career pathways, industry perception, educational access, the identity of Heyfield, and contemporary workforce dynamics.

Based on the collective understanding gained, the initial problem statement was framed as follows:

"There is an inadequate supply of Agricultural workers in the Heyfield and district which is adversely affecting productivity, growth, and sustainability in the industry."

To foster empathy, participants identified key user groups within the system, including Farmers, Jobseekers, Young People, and Migrant workers. A tailored set of questions was crafted for each group, and participants were encouraged to conduct interviews between sessions. A comprehensive list of responses can be found in [Attachment 4](#).

These interview insights were developed into four personas (see [Attachment 5](#)), that were used to integrate the prototype models ([Attachment 8](#)).

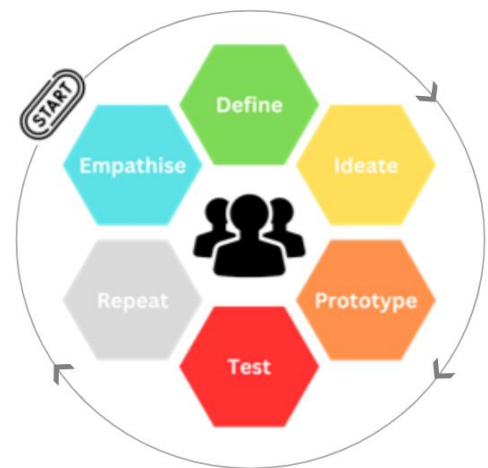


Figure 1: Human-Centred Design

Following the “What we know” and “What we heard” activities, the group voted on the key contributing factors to the problem, ([Attachment 6](#)) and came up with the following ranking:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| - Training Pathways & opportunities | 21 votes |
| - Industry perception and understanding of the Agricultural sector | 11 |
| - Skills & Retention | 9 |
| - Support Young People / Secondary Schools | 6 |
| - Promotion and awareness of careers in Agriculture | 4 |
| - Pride & Perception of Heyfield | 3 |
| - Other (technology, transport/accommodation) | 4 |

The top 3 responses were used to amend and refine the problem statement (Figure 2) and to focus participants for developing their solutions during the next phase of co-design.

Industry perception, training pathways, skills and retention are all contributing to an inadequate supply of Agricultural workers in the Heyfield and district which is adversely affecting productivity, growth, and sustainability in the industry.

Figure 2: Final Problem statement adopted during the Co-Design process.

During the ideation phase, participants engaged in a creative thinking exercise known as "Crazy 8 Ideas" ([Attachment 7](#)), generating innovative solutions that were consistent with previously identified themes, such as school engagement, industry perception, on-farm support and training, accommodation, and the concept of an Agriculture Centre or Hub.

Subsequently, the group divided into four teams to develop and test prototype models (see [Attachment 8](#) for details):

- **Model #1: Redgum Plains Agricultural Skills & Education Program**
 - o Industry-led program utilising a hybrid delivery model incorporating both classroom instruction and on-farm that bridges educational institutions such as TAFEs and schools.
- **Model #2: Keeping it Local: Agriculture Experience Tours**
 - o Agricultural local tours offering access to organizations not usually open to the public, showcasing the diversity of agricultural activities in the local area.
- **Model #3: City-2-Country Exchange Program**
 - o Template exchange program targeted at metropolitan high school students providing structured workplace learning opportunities.
- **Model #4: Heyfield Ag Training Coordination Hub**
 - o Hub in Heyfield, either bricks and mortar or online, connecting farmers to training opportunities, job seekers to employment opportunities, and serving as an advocate for the Heyfield Agriculture sector.

Following prototype development and testing with personas, the group were asked to capture the top ideas from everything they had heard and considered crucial to the final model. Notably, these top ideas ([Attachment 9](#)) clearly articulated the need to focus on a coordinated and cohesive ‘Hub’ approach that effectively integrating elements of all 4 prototypes into a unified model (below).

The Model

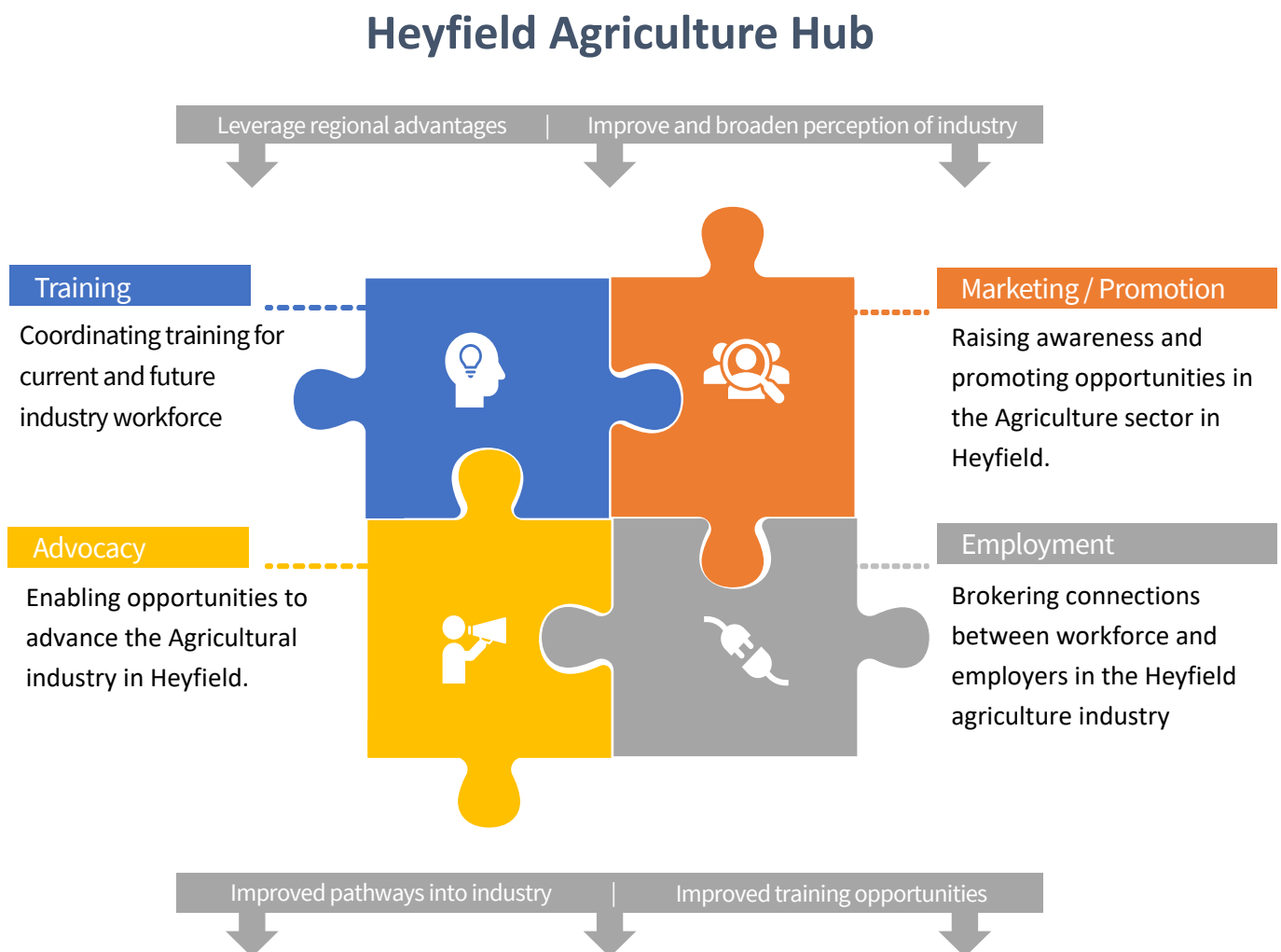
The integrated model below combines the four prototypes presented during Workshop 2 ([Attachment 8](#)) with insights gathered through the co-design process. Compiled by the Victorian Skills Authority, it acknowledges the need for further investigation and development, including broader testing with key stakeholders and identified user groups such as schools, training providers, industry sectors, young people, and farmers.

The envisioned Agriculture Hub necessitates a robust governance structure, adaptable to the evolving needs of the entity. Initially, this may involve establishing an auspice body supported by a steering committee, with potential future evolution into a standalone legal entity operating under a not-for-profit cooperative model.

