Government Response

Review into Agricultural Education and Training in New South Wales

Recommendation to Government

1. A review into careers advice provision in New South Wales Schools be undertaken to ensure students are provided with well-informed advice on possible careers and pathways.

2. New South Wales school systems, schools and TAFE NSW Institutes establish an ‘Agriculture and Food Week’ within the annual school year to celebrate and appreciate the role that agriculture and food make to the health, wealth and wellbeing of society.

3. The Board of Studies NSW develops a ‘Statement on teaching about agriculture in primary school’, including guidance and advice for teachers about Key Learning Area opportunities and availability of resources.

4. The NSW Institute of Teachers, New South Wales universities and school authorities initiate a review of the training and ongoing professional development of primary teachers in science, including agriculture and food, to ensure that primary teachers have the confidence, sufficient expertise and up-to-date knowledge to deliver quality science education in schools.

5. In the teaching of Technology in each of Years 7 and 8 of secondary school, at least one content area be based on agriculture, food and fibre.

6. In the context of the implementation of the Australian curriculum in the senior years of schooling, the Board of Studies NSW considers the potential for students with a clear interest in agriculture to package a set of study options that better target vocational and professional career opportunities in that field.

Government Response

Recommendations 1 and 2 are supported. The Government will take up the need to improve provision of advice about careers in agriculture and the concept of an ‘Agriculture and Food Week’ with each of the school sectors and TAFE NSW.

Supported. The preparation of a Statement will be integrated into the development of NSW syllabuses for the Australian curriculum in Technology by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.

Supported. This will be undertaken in 2014 by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.

Supported. This will be implemented through NSW syllabuses for the Australian curriculum in Technology by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.
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<td>7. The NSW Institute of Teachers undertakes a review of the qualifications of teachers in Agriculture and Primary Industries to determine future directions in recruitment to ensure strong depth in expertise in these areas.</td>
<td>Supported. This will be undertaken in 2014 by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.</td>
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<td>8. The agricultural high schools in New South Wales be considered ‘specialist schools’ for education and training in Agriculture and Primary Industries for secondary students. These schools should:</td>
<td>Recommendations 8-11 are supported.</td>
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<td>a. Encourage all students to study Agriculture and/or Primary Industries in senior secondary school</td>
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<td>b. Review their mission statements to ensure that agricultural education is strongly identified as a designated educational outcome for their students and</td>
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<td>c. Utilise the flexibility provided for staff appointments to appoint directly specialist agriculture teaching staff because of their pivotal role in the reputation and leadership responsibilities of the school.</td>
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<td>9. An Agricultural High Schools Forum be established comprising the Principals of agricultural high schools and officers of the NSW Department of Education and Communities. Issues for consideration should include:</td>
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<td>a. Professional development needs</td>
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<td>b. Management of agricultural equipment</td>
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<td>c. Residential accommodation policies, management and staffing arrangements.</td>
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<td>10. Agricultural high schools give consideration to establish and maintain, where they do not exist, an email-based alumni network for school promotion and reconnection with potential supporters.</td>
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<td>11. Head teachers of agriculture from the agricultural high schools and VET providers form a network to develop a program of actions that contributes to leadership in agricultural education and training.</td>
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<td>12. The NSW Department of Education and Communities considers Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status for the combined agricultural high schools.</td>
<td>Not supported. Existing RTO arrangements support the intent of this recommendation.</td>
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<td>13. The NSW Department of Education and Communities explores the options for the designation of an agricultural high school in central New South Wales, such as Dubbo. Such school would need to be near to TAFE training facilities and would need adjunct accommodation facilities for females and males.</td>
<td>Supported. The Government will explore options but will not explore the need for additional boarding facilities in the area.</td>
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### Recommendation to Government

14. The NSW Department of Education and Communities identifies a range of lighthouse schools statewide that support good practice in curriculum delivery, student engagement and career promotion in Agriculture and Primary Industries.

15. The NSW Department of Education and Communities undertakes further consultation to develop partnerships that encourage more Aboriginal students to access agricultural courses, further training and related employment opportunities, including through Opportunity Hubs.

16. The NSW Department of Primary Industries' Research Centres establish an annual forum with regional agriculture teachers to explore and plan activities to enrich the teaching of Agriculture and Primary Industries in regional schools and VET settings.

