

VFITB Food Process Operator Up Skilling Project 2010

Progress Report

VFITB Meetings

Several meetings have been held to develop project implementation strategies and processes. This includes drafting a report outline, work schedule and project timeline, assembling a list of prospective industry and other stakeholders for consultation.

Consultations

Interviews have been held to date with representatives from the following companies and industry organisations:

Simplot

Turi Foods (Golden Farms Poultry and La Ionica Chicken)

National Union of Workers

Skilled – training arm of organisation

Warrnambool Cheese and Butter

Heinz

Murray Goulburn Co Op

Ai Group

Casey and Linda attended the Plenty Food Expo and met with companies and RTOs in the food area.

Interviews and meetings have been held with representatives from the following RTOs and training support organisations:

CMM General Manufacturing

DIVERSITAT

GO TAFE – Shepparton department

National Food Institute

Richard Jenkins and Associates (food processing training package writers for AgriFood Skills Australia)

MESAB (Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Advisory Board)

Ashley Group

National Workplace Trainers

Project Steering Committee Meetings

Two PSC meetings have been held. Note – the NUW representative has changed to be their national secretary, Doug Stevens.

Project Discussion Paper

A project discussion paper was drafted and finalised following consultation with VFITB and PSC. This paper is now being used to continue the consultation with industry and other stakeholders and is on the VFITB website. www.vfitb.org.au This Consultation Paper/Industry Survey lists the new technical units that will be in FDF10 which is due for release by August 2010. This Food Upskilling project seeks to raise industry's awareness of new units and packaging flexibility in the new Training Package.

<http://www.vfitb.com.au/projects.php>

Project Report

Preliminary work has commenced on generic sections of the project report. These include the food processing industry in Victoria, identifying RTOs delivering Food training, etc.

Project draft timeline:

Consultations with industry and Interim Report completion and distribution	31 July
Liaison with RTOs to feed into writing first Training Solutions Report	End August
Validation draft of Training Solutions report to be circulated to IAC and industry stakeholders for comment and report revision	End September

Upcoming Industry Consultation

A northern Victoria industry consultation trip will occur in July to visit a minimum 6 enterprises over three days. To date the discussion paper has been sent to the following company representatives with a view of receiving input for the project:

Mars - Ballarat
 McCain - Ballarat
 Patties – Bairnsdale
 Fyna - Hallam
 Fosters Group – Abbotsford
 Fonterra – Mt Waverley
 Fonterra - Cobden
 Heinz - Mill Park
 Heinz - Echuca
 Nestle – Tongala
 Unilever – Tatura
 Tatura Milk – Tatura
 Luv a Duck – Nhill
 Kraft Foods – Port Melbourne
 Coca Cola Amatil – Moorabbin
 Mars – Scoresby

Early Indicators

The feedback from industry and stakeholders to date indicates that:

- Up skilling process operators provides a range of benefits to both employer and employees.
 The top three reasons for undertaking training for process operators are:
 - Meet minimum skills to facilitate production requirements
 - Meet compliance – OHS, HACCP, customer requirements, etc.
 - Improve productivity
- Those enterprises that utilise traineeships for the bulk of their process operator training, rate the Government training incentives as important.
- The greatest demand for formal/structured skills development are in the generic industry skill areas including, OHS, quality, HACCP, team work, communications.

- Environmental sustainability as it relates to a process operator's job is also emerging as a required generic skill for people working in the food processing sector.
- The competencies covered by the FDF 03 Training Package at Certificate II and III cover the skills for the vast number of enterprises. Those with specialist needs have imported the additional skill areas from other industry training packages.
- A number of enterprises train for specific skill sets and leave it up to the employee to pursue the full qualification.
- For the bulk of enterprises the operator jobs have not changed significantly over the past 5 years.
- Although some enterprise do require process operators to undertake some minor mechanical functions, the level of skill is at a very basic level and generally associated with equipment cleaning or product changeover.
- The level of literacy and/or numeracy skills held by operators varies greatly from site to site. In workplaces with high numbers of employees with English as a Second Language some issues do arise with implementing operator training. Many enterprises have used WELL programs to assist with addressing this issue.
- The industry does not use minimum qualifications as a prerequisite to employment. The portability of the qualification relates primarily to the generic skills (food handling, HACCP, OHS, etc.) within the qualification, not the qualification as a whole. This is because the functional skills in most enterprises relate to products and production processes unique to that workplace.
- Most enterprises rely on their RTO to keep abreast of training issues. Employer Associations, industry networks, etc. are also sources of information.