Effective prioritisation and a well-defined implementation plan are paramount to ensure short- and long-term objectives are achieved, while addressing sustainability in the early stages of establishment.

Critical to the success of the model is securing short term establishment funding and to engage strong leadership and project management. Ongoing support will be determined by the scope of activities, the potential to partner with other organisations and the generation of revenue.

Figure 3: Heyfield Agriculture Hub Model





Training

The Hub could coordinate a training program and skills response for localised needs, as well as providing research and development for both tertiary education and industry to undertake research trials in the region.

- **Industry training**
 - Training for those currently employed in agriculture industry.
 - Farmer short courses/skills
 - Safety
 - Human Resources
 - Embracing Technology
 - Computer skills and phone apps
 - TAFE based training.
 - Hybrid model explored with online and face to face delivery.
- **Pathways and Careers**
 - Connecting those seeking employment in agriculture industry with relevant entry-level training.
 - Advising those employed in industry on relevant training, skilling and career opportunities.
- **Community of Practice**
 - Develop a network to share information and learnings.
 - Micro-credentialing
- **Research & Development**
 - Partners with Education providers: Dookie, Longerenong, Marcus Oldham, TAFEs, universities.
 - Partner with Industry to establish trials and product development.



Marketing and Promotion

The Hub could work with key partners to raise the profile of the Agriculture Industry in Heyfield and district. This may be through advertising, distributing case studies, engagement with schools and conducting community awareness programs. Examples include:

- Farm visits & service providers: STEM in action
 - Showcase/engage innovative technology, e.g., circular economy to maximise engagement.
 - Target schools, future workers, migrant community.
- Local Engagement Days.
 - Speed dating connections with farmers, industry and schools/community.
- Case studies to promote industry and local achievements.
- City to Heyfield Exchange Program
 - Program delivered by industry experts and qualified trainers.
 - Farmers feed into design process but don't lead.
 - Structured Workplace Learning
 - Federation University student placements
 - All students e.g., business students, accounting, marketing.
 - Investigate paid placement opportunities.



Advocacy

Acknowledging there are established groups already advocating for the region, the hub could provide support for agricultural specific policy change and resources attraction, especially where these hinder productivity, growth, and sustainability in agriculture, for example:

- Transport
 - Exploring opportunities to utilise different modes of transport for agriculture workers.
- Accommodation
 - Exploring opportunities to utilise different modes of transport for agriculture workers.
- Training
 - Advocating for training that supports local industry needs and aspirations of the Hub.



Employment broker

The Agriculture Hub may have the opportunity to act as an employment broker or labour hire company, assisting the sector recruit, train, and employ staff, effectively conducting a Human Resource function for the sector, especially those without time or skills. These may also develop into a source of income to support the development and aspirations of the Hub:

- Reducing HR load on farmers.
- Labour Hire services, e.g. Relief Milkers
- Brokering employment arrangements and job matching.
- Mobilising seasonal workforce across region.
- Providing an entry point to industry for interested members of the community and across the state – recruitment services.

This may include development of an app with examples provided such as Uber, Airtasker, TinyJobs, SnapMatch etc. Could also build on what Horticulture sector are already doing.

In designing the model, workshop participants were encouraged to consider the needs, behaviours, and experiences of the people for whom solution was being designed, as identified through the stakeholder interviews. Key considerations should be kept at the forefront as people review and further develop this model. Considerations are summarised in the table below with a full record available in the interview responses ([Attachment 4](#)) and the developed personas ([Attachment 5](#)).

TABLE: Design considerations for each stakeholder group

Farmers	• Farmers reported being time poor, resulting in not having the ability to conduct recruitment activities for positions available. • A significant number of farmers reported not having HR skills. • Identified the main skills missing in job applicants as a lack IT and technological skills, lack of qualifications including forklift license, limited familiarity and understanding of animals and a general lack of relevant work experience. • A lack of suitable transport and accommodation options were reported as the main barriers for recruitment.
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Job seekers

- Reported job stability, support, security, and location as the most important factors when considering employment opportunities.
- When asked what they thought farm work would be like, spoke of physical, dirty and hands-on work, with early hours and specific skills such as operating a tractor being required.
- Didn't have a great collective understanding regarding the amount of pay workers receive in the industry, or the opportunities available including for career progression.
- Quoted licenses (manual car, heavy machinery), knowledge of farming equipment and fitness as key requirements for gaining employment in the industry.

Young people

- Most young people in the area reported the agricultural industry as having a positive reputation locally.
- Numerous young people could see relevant career opportunities for them in the industry, with others being focussed on careers in other industries, such as law or online entertainment, including streaming.
- Young people reported a mix of plans to stay or leave the area, with work and training opportunities (such as the ADF) being the main reasons to leave, and family and local work opportunities (such as farming) being the main reasons quoted for staying in the area.
- Most young people spoken to state their ideal work would involve outdoor, hands-on work. This includes trades, such as carpentry.
- Most young people did not have any understanding of agriculture training, education pathways or apprenticeships.

Migrant workers

- Only one migrant worker was spoken to as part of the co-design process.
 - They spoke about enjoying the lower associated costs of living in a regional area compared to a metropolitan area.
 - They reported having a strong local community of people from their home country as a factor making regional life easier.
 - They said higher pay would be the main consideration factor to keep them in the agriculture industry.

Next steps

Many workshop participants and members of the Heyfield and District Agriculture Group expressed an interest in continuing discussions beyond the workshops. A follow up meeting was held on Thursday March 21, 2024, to accept and amend this report and endorse the next steps listed below.

- 1) To review and further develop the Agricultural Hub model as presented in this report:
 - Socialise and test model with key local stakeholders, in particular farmers, agricultural organisations, school leavers and education providers (further Interviews, focus groups or surveys)
 - Investigate opportunities to partner with other key organisations within and outside of Gippsland.
 - Coordinate with other Gippsland communities with similar challenges, share information and determine potential for a broader Gippsland project and/or response.
- 2) Liaise with DEECA and other Government departments (Local, State & Federal) to identify any potential sources of funding for a pilot project or implementation phase of the Agricultural Hub.
- 3) Develop a governance model and plan that will enable the establishment of the Agricultural Hub as well as enable future growth and development. This may be in phases with an organisation providing an auspice arrangement with stakeholder reference group during implementation through to a co-operative owned by the sector or similar legal structure.
- 4) Determine vision, priority and core objectives for the Agricultural Hub and develop a long-term implementation plan. This documentation would also provide supporting evidence for any funding or sponsorship sought.

Acknowledgement

The VSA thanks all workshop participants for their enthusiasm and input into one or both co-design workshops and to the many that assisted with interviewing identified cohorts between sessions.

We trust the Human-Centred Design process has assisted the industry, training providers and Agricultural Sector to progress their work to address the key challenges contribute to an inadequate supply of Agricultural workers in the Heyfield and district which is adversely affects productivity, growth, and sustainability in the industry.

The VSA will continue to work with the Heyfield community to support the implementation of this model.

Report prepared by Sam Driscoll, David Roberts, Emma Hall, Louise Pearce and Owen Chapman from the Victorian Skills Authority. Final Report completed 4 April 2024.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Participants

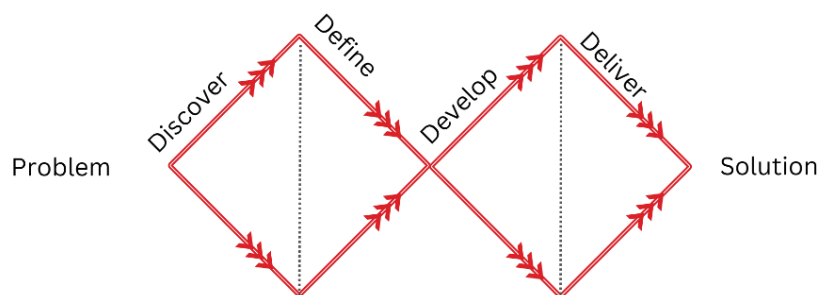
Name	Organisation
Alexis Killoran	Agriculture Victoria
Andrea Henry	Macalister Demo Farm
Ash Hall	Latrobe Valley Authority
Caroline Trevorrow	Heyfield Community Resource Centre
Chris Freney	Farmer
Darren Beggs	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
Don Shaw	GELLEN
Emily Scott	Food and Fibre Gippsland
Gerry Davis	Community member
Greg Tomamichael	Thompson Valley Service Centre
Jeff Svigos	DEECA - Forestry Transition
Jen Smith	Gippsland Ag Group (GAgG)
Jess Reeves	Fed Uni
Margareta Osborn	Farmer
Mark Coleman	Wellington Shire Council
Matthew Stagg	Southern Rural Water
Michelle Anderson	Fed Uni
Petra Wood	Wellington Shire Council
Raelene Hanratty	Farmer
Sarah Dilges	DEECA - Forestry Transition
Scott Botten	Agriculture Victoria
Stuart Quigley	TAFE Gippsland
Veronica McLeod	GippsDairy

Attachment 2 – Co-Design methodology and workshops

Co-design Methodology

Co-design is the process of bringing stakeholders together to explore both problems and solutions collaboratively. A co-design process connects stakeholder groups in a meaningful way to design industry-led solutions to unique and complex issues.

