



# Grain Producers SA



25 June 2015

The Hon Leon Bignell, MP  
Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
GPO Box 1533  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

[ministerleonbignell@sa.gov.au](mailto:ministerleonbignell@sa.gov.au)

Dear Minister Bignell,

**Re: GRAIN PRODUCERS SA SEEKS CLARIFICATION ON THE CHANGES TO RTO'S ACCESS TO WORKREADY FUNDING**

Grain Producers SA (GPSA) is the peak industry body for South Australian grain producers. It is unique in that it is a non-political body that represents all grain producers to government, the community and industry including, grain marketers, exporters, transporters, storage and handlers, researchers and farm input suppliers.

The recent WorkReady announcement has concerned our members. The removal of unlimited contracts for traineeship funding for Certificate 3 in Agriculture and Certificate 3 in Rural Operations will be a serious blow to the broadacre industry in this state. Effectively it means that no traineeships are available for broadacre agriculture, specifically the grains industry. If this Government is truly committed to its strategic priority of Premium Food from our Clean Environment, then how can the removal of training to this vital sector of the State's primary industries be seen as either effective or practical in achieving this priority.

We believe a move away from private RTO's to fund TAFE SA will see a demise in broadacre agriculture training opportunities. Private RTO's have played an important role in the provision of training to the broadacre agriculture sector, especially as TAFE SA continued to withdraw from the regions and this sector. Private RTO's have increased their market share in the regions by developing a high level of industry consultation as well as relationships with private enterprises, allowing industry facilities and infrastructure to be used for the provision of training. While TAFE SA is looking at moving back into this training space, there will still be a considerable time lag as they upskill and invest in appropriate facilities and staff to be able to conduct this very specific type of training.

Without training such as the Certificate 3 in Agriculture and Rural Operations, how can the next generation of farmers be trained and upskilled to face an increasingly complex business environment. How are we supposed to attract young people back to working in these industries if suitable training is not available for them? The private RTO's are very often the only training providers in the regions and therefore are critical to the upskilling and training for the next generation of farm managers. The removal of subsidised funding to RTO's places much of this training in doubt.

This is particularly critical as farmers and farm managers face increasing pressure in terms of their skills and expertise not only in farm management but also in meeting their obligations in areas such as work health safety and heavy vehicle



movements, just to name a few. The recent 90 Day project – A Modern Transport System For Agriculture has highlighted skill shortages and a knowledge gap for some farmers in transport related issues – in the absence of TAFE SA in the regions, existing private RTO's would be the best placed to provide the necessary training but it seems they will now be excluded.

The value and importance of the grains industry to this state, should not be underestimated. The grain industries are large and diverse, making a significant contribution to the economy. Total grain production in South Australia from an estimated 3,000 grain producing businesses for the 2014-15 season was 7.63 million tonnes from 4.04 million hectares. With an estimated farm gate value of over \$1.8 billion & export value of \$2.2 billion, the grains industry is a not only a major contributor to this state's economy it is also a significant export earner for this state and a significant employer. PIRSA has estimated that the industry employs more than 20,000 people along the supply chain from production, milling, baking, cereal manufacturing, malt and beverage manufacturing. Where will they go now for their training?

Access to appropriate and timely training will be essential for this industry to continue to develop and invest in it's people which will be critical if this industry is to continue to grow and prosper. We support Rob Kerin, Chair of Primary Producers SA, who has proposed the following options as a possible solution to ensuring the broadacre agricultural industry is not disadvantaged in terms of access to training –

- a) Allocate the same provision of unlimited contracts of training (to both TAFE SA and RTO's) as have been allocated to almost every other industry sector but only for:
  - Certificate 3 in Agriculture
  - Certificate 3 in Rural operations
- b) Allocate 150 places for the Diploma of Agribusiness Management (to both TAFE SA and private RTO's)

We would appreciate a meeting with you, at your earliest