17. Where opportunities exist, schools move over time to offer Certificate III in Primary Industries for those students seeking employment in agriculture.

18. State and federal funding authorities recognise the benefits, for disengaged Aboriginal youth, of BackTrack and similar schemes in New South Wales and create flexibility of funding to ensure the schemes are able to operate with maximum benefit to participants.

19. TAFE NSW reviews the offerings in primary industries in the metropolitan area to ensure students have appropriate access to such training.

20. TAFE NSW works with the AgriFood NSW Industry Training Advisory Body to encourage:
   - Establishment of aquaculture training packages and opportunities in oyster farming
   - Review of training packages in fish farming to ensure business principles and environmental management are appropriately represented.

21. In Smart and Skilled, agricultural and seafood courses be considered for thin market Community Service Obligation payments to guarantee training in rural and remote areas.

### Government Response


15. Supported. Opportunities for training and employment in agriculture will be developed including consideration of options available through Opportunity Hubs.

16. Supported.

17. Supported. Some schools are already able to deliver Certificate III.

18. Supported. Funding arrangements will be raised with the Commonwealth.

19. Supported.

20. Supported. TAFE NSW will continue this work.

21. Supported. This approach will be considered as part of the implementation of Smart and Skilled.
Recommendation to Government

22. The NSW Department of Primary Industries, in conjunction with the C B Alexander Foundation and other stakeholders, establishes a set of guidelines on what constitutes a ‘Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education and Training’ and ensures the guidelines are implemented.

23. The Tocal College farms be managed as a business unit under the auspices of the C B Alexander Foundation.

24. The NSW Department of Primary Industries re-establishes the Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture under the following principles to provide the opportunity to build on the reputation of the past, yet with the flexibility to provide an expanded range of services. These principles are:

   a. That Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture has a defined location and that the boundaries of the entity are drawn up along the lines indicated in the report to enable the College to operate independently of Yanco Agricultural Institute

   b. That the facilities are operated under a not-for-profit trust and continued investment in the operation of the facilities be undertaken

   c. That an education and training subcommittee of the trust be appointed, comprising the NSW Department of Primary Industries, TAFE NSW, Yanco Agricultural High School and Charles Sturt University to advise on programs, farms, training facilities and inter-educational relations

   d. That training and other programs deliver to the needs of southern New South Wales and operate independently of Tocal College, but that the Colleges collaborate on issues such as a single NSW Department of Primary Industries Colleges RTO (which should not align in name with either college), publications, training package development, and other Departmental training initiatives

   e. That a College Director be appointed with skills in training, finance and enterprise management. Such appointment should be funded by the NSW Department of Primary Industries, have the independent authority to run the business and operate as the Executive Officer to the trust board

   f. That the trust invites regional industries to commit to the College through investment, support for training of their staff and involvement in the trust.

Government Response

Supported. The NSW Department of Primary Industries will consider the need for additional guidelines to complement RTO requirements.

Supported. The Government will progress this approach.

Supported. The Government supports the recommendation in principle.
Recommendation to Government

25. The NSW Government, through the Standing Council on Primary Industries, raises the following matters with the Federal Government:

   a. Greater provision of top-up scholarships by Research and Development Corporations, to the maximum allowable under the taxation rules

   b. An increase in the maximum allowance for top-ups under the tax-free provisions for research scholarships

   c. The need to restore competitive and respectable stipends for postgraduate scholars under the Australian Postgraduate Award and Australian Research Council schemes including annual increments and superannuation entitlements.

Government Response

Supported. This matter will be raised through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Standing Council on Primary Industries.

26. The NSW Department of Primary Industries, in conjunction with key industries and universities, explores the merit of developing a professional development program focused on leadership, management and policy development in the agricultural sector through an alliance modelled on the Australian and New Zealand School of Government approach.

Supported. The NSW Department of Primary Industries will further explore this proposal.

27. The NSW Department of Primary Industries undertakes to complete the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on collaboration between the Department, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW and NSW Farmers Association with the purpose of increasing the range of activities year round to support the education needs in agriculture. Opportunity should be taken to engage commercial, industry and other government parties.

Supported. The NSW Department of Primary Industries will progress the renewal of the MoU, which ensures coordination and collaboration between key organisations.

Recommendations to Industry

The Government encourages industry to consider its capacity to implement the Review’s 15 recommendations to industry.