The two co-design workshops held were based on the Victorian Government [Human-Centred Design Playbook](#). It follows the double diamond and is underpinned by an iterative process of openness and creativity, divergent and convergent thinking, and specification and testing.



Source: The Double Diamond, The Design Council

Co-design Workshops

Both workshops were run using a hybrid model. They were designed to be interactive and collaborative encouraging participants to contribute actively and freely. Participants were also requested to undertake some work outside the time allocated for the workshop, including completing interviews of key stakeholders as part of the 'Empathise' process.

Workshop 1: Wednesday 6 December 2023

Define 	Activities: - Knowledge gathering activity followed by a group discussion - Exploration of the problem definition Outputs: - Key themes document based on participants feedback – Attachment 3 – What We Know from Workshop 1
Empathise 	Activities: - Identify key stakeholder groups - Establish a plan to learn more from stakeholders "Asking the right questions" activity Outputs:

	Interview answers (summary): Attachment 4 – What We Heard: Summary of stakeholder consultation
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Workshop 2: Thursday 15 February 2024

Define (cont.) 	Activities: - Review and finalise the problem definition - Discuss what we heard from our stakeholders Outputs: - Top 3 Contributors to the problem we face – Attachment 6
Empathise 	Activities: - Discuss what we heard from our stakeholders - Developing personas – one persona per stakeholder group Outputs: - Personas – Attachment 5 – Personas to consider when designing solutions
Ideate 	Activities: - Provocation activity - Crazy 8's Outputs: - Crazy 8's – Attachment 7
Prototype & Test  	Activities: - Build or draw potential model using materials (lego, playdough, etc.) - Test model in small groups against personas and refine. - Present models to the wider group - Vote for the best model and ideas Outputs: - Models – Attachment 8 – Model and Concepts - Top ideas – Attachment 9 – Top Ideas

Attachment 3 – What We Know from Workshop 1

Understanding the problem

This is a summary of what the group shared regarding challenges for the Heyfield Agriculture region.

Issues categorised in themes

The group shared their views on what the problems are and its consequences. These are categorised in themes.

Employment Barriers:

- English as a second language makes progression beyond basic skills difficult.
- Some employers have stringent requirements.
- Various barriers such as accommodation planning, driver's license, WWCC (Working With Children Check).

Workforce Attraction:

- Need for strategies to attract workers to the industry.
- Limited services available to attract people.
- Poor promotion of the agricultural industry by the industry itself.
- Changes in visa regulations affecting access to low-skilled workers.

Pathways & Careers:

- Disengagement of young people from education leads to unpreparedness for the agriculture industry.
- Lack of career pathways and awareness in schools.
- Insufficient engagement opportunities for young people in agricultural learning environments.
- Agriculture not adequately promoted by career advisors in schools.

Industry Perception:

- Criticism of the farming industry from urban areas.
- Disconnect between urban and rural communities regarding food production.
- Perception of agriculture as unattractive or not "sexy."
- Gender biases and perceptions of nepotism within the industry.
- Agriculture seen as lacking desirable career paths due to perceptions of working conditions.

Industry Accessibility:

- Barriers to entry such as access to land and expense.
- Pressure to meet supermarket standards driving production demands.
- Difficulty transitioning into agriculture due to industry competition and technological advancements.
- Lack of local tech support and translation between training and technology.
- Political and competitive issues surrounding water usage.

Skills & Education:

- Barriers in offering certain certifications in senior school and higher education.
- Challenges in accessing appropriate qualifications locally.
- Industry apathy towards engaging with educational institutions.
- Lack of practical farm courses for specific skills.
- Absence of agriculture in the primary/secondary school curriculum in certain areas.
- Limited availability of practical training opportunities.

Heyfield Identity:

- Heyfield's legacy as a timber town.
- Decreasing societal connection to agriculture in Heyfield and Gippsland.
- Need for better promotion of local production and less secrecy surrounding it.

Contemporary Workforce:

- Youth workforce moving away from rural areas.
- Disparity in value, funding, and pay between skilled and unskilled work.
- Insufficient long-term skilled migration, relying heavily on backpackers.
- Poor succession planning by current farmers.
- Lack of new farmers with diverse experiences.

Attachment 4 – What We Heard: Summary of stakeholder consultation

STAKEHOLDER GROUP: Farmers/Growers
Question 1: What skill shortages do you currently have? What emerging skills areas do you foresee in your industry in the next 5 years?
- Mechanical skill in our workshop, machinery operators - Skills shortages: Harvest supervisor, tractor and forklift drivers (licensed) Emerging skills: leaning a lot more towards technological savviness - Experienced machinery operators for inside the factory is our key shortage. As the industry progressively becomes more tech based, accessing operators capable of working high tech packaging machines will become more necessary. Also, driving recruitment into the younger generation, to ensure we have upcoming tractor drivers, forklift operators, rising team leaders, etc. We currently rely heavily on itinerant workers for our process worker positions – and aim to recruit longer term resident employees for the positions requiring significant training. There will always be a component of our work that is manual, and requires a low skill set (due to the nature of hort) – so if we could more readily access local staffing that were keen to do the basic, manual components/process worker – that would assist us in not only having a more permanent staff base, ability for more team rapport, minimise ongoing basic training requirements as well as provide us access to potential candidates who may then consider a career in horticulture. - People have no idea how to handle animals. People have no idea how to operate machinery. - We have trouble getting any workers at all, let alone ones with skills. We always have to train them so we have a shortage of all skills! Emerging: more tech & remote operation of equipment. - Shortage of every single skill but mostly animal husbandry and any knowledge of dealing with animals at all. Tech is changing everything but still doesn't help notice when an animal is sick! - Pickers, machinery operators - Relief milkers and middle managers – 2ICs - Not relevant to our situation at the moment. Waiting for contractors is a problem. There will be a need for contractors for the smaller properties especially sowing small acreage and fencing - Reliable milkers, general farm hand workers. I don't see a positive outlook for the areas mentioned getting any better - Reliable relief/full time milkers. General farm hand, daily dairy upkeep, irrigation. All skills!!! - Current – local advisors specialising in pumps and motors, both supply and installation - Emerging: Middle managers 2ICs, willing to step up to allow me time off
Question 2: Once you find people of value, what strategies do you use to retain them?
- Suit the person to the job and keep them happy to the best of our business ability - Learn their areas they are most interested in and excel in at work and try to focus them on work based around those interests - We are currently in the depths of redefining our company values and rebuilding a very broken culture. Understanding the current employee experience and building out engagement and effective communication with the entire team is a significant key to retention. We are also building out development/progression options for key roles, to ensure that our team view horticulture as a career option and not just employment. There is lots to be done in this space. - I pay them. I try to pass on knowledge. - We try to offer good pay and conditions and try to train them so they get interested in the industry and stay.

- We have housing for them and treat them well. If they are from far away we try to help them settle into the community.
- Fair work hours, guaranteed work, wage above award
- Generous salary, training, where it works with the farm operation allowing them to specialise in the skill set of their choosing (pasture, calf rearing, irrigation)
- We could offer to a person of value the opportunity to run a few head of stock as an incentive.
- We have so far been unable to retain the valuable workers as they have enough gumption to work hard and move on to better careers with more opportunity for advancement (money)
- We have found no people of value worth fighting for. Most cases we are annoyed that we can't fire people.
- Accommodation. Generous wage. Training opportunities. Opportunity to run own animals for meat in non-milking platform areas

Question 3: What formal training (i.e. TAFE apprenticeship, degree) do you hold? If any, was/is it useful in your current role?

