

Building the Future of Australia's Agricultural Workforce

AgCAREERSTART

Learn. Grow. Farm. Your Pathway into Agriculture.

Contact us for more information:

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National
Farmers
Federation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia's agriculture sector is targeting \$100 billion in farm gate output by 2030, but achieving this goal requires a strong, skilled workforce. The sector faces an ageing demographic, workforce shortages, and low awareness among young people of careers in agriculture.

AgCAREERSTART is the only national program designed to provide a structured pathway for young Australians into agriculture. Delivered by the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the program offers an immersive, supported on-farm experience complemented by training, networking, and career development opportunities.

Since 2022, AgCAREERSTART has:

- ✓ Placed over 200 participants on farms nationwide
- ✓ Achieved 90% retention in agriculture careers
- ✓ Delivered BCR 3.82 – proven ROI

Now, we seek industry bodies, RDCs, and government partners to co-invest in the next phase of AgCAREERSTART to secure the agricultural workforce pipeline and strengthen regional and rural communities.



THE CHALLENGE

Australia's agriculture sector is one of the nation's economic pillars, but it faces a looming workforce crisis. Without urgent action, these issues will impact productivity, innovation, and our ability to meet the national goal of \$100 billion in farm gate output by 2030.

National Challenges:

- Ageing Workforce: Average farmer age = 58
- Critical Shortage: 100,000+ new workers needed by 2030
- Low Awareness: Young people lack ag career pathway

OUR SOLUTION

A national gap-year program connecting young Australians (18–25 year old) with paid on-farm employment for 8 – 12 months.

Features:



- ☑ Paid Placement (full-time aligned with industry awards)
- ☑ Training and Development Bursary: \$3,000
- ☑ Industry Networking Events
- ☑ Orientation Week
- ☑ Compliance and Business Support
- ☑ Pastoral Care Support for Participants and Host Producers

IMPACT TO DATE

AgCAREERSTART has delivered measurable success since the first cohort in 2022.

Independent evaluation confirms that the program is achieving its goals of building workforce capability, supporting diversity, and delivering strong economic value.

- ✓ 200+ participants since 2022
- ✓ 44% from metro areas
- ✓ 58% female placements
- ✓ 6% Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
- ✓ 10% Identified as having a disability
- ✓ 7% Born outside of Australia
- ✓ 3% From non-English speaking backgrounds
- ✓ 90% Retention into ag jobs & further study
- ✓ BCR 3.82 overall

FUTURE VISION

AgCAREERSTART is committed to evolving with the needs of industry, producers, and participants. As we plan for the future, our focus is on delivering greater impact, improved flexibility, and cost-efficiency, while maintaining the high standards of participant and host producer support that define the AgCAREERSTART program.



- ✓ Realistic cohort sizes
- ✓ Domestic workforce, reinvesting earnings back in to local communities
- ✓ Shorter Placements for Seasonal Demand
- ✓ Training and Development Bursary Streamlined to \$3,000
- ✓ Reduced Events Per Participant
- ✓ Access State and Local Training Opportunities
- ✓ All Participants 18+ for Safety and Compliance
- ✓ All Participants Must Hold a Probationary Drivers License
- ✓ Eliminating the \$2,000 Host Producer Safety Incentives
- ✓ Increased Accessibility for ATSI Participants and Producers
- ✓ Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting

WHY PARTNER WITH US?

Australia's agriculture sector is on track for growth, but success depends on attracting, training, and retaining the next generation of skilled workers. By partnering with AgCAREERSTART, you're not just funding a program – you're investing in the future of agriculture and the strength of regional Australia.



Partner with us today to:

- ✓ Secure a Skilled Workforce
- ✓ Provide an Entry Pathway for Young Australians
- ✓ Strengthen Regional and Rural Communities
- ✓ Deliver Proven ROI
- ✓ Align with Ag2030 Goals



CALL TO ACTION

Join us in shaping the future of Australian Agriculture.

We are seeking co-investments to sustain and expand AgCAREERSTART, ensuring a skilled workforce pipeline for all commodities across Australian Agriculture.

Funding will directly support:

- ✓ Participant placements and host producer support
- ✓ Training and development bursaries
- ✓ Pastoral care and compliance programs
- ✓ Industry networking and events

Partner with AgCAREERSTART to build capacity across rural and regional farming communities, strengthen the workforce, and secure the future of agriculture.

To discuss partnership opportunities or multi-year funding contributions, please contact:

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**National
Farmers
Federation**



PARTICIPANT JOURNEY

Home State:

WA

Placement:

QLD

Industry:

Beef



Vienna

Coming from Metro-Perth, joining the AgCAREERSTART program has changed Vienna's life. *"I really wanted to be in Agriculture, but I just didn't have the right connections or know the right people"*. After just 8 months on an extensive beef operation, Vienna has had exposure to horses, yard work, lick runs, trucking, oxy cutting, welding and of course – fencing. As the year comes to a close, Vienna hopes to stay on-farm and continue to build her skillset, including being offered leadership opportunities within the team.

Completed so far in 2025:

- Beef Fundamentals Course
- Horsemanship School
- Motorbike School
- Attended Innovation Generation

HOST PRODUCER EXPERIENCE

Placement:

VIC

Industry:

Dairy

Richard:

With 800 dairy cows and 1,000 head of beef, Richard has found the AgCAREERSTART program nothing short of *"fantastic"*. Having 4 participants over the last 3 years, he has been able to maintain a steady workforce that not only benefits his company, but the agriculture industry as a whole. *"I enjoy employing the younger generation mainly because they're smart, they're keen, they want to work...we pride ourselves on producing the next leaders in Australian agriculture"*. Richard is a firm believer in fostering the next generation; *"if you give young people the opportunity, they can pretty much do anything"*.

3 of Richard's participants



Annie Brown,
ABC Rural