- Cert 2 Horticulture / Cert 3 Production Horticulture as a 3 year apprentice / Cert 4 Agriculture with emphasis on lean principals
- All 3 were extremely useful. Any people doing Cert2-3 in Horticulture or Agriculture would be great prospects for our industry
- None. *(two responses)*
- I hold an advanced diploma in Tourism management – none of which would be considered technically relevant to my current role. Potentially some of the people and time management skills have proved advantageous – however they have also been learned over decades. For the most part – we want to focus on employing the right attitudes, we can upskill/train the rest.
- No training or degrees. All learned through trial and error and hard work.
- No formal training – we are 5th generation farmers and our knowledge has been learned and passed down.
- None, except for small on-farm induction type training required by our company.
- TAFE hort cert 3
- University degree. It has been useful especially when compiling documents.
- Chemical User course completed as a requirement. Shearing training certificate. HR vehicle licence. All other skills and knowledge obtained as a generation farmer.
- No formal training, generational farmer. Ex shearer
- Degree ag science. Yes (useful)

Question 4: What barriers do potential workers have to working in your business? (e.g. accommodation, skills, experience, transport)

- Accommodation is the main one.
Transport less so as our operators need licenses to operate between our farms so it's a non-negotiable
A lot of the skills are teachable – a main thing is there isn't much light put on the vegetable industry so people don't know the opportunities – e.g. mechanics, welders, fitters, operators, irrigation technicians, supervisors and management
- Forklift licence is a top one, there should be forklift training focused on ESL people, they can already do car license in their own language here but not forklift
Accommodation is getting scarce.
Lots of workers who don't know how to drive or don't own a car.
- For itinerant workers – transport is probably the number 1 issue. Prior to covid, backpackers more readily accessed vehicles for transport and for their accommodation, however, now there seems to be significant reliance on finding work that has either transport options or accommodation on site.

We don't offer either.

Some of our roles require a level of base skill, partially due to the equipment being operated but also partially due to current time constraints, or existing staff shortages making it more difficult to start at the beginning. We are in the process of building out better coverage for these roles to alleviate some of these pressures.

- I will not employ anyone who can't handle a cow or drive a tractor. I don't have time.
- Always skills and experience. Sometimes accommodation if they are backpackers etc.
- They have absolutely no skills or experience and sometimes no transport if they are seasonal workers/travellers like backpackers who are always unreliable because they move on.
- Accommodation, visas for pickers, transport, language skills
- Accommodation
- Not applicable
- Accommodation – no dairy farm manager house available. Can't compete with big farms for quality workers in the pay department. Safety equipment to pass standard for apprentice/trainee workers. Transport has been an issue for young workers who are doing cert II in agriculture while at school. Minimal experience, require babysitting which doesn't help efficiency on the farm
- Minimum wage, accommodation, experience
- Skills and initiative, mostly initiative, skills can be taught

Question 5: Who looks after HR, training and people management of staff on your farm?

(If it is the owner, do you feel you have the appropriate skills, knowledge and/or experience to do this effectively?)

- Managers manage their own staff with the guidance of HR.
- I do a bit of all myself, but we also have a company HR rep whose main focus is obviously HR problems.
No, I think it is a big area of potential improvement for myself personally.
- That would be me (Owner), for the most part. We have employed a human resource coordinator, who in due course will be able to take more responsibility in the space, as she has not come from a traditional HR background, which actually proves to be advantageous, as she is learning to do things the correct way and build out processes that were either not in place previously or had been disregarded.
The inception of our HRIS, ELMO has significantly streamlined the onboarding and management of key employment records, payroll etc, as well as currently building out performance and recognition modules within the system.
We also engage a professional HR consultant to advise on key issues and offer regular support for multiple HR issues as they arise. This consultant is advantageous in reviewing documentation and processes around people management, ensuring compliance and offering guidance and support to upper and middle management of the business. They are also assisting us in working through multiple issues stemming from previous HR personnel/management.
So effectively, between all the above, we have built out the right skills, knowledge and support to enable this to be done effectively – and acknowledge that our HR space is a work in progress with significant improvements already experienced.
- I do. Yes I know what I need on my farm.
- Ourselves – yes we have the skills and knowledge but not the time. It would be a god send to find staff that didn't need training / babysitting.
- We identify people we are prepared to have on the farm and our company does the rest.
- HR team
- I do, yes
- HR really isn't relevant to our situation. From past experience I feel I would have the knowledge and the experience to manage farm staff.

- Most of this is done by our book keeper (my daughter) who has multiple jobs. Training is done by both owners (myself and my son) and our main worker (my daughter). Other than pays, super and tax, the onboarding is very basic training shared between the family.
- Myself my dad and sister do all training, my sister does book keeping. We outsource accounting.
- My wife and myself, experience and have done mini courses through Gippsdairy/Ag department on staff management

STAKEHOLDER GROUP: Job Seekers

Question 1: What are you looking for in a job?

- Working on Computers, trying to get out of manual labour and hands on roles.
- Stability & interesting.
- Support & Security. Close location to home. Good Team.
- Flexibility, Availability
- Stable hours, good place to work, professionalism
- (School leaver from farming background) I love to work with animals. I would like to learn more about genetics and good breeding of cattle. I would like to work for someone who will let me learn more and improve my skills
- (Y11 student wanting to leave school to work) I want to get good pay. I want to work outside. I want to work with machinery.
- Stable income. Flexibility.
- I am looking for a good team to work with that can uphold a healthy and safe work environment for everyone. I am also looking for work that poses a challenge to me so I can learn and improve upon skills so I can stay engaged and mentally fit.

Question 2: What do you think working on a farm looks like?

- No easiest of jobs. Applied for several milking roles & never heard back
- Physical dirty work.
- Get dirty. General idea of mechanical work & agriculture.
- Hard work, Dedication
- Tractors and Hey, Long hours, up early, Working late
- (School leaver from farming background) I know that farming can be hard depending on seasons and that I will have to work hard. I think you have to be multi-skilled and solve problems as you go. Farming is all about making sure the animals are healthy.
- (Y11 student wanting to leave school to work) I think it will be early starts. I will be able to drive machinery for harvesting and feeding animals. I think it will be hard work.
- Shit! Bad rosters, inexperience, constantly changing jobs (farm fuck ups).
Decent money, working outdoors can be good in good weather.
Long hours or no hours
- I think working on a farm looks rewarding yet challenging.

Question 3: How much do you think working on a farm pays?

- \$25 per hour
- Minimum Wage \$25 per hour
- No idea
- Not a lot.
- Depends on whether they are having a good year or not e.g. Flooding.
- (School leaver from farming background) I think working on a farm should pay a good wage because it's important we have food and milk and meat and crops. I think about \$58,000 a year.
- (Y11 student wanting to leave school to work) Award wage? Maybe \$30 per hour?

- \$60000 full time
- I think working on a farm pays a respectable amount but could be increased, this is due to the risk involved compared to being an employee at a supermarket for example.

Question 4: What would make you consider an agriculture job?

- Transport issues to get to farm with no car & no public transport.
Not many roles advertised on the internet or newspapers.
- Did not see long term career.
- What am I expected to do. What will they pay.
- Not too sure
- Stable hours
- (School leaver from farming background) Working with the animals and working outside.
- (Y11 student wanting to leave school to work) I want to work outside. I like machinery and animals.
Good pay.
- Better pay, boss pays for training.
- I think the healthy lifestyle of being active and fit would make me consider a job in agriculture, along with the challenges and rewards involved with completing work.

Question 5: What training or skills do you think you need to work in agriculture?

- Licences- Manual car licence.
- Learn on the job & bit fit.
- Chemical mixing licence. Cert in Agriculture.
- Heavy Machinery
- Knowledge on how to operate farming equipment.
- (School leaver from farming background) You definitely need to know how to handle all sorts of animals safely, you need to know when they are sick and how to treat injuries and problems. Skills like fencing, fixing troughs, driving farm equipment you also need. You can do courses for this which would be good but it can't all be paperwork, you need hands on learning as well.
- (Y11 student wanting to leave school to work) A licence. Drive machinery. Be fit. Know how to fix things.
- No formal training, farm common sense (can't teach this). Can't be lazy
- I think in order to work in agriculture you would need to have thorough training in regards to handling animals and their behaviour, I also think you would need training to operate heavy machinery such as a tractor or quad bikes.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP: Young People
Question 1: What do you know about the agriculture industry?

Do you think the agriculture industry has a good reputation?

Do you see a career future on a farm?

- There is different parts to agriculture and different types of machinery to use
- Yes to people in the industry. No to Greens supporters.
Yes I see a future career on my family farms.
- Yes for the most part the agricultural industry has a good reputation.
Yes I think there are many avenues for careers on farms.
- I know that the Ag industry is an important part of our local economy. I think it has a bit of a mixed reputation but potentially because people aren't educated enough about the industry. I see lots of potential careers on a farm!
- Yes I do see a career future on a farm.
- Yes I see a career future.

- I don't know anything about it but yes I see a future on a farm.
- Yes, the agriculture industry has a good reputation. I see a career future on a farm.
- Yes I think the industry has a good reputation. No I don't see myself having a career on a farm.
- I don't think it has a good rep. I don't see myself having a career on a farm.
- I think the agriculture industry has an ok reputation, it has its ups and downs and I'm already working on a cattle farm.
- Agriculture industry has a good reputation rurally, less so in towns or among people who don't have experience or don't understand it.
Possibly. Quality young people are hard to find.
- The ag industry has a good reputation. Yes.
- I don't have an opinion on agriculture. I do think the industry is doing well.
I don't think I have a future here.
- I can see myself on a farm in the future because I have grown up on and I love it.
- Sort of. No I don't because I don't like farm work.

Question 2: Are you planning to move away from Gippsland? If so, what would keep you at home and in your region?

- The amount of local sustainable jobs that are able to keep Gippsland together.
- No, not long term.
- Not planning on permanently moving away from Gippsland but I believe the up-to-date technology especially on vegetable farms and cattle properties should remain and continue to gradually advance.
- No, I am planning on staying! I can see local jobs and opportunities. But I did move away to go to uni because at the time I thought that was my only option – I think this perception is slowly changing.
- No I would like to stay in Gippsland.
- Let me drive a truck.
- No I stay in Gippsland because that's where family is.
- No, I'm planning to stay in Gippsland.
- I want to move away so I have more variety of work.
If I could get work offshore around here.
- I'm not planning on moving out of Gippsland.
- No.
- Local government policy changes allowing more access to land and resources, opening up jobs, and population growth.
- Yes, unfortunately my preferred job is in the ADF up north.
- I'm planning to move. I would stay if I got rich.
- I am not planning on moving away.
- Don't know.

Question 3: What sort of job (or work) would you think you would enjoy and why? Indoor/outdoor, hands-on/tech etc

- I usually would have said hands on outdoor work, but working indoors has given me lots of opportunities and taught me new skills.
- Corporate work in the legal industry & working in the beef industry. Enjoy the formalities of law and reward, thoroughly enjoy farming, livestock handling, and associating with people in the ag industry.
- Outdoor, hands-on work for sure. Making (?) cows, maintaining land through the way of fencing etc and any other general maintenance would be what I enjoy. Using horses for farm work would also be great.
- I think I would enjoy some hands-on work but would need a lot of training/reskilling. I'd be more suited to a support function such as HR, management etc.
- Outdoors, hands on, building anything outside.

- Farming
- Mechanic because I like fixing cars.
- I would enjoy laboratory work, outdoor work (ranger, DELP), and hands on jobs (wood-working, building, smithing)
- Working offshore on ships as a technician / engineer.
- Hands on jobs, trades like mechanic, carpenter, plumber.
- I'd enjoy working outdoors, working on a farm. I enjoy it because its hands on and you learn a lot of new things.
- Outdoor support, training, experience.
- Outdoor hands-on work, I prefer practical work as it keeps me busy.
- Online entertainment / streaming.
- Outdoor hands on. Love helping lift and build at home and at family business.
- Outdoor hands on because I like the sun and it's just better.

Question 4: What do you know about agriculture training, education pathways and apprenticeships?

- I don't know a lot, definitely is a great career pathway for young people and you can learn so many new skills
- I do not have an extensive understanding of this, but do know the basics! Was privileged to grow up on beef farms so did not need to seek alternative pathways to get my foot in the door.
- There are many pathways in the ag industry. Many TAFE courses e.g. Cert 3 in Ag, uni courses which can specialise in the Ag industry like a specific Bachelor in Agriculture, Agribusiness, Equine etc. Many apprenticeships are also available.
- I know there are a lot of training options and pathways for people at secondary school right through to mature learners. And with a mix of hands on, classroom based and online options – although not all are always accessible in regional areas.
- Nothing (x 2)
- Not a lot.
- Don't know anything.
- I don't really know anything about it
- Not a lot – all I know is it's a lot of work.
- Very little. Can be word of mouth for a lot of farms.
- Nothing that I know of / Nothing I can think of.
- It's well put and advertised.

Question 5: What type of work do you think happens on a farm?

- Harvesting, spraying, mixing chemicals.
- **Everything!** Depends on farm – beef, sheep, crop, dairy etc. Land/machinery maintenance, livestock mgmt., book work, pest control, general duties.
- Various types such as maintaining soil standards, spraying weeds, ensuring the longevity of the land through innovative practices, fencing, welding, marking cows, shearing sheep, general maintenance, farm vehicles and more - depends on the type of farm you run and the practices you wish to undertake.
- Too much to list! Everything from operations, HR, logistics, customer service! Both hands on and support work.
- Fencing, ground work, calving, animals.
- Driving heavy cars.
- Dairy work.
- Logging, machinery/tractor work, herding/rounding, harvesting, and sowing seed.
- Harvesting products, farming animals, exporting goods.
- Growing produce, and farming stock.
- Cutting trees, fencing, moving animals, yard work, and cleaning.
- Land maintenance, cropping, stock management, machinery operation

- Handling cattle, operating machinery.
- Gardening.
- Slashing, chainsawing, working with cattle (if you have them)
- Getting vegetables and/or fruit out of the ground and putting them in and making sure the farm is in good condition.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP: Migrant Workers

Question 1: What motivated you to move to a regional area or what would motivate you to move to a regional area?

- Cheaper life in regional town compared with major cities. Living cost like rent, accommodation, food, drink and services are usually cheaper. I have worked in Tasmania, NSW, Melbourne and Gippsland through an agency. I am now free from the agency as I have applied for a different visa. Many of my friends and relations are restricted in movement depending on where they get sent by the agency. Accommodation and living is very expensive through the agency as they garnish our wages.
-

Question 2: What would motivate you to remain in a regional agriculture job?

- Better pay and without any experience being able to find work. I currently work in agriculture but plan to study and work in aged care or nursing.

Question 3: What formal training (i.e. TAFE, Apprenticeship, degree) have you undertaken?

- If any, was it/is it useful in your current role?
- If yes, how easy was it to obtain this training?
- If no, what stopped you from accessing training?
- I have no formal training in this country. I studied in health care in Timor Leste.

Question 4: What concerns do you have about living and working in regional Victoria?

- No concerns for me. I have a large community of people from my country, I speak English well and am more comfortable in the country area.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP: Migrant Worker Agency

Discussion with Ken White, Nelson Cox, Brad Cox and Marcy Giles. (January 14th 2024)

- 1. Accommodation - nothing to rent, jack shit to buy, and there's a challenge in that you are entrusted with ensuring their pastoral and we've always questioned having them living in larger towns exposes them to the potential sins of the outside world. So we have always tried to keep them away from larger towns. No problems going there on downtime and weekends, but not live there.
- 2. Food - they can cook fish in a hole in the ground but day to day, when they are working, they are shocking with diet - they'll eat BBQ Shapes for lunch on a 14 hour day in summer. We have a trade cook giving them balanced meals.
- 3. Transport - they are not the greatest drivers - that needs to be managed.
- 4. Cleanliness - same part of our pastoral care requirements, they have a laundry on site but we monitor and have our cleaners go through periodically

- 5. Recruitment - you have to be careful with recruitment as we are bringing in people from another country, a place with nearly 100 different islands and lots of tribes - so you have get it right as they don't all get along
- 6. Communication - normally we have appointed leaders of each working group, these pe have lets say have tribal respect so when they talk, the crew listens. Its nigh on impossible to expect an Australian leader to get these guys to work in the fashion you want without having the support of a senior member of their crew.
- 7. Aussie Foreman - we've always founds that if we have a dedicated person here who helps oversee their workload, their pastoral care and their after hours care and recreation the system works. It's a big commitment. People from the outside think it's cheap labour. It's not, it's reliable labour that needs to be managed, and we genuinely care about these people and want to improve their lives back home.
- 8. Length of Stay - so the original seasonal worker program was a 7 month rotation and then home, no breaks during this period - to return home that is. New Visa's potentially allow 3-4 years I think with 6-8 weeks at home, which in part was to cover off the investment of the employer in recruiting and getting them here, as the employer covers all that. At this stage we haven't pursued this extended visa. We found during covid when they were stuck here for more than their 7 months it became really difficult to keep their mojo up, work ethic waned, alcohol became an issue and ultimately discipline. I think that type of visa is probably for a single person without wife and kids at home looking for a pathway to permanent residency.
- 9. Cost – it's has become expensive to recruit and retain under this program. I'd have to revisit the costs but as compared to a resident worker who we employ and don't have to worry about the pastoral care stuff - it is definitely more expensive. But get it right and there is a reliability aspect that we just can't seem to achieve with Australian worker nowadays.
- 10. Type of work - they are not up for every type of work. More delicate work with fast ha such as picking broccolini is best done by Asian descent workers who are shorter and but physically to do this work easier. Its larger vegetable lines that these guys are better to with. They hate working in a factory - cold environments. So you have to pick your target.

Attachment 5 – Personas

Attachment 5 – Personas	
Persona  Name: <u>ARLO</u> About: <u>FARMER • CERT IV AG.</u> Story: <u>Family farm, grew up on farm. Small community. Went away to study</u> Goals: <u>Sustainable business to pass on to children.</u> Needs: <u>Good workers who know how to handle animals & use on farm machinery & tech.</u> Pains: <u>Accommodation for workers. Finding skilled workers.</u> Source: Adapted from "Disciplined Entrepreneurship" 3rd Edition, 2014	Persona: Farmer Name: Arlo About: Farmer, Cert IV Agriculture Story: Family farm, grew up on farm. Small community. Went away to study. Goals: Sustainable business to pass on to children Needs: Good workers who know how to handle animals & use on farm machinery & tech Pains: Accommodation for workers. Finding skilled workers.
Persona: <u>Young Person.</u>  Name: <u>Mayson</u> About: <u>School aged (secondary). Lots of local friends. Drives through farming areas often. Interested in tech (passive). Practical & Robust.</u> Story: <u>Plays local sport. Attends school in rural/regional town. Part-time/School Holiday job. Has spent time on/around farms.</u> Goals: <u>Would like to stay local. Loves outdoors. Wants to contribute & feel valued.</u> Needs: <u>Well paying job. Training & opportunity.</u> Pains: <u>Doesn't see/understand opportunities available. Can't see local opportunity. Where do I go to seek training.</u> Source: Adapted from "Disciplined Entrepreneurship" 3rd Edition, 2014	Persona: Young person Name: Mayson About: School aged (secondary). Lots of local friends. Drives through farming areas often. Interested in tech (passive). Practical and robust. Story: Plays local sport. Attends school in rural/regional town. Part-time/school holiday job. Has spent time on/around farm. Goals: Would like to stay local. Loves outdoors. Wants to contribute and feel valued. Needs: Well-paying job. Training and opportunities. Pains: Doesn't see/understand options available. Cant see local opportunity. "Where do I go to seek training"

Persona:  Name: <u>Phill Lucky</u> About: <u>Phil, 40 male 40</u> Story: <u>10 years</u> <u>- Saudi milking cows No pasture</u> <u>- No Farming Experience only milking</u> <u>- No Animal Health</u> <u>- No Driving Experience</u> Goals: <u>- Long term employment</u> <u>- citizenship / Bring out family</u> Needs: <u>- Driver training motor bike</u> <u>- Medical Awareness Medicare card</u> <u>- Tractor Driving</u> <u>- General Farming training</u> Pains: <u>- Transport, Different culture</u> <u>- Lack of Local community</u> <u>- Restriction of movement</u> Source: Adapted from "Displaced Entrepreneurship" 8th April, 2013	Persona: Migrant/CALD workers Name: Phill Lucky About: Filipino male, 40 years old Story: 10 years in Saudi Arabia milking cows. No experience in pastures, general farming experience, only in milking systems. No animal health. No driving experience. Goals: Long-term employment. Citizenship, with the aim to then bring family to Australia. Needs: Driver training – motorbike, manual car. Tractor driving. Medical awareness & Medicare card. General farming training. Pains: Transport, different culture. Lack of local community. Restriction of movement.
Persona: <u>JOBSEEKER.</u>  Name: <u>JENNIFER</u> About: <u>EX-MILLWORKER</u> <u>NIGHT CLEANING SHIFT</u> <u>WANTS EXTRA \$K TO TOP UP</u> <u>SUPER FIRE - RETIREMENT</u> Story: <u>WANTS DAYTIME WORK</u> <u>LIFESTYLE - GRANDKIDS WEEKEND</u> <u>DEEPLY ROOTED IN HEYFIELD</u> <u>VOLUNTEER - CANTEN FOOTBALL/NETBALL</u> Goals: <u>- GET REASONABLE WAGE \$60K</u> <u>40 WEEKS/YR - NORMAL HOURS</u> <u>ROLE CERTAINTY (same job 30 years)</u> Needs: <u>NEEDS CERTAINTY</u> <u>NEEDS LESS PHYSICAL JOB</u> <u>PREPARE FOR RETIREMENT (15 YEARS NEEDS PLAN)</u> Pains: <u>BELIEVES SHE HAS NO TRANSFERABLE</u> <u>SKILLS. MAY NOT BE RECOGNISED</u> <u>IN OTHER INDUSTRY.</u> Source: Adapted from "Displaced Entrepreneurship" 8th April, 2013	Persona: Job Seeker Name: Jennifer About: Ex-millworker. Night cleaning shift. Wants extra \$\$\$ to top up. Story: Wants daytime work. Lifestyle – grandkids weekend. Deeply rooted in Heyfield. Volunteer at the canteen at the local football netball club. Goals: Get reasonable wage - \$60,000. 40 weeks per year, normal hours. Role certainty (has had the same job for 30 years). Needs: Needs certainty. Needs less physical jobs. Preparing for retirement (15 years, needs a plan). Pains: BELIEVES she has no transferrable skills. May not be recognised in other industry.

Attachment 6 – Top 3 Contributors to the Problem Statement

Summary of Votes:

Training Pathways & opportunities	21 Votes
Industry perception and understanding of the Agricultural sector	11 Votes
Skills & Retention	9 Votes
Support Young People / Secondary Schools	6 votes
Promotion and awareness of careers in Agriculture	4 Votes
Others	4 votes
Pride & Perception of Heyfield	3 Votes

3 votes	• Training Pathways - local learning opportunities • Pathways – lack of regional pathways between school and industry • Create model of pathways for Ag – Hort sectors • Good training opportunity – certified / accredited so there is a ‘ticket’ or ‘certificate’ attached – locally based • Training pathway in local area • Pride in Heyfield as an Agricultural town • Exposure and definition around broader farming sector and opportunities • Positive promotion of the agricultural sector • Education on the opportunities in Ag • Industry perception • Raising the profile of careers in Ag – identity; perception • Industry perception • Perception of working in Ag
2 Votes	• Training and Pathways to achieve roles in farming • Pathways and careers • Localise the skilling of labour on farm / off farm • Farmers to take more ownership of training as a retention incentive and support for farmers to provide training • Farmers lack of time / interest to mentor / train workers • Skills and Education – current Cert II, III course are not producing fit for purpose Ag workers • Training and pathways – what skills are needed; training options locally • Workforce attraction • Lack of opportunity to experience Ag – try before you commit • Diversity of future farming jobs / careers • Support young people in employment • Support ongoing for people / youngsters doing Ag training to assist them to find place to do work experience / work / start out a career in farming
1 vote	• Technology Information and Services that support a farming operation • Industry perception, connection and Identity • Ag education in schools to show pathways to Ag careers, so farming isn’t just considered a ‘drop out’ job. It’s a vibrant CAREER • Identify barriers to accessing farming areas e.g. transport, housing, security • Transport and Accommodation • Skills • Connection between young person and farmers • What McClouds Daughters did for pastoral Australia • Design the on-farm support model

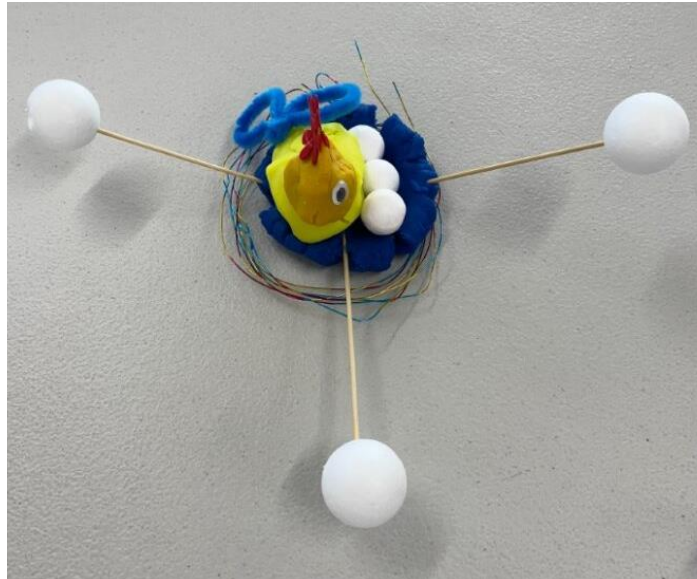
Attachment 7 – Crazy 8 Ideas

Good ideas:	
Engagement / school programs	• School engagement program resourced to take kids to farms regularly to talk to farmers • In-school education programs which are funded through government investment • Experiential Ag Skills & Education program for young people 16-25 – face to face and practical soft skills • Program to connect kids to Ag • Rotation program between city/country – supervisors to attract more people to region • Develop work experience “taster” opportunities, delivered on farms with farmers • Work experience for all Grade 6 kids supported by staff to supervise and direct activities • “Come and Try” day on series of farms for 1 day – a taste of farm life • A replica of Longerenong with course updates or integrating farm opportunities into other courses – ICT, Commerce, Business Law etc. ◦ “HATCH Program”: Broiler, Hort, Dairy • Host city/country experiences for students – uni, school
Centre / Hub	• Local study hub – education support • Cultural farming hubs to support diverse cultural backgrounds • Heyfield Centre for Agriculture • “How to work part time on a farm” conference – employers and employees co-design for pilot
Perception	• Campaign to improve perception of Ag jobs & to promote pathways • Positive marketing of Heyfield as the “heart” of Gippsland’s Agricultural sector • Leave marketing for Ag industry up to government • Local short video series exposing farming & daily challenges ◦ Challenging perception of farmers ◦ Broadening horizons • Film <i>Masterchef</i> in Heyfield to promote our connection to food • Make Heyfield the host of Australia’s best vegetable festival, with rock music • A brochure advertising Ag in Heyfield • Careers advisors • A campaign: children’s book replacing firemen with microbiologist, farm drone etc. • Promotion of Heyfield and surrounds
Farm assistance / Training	• Skills support on farm • Program to link job seekers to farmers • Heyfield Farmer Training Support Program • On-farm training and skills development program • Better rostering • Varied skill training (vary types of jobs to do on farm) – informal

	• Advanced training (certified) • On-site trainers delivering practical training through learn & earn • Deliver forklift training in own language for ESL migrant workers • A Training Mobile Room that has short courses to deliver what's needed • Free TAFE or training
Accommodation	• Affordable and fit-for-purpose accommodation • All farmers to be provided with on-site lodgings for workers
Other	• Better pay • Starting bonus to employees @ 3 & 6 months • Split shifts
"Bad" ideas – can we flip these into "good ideas"?	
Engagement / school programs	• Daily farm buses like a school bus for farmers / workers • "Come and try" program ○ Pulling calves ○ Milking cows ○ Degassing bloated stock ○ Seeding a paddock solo • Make politicians spend two weeks per year working on a farm – "Boots and all" • Government employees spend a day a week working on farms • Relying on farmers to make first move – too busy • Heyfield: Landfill Centre • Heyfield: Australia's First Nuclear Power Plant • Subsidy program to build on farm housing for Ag workers, that only big business can access & write grants for • Farm vehicle driver training @ Forestec • Pathway napkin – someone write on a napkin pathways into Ag employment • Tents for migrant workers • Group accommodation for farmer workers in abandoned community buildings • Mandatory on-farm work experience for city kids (even country kids) • Compulsory military service – instead of training for war, training on farms in different locations via conscription • Give cash incentives to farmers with high turnover of staff • An updated Bluey cartoon who has a successful farmer friend • A Hollywood blockbuster where a farmer is the hero (or the villain) • A YouTuber / influencer – "Haylor Swift" • Robot farmers • Free milk/beef to staff • Make faster tractors/machines • Move farms to the city

Attachment 8 – Model and concepts

Model #1: Redgum Plains Agricultural Skills & Education Program



Redgum Plains Agricultural Skills & Education Program

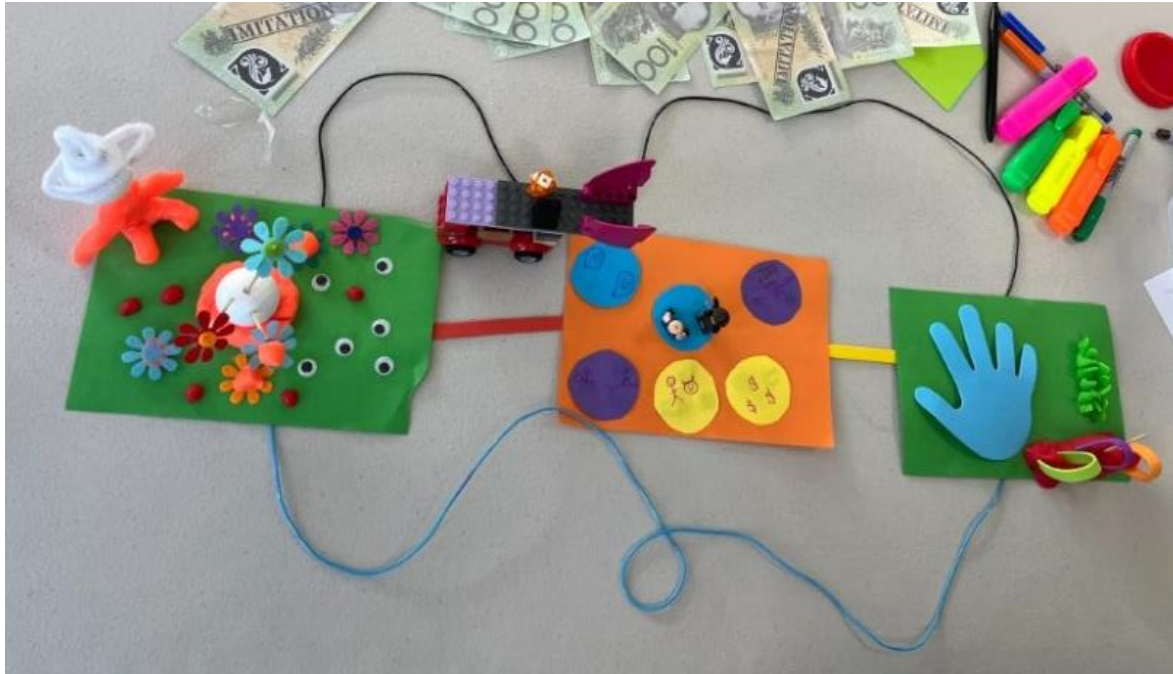
Background

- Red Gum Plains is one of the region's most affordable regions for people to get a start in farming
- Department of Education have managed risks by constricting opportunities available for students

Program Details:

- Industry-led program that bridges educational institutions such as TAFEs and schools.
- Utilizes a hybrid delivery model incorporating both classroom instruction and on-farm learning.
- Focuses on experiential learning, particularly targeting Year 9 students, emphasizing practical, hands-on experiences.
- Built on regional partnerships involving institutions like Longenong, Marcus Oldham, and Dookie College, along with TAFE Gippsland and local schools.
- Funding sourced from LGA Vic and the State Government.
- Funded for at least two years, with a design that allows for iterative improvements based on trust and regular reviews.
- Grounded in industry research to address values and needs, prioritizing experiential agricultural skills over certification, and employing trainers with agricultural experience and strong engagement skills.
- Expected to be tailored to the specific needs of the region, contributing to its success as it transitions from the timber industry to agriculture.
- Aims to celebrate the achievements of the agriculture sector within the region.

Model #2: Keeping it Local



Local Agriculture Experience Tours

- The tours would be delivered as "Family Fun Days" and offer access to organizations not usually open to the public, such as rotary dairies.
- Farm visits occur every two months, showcasing the diversity of agricultural activities in the local area.
- Farmers present their innovations and ideas during the tours.
- Visitors have the opportunity to sample farm-produced food like milkshakes and cheese.
- Activities may include flower picking at flower farms and demonstrations on milking.
- "Speed dating" sessions connect visitors with farm owners and workers to discuss potential job opportunities.
- Case studies are shared to inspire future attendance.
- The tours aim to strengthen connections between local residents and farmers.
- Targeted towards local people, with separate bus tours arranged for different groups, including students, families, migrants, and others seeking new experiences in Gippsland.
- The ongoing nature of the tours fosters a sense of belonging within the community.
- Farmers receive payment for showcasing their farms.
- The initiative highlights positive stories about agriculture in Heyfield.
- Bus tours also include visits to agriculture service industries such as veterinary centers, AI technicians, agronomists, and irrigation facilities.

Model #3: City-2-Country Exchange Program



City-Heyfield Exchange Program

- 5) Template program developed in consultation with host farmers, rather than designed by farmers, owing to their limited availability
- 6) Targeted at high school students.
- 7) Provides structured workplace learning opportunities.
- 8) Students work on modules towards certificates
- 9) Offers accreditation/VETIS opportunity with a Cert 2 in Agriculture.
- 10) Potential for a similar model to be offered through Federation University industry placements for other relevant students, such as those in Business programs.
- 11) System facilitates farm experience for both metropolitan and regional students.
- 12) Initially focuses on local collaboration between TAFE, university, and Wellington education system, with potential for scaling if successful.
- 13) Integrates education curriculum with local economic needs.
- 14) Includes a built-in trainer.
- 15) Provides structure and consistency to the work experience process.
- 16) Resembles a tailored industry placement where farmers provide land and resources to the program.
- 17) Modeled after the Fed Uni Co-op Model, which mandates paid industry placements as part of certain degrees, such as Berwick business students.
- 18) "AGRIBUS" transports participants.

Model #4: Heyfield Ag Training Coordination Hub



- Hub may begin online before physical “bricks and mortar” establishment.
- Targets young individuals early in their careers, newcomers, and unemployed individuals, offering diverse opportunities beyond traditional farm work e.g. computer work, learning how to fly a drone to record data
- Driven by industry and supported by government (two hands in model)
- Aims to develop participants into fully skilled individuals ("fully bloomed flowers" in the model).
- Farmers are equipped with improved technology skills (has learnt how to utilise a tablet in the model)
- Assists farmers in recruitment and showcasing pathways into the sector.
- Hub serves as advocate for Heyfield Ag sector, promoting positive narratives.
- Focuses on leveraging regional advantages:
 - Gippsland region uniquely positioned for success
 - Region boasts 8 major dairy processors, supported by farm and horticulture sectors

Attachment 9 – Top Ideas – Power Votes

Participants were asked to document the 2 top idea or concept they had heard through the workshops:

Summarised as:

Co-ordinated ‘Hub’ approach:

- Connection of projects / model presented on day
- Join ideas as one system
- Hub idea
- Hub IT
- Hub but needs a co-ordinator (not just online)
- Online hub for publicising good news stories & communities of practise

Increasing exposure / promotion / training / careers and opportunities:

- Farm Stay Program
- Opportunity to do a driving showcase to attract students to a learning development program
- Work experience for school kids – catch them early
- Showcase local farms
- Ag weekend / bus trip – open farms to public for the day
- Fed Uni industry placements on farms for business students
- An intervention that facilitates engagement from all areas of the community
- Ag must be on curriculum and in front of career teachers
- Mix metro and rural kids
- Advocacy

Attachment 10 – Previous work in Heyfield

HEYFIELD & DISTRICT-AG Skills & Training HUB

WHAT problems to address?

1. FOR EMPLOYERS

- ⇒ Recruitment, retention in workforce
- ⇒ OHS compliance. Upskill staff.
- ⇒ Worker time release; delivery mode
- ⇒ Easy access to relevant information

2. FOR STUDENTS & EMPLOYEES

- ⇒ Training that is relevant, practical
- ⇒ How connect to networks. Find jobs.

3. FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS

- ⇒ Student numbers, training relevance
- ⇒ New courses & new trainers

4. FOR ALL

- ⇒ Fragmented training. Limited cross-industry mechanism for connection

VISION BOARD

WHAT is the RESEARCH?

1. EXISTING AG SKILLS & TRAINING

- ⇒ Local conditions. Ag statistics & policy
- ⇒ Identify stakeholders, networks.
- ⇒ Examples of innovative approaches

2. DEVELOP NEW PACKAGES

- ⇒ Recommendations, trials,

3. SUSTAINABILITY OF HUB

- ⇒ Grants, funding, future directions

HOW will it happen?

- ⇒ Collaboration. Networks. Build trust.
- ⇒ Partnerships. Ambassadors.
- ⇒ Blend of existing and new.
- ⇒ Trial, pilot. Look at what does this district want to be known for?
- ⇒ Project resources: staff, leadership
- ⇒ Local knowledge and resources.
- ⇒ Time & effort - employers, industry, students, training providers, etc.

WHO are the students?

1. YOUNG PEOPLE

- ⇒ School Students. Work Placement. Apprentices / Trainees.

2. EXISTING WORKERS

- ⇒ OH&S compliance; Upskill
- ⇒ Supervisors. Owners / managers

3. PEOPLE NEW TO AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH
Local characteristics,
resources & ideas.

CO-ORDINATION

...Connecting the dots...

**NEW
SKILLS & TRAINING
PACKAGES**

WHAT is CO-ORDINATION?

1. NAVIGATE THE SYSTEM

- ⇒ Local "go to" place for connecting people & services
- ⇒ Understand current system, networks.

2. MECHANISM FOR CONNECTION

- ⇒ Mechanism to connect stakeholders
- ⇒ Work with industry & employers to identify gaps, & develop new training
- ⇒ Mentoring program

3. GOVERNANCE

- ⇒ Operation of hub; decision-making

WHAT is the TRAINING?

1. TECHNOLOGY / SUSTAINABILITY

- ⇒ Irrigation; water; digital; high-tech equipment; jobs of future

2. UPSKILL / OH&S COMPLIANCE

- ⇒ Existing courses delivered differently
- ⇒ Increase productivity / efficiency

3. SHARING SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- ⇒ Train the Trainer support
- ⇒ Mental health, wellbeing support

HOW is different from business as usual?

1. LOGISTICS

- ⇒ Place-based, local resources
- ⇒ Co-ordinated, easier to navigate

2. TYPE OF TRAINING PACKAGE

- ⇒ Micro-credentials blended with pre-accredited + accredited
- ⇒ New methods of delivery

3. CONTENT & ACCESS

- ⇒ Cross industry. New courses
- ⇒ Mechanism for new connections

WHY do something differently?

1. INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY

- ⇒ Ag is big employer, regional output.
- ⇒ Food security. Industry leadership
- ⇒ Sustainability. Increase profit.

2. ADAPTING TO CHANGE.

- ⇒ Mechanism to research & develop courses for new jobs or technology.
- ⇒ Response to Timber transition

3. MECHANISM FOR CONNECTIONS

- ⇒ New ways to attract ag workers. Make it easy, convenient, friendly
- ⇒ Stakeholders can work together
- ⇒ Assist people to move jobs, industry.
- ⇒ Opportunity for local people, farms, resources, skills and knowledge.
- ⇒ Ag people who want to help others

4. A DIFFERENT APPROACH

- ⇒ New, practical training. Co-ordinated support for students and employers.
- ⇒ Increase options for those who don't like classroom and/or online
- ⇒ Group training. Sense of belonging.
- ⇒ Flexibility, tailored to local needs
- ⇒ Complimentary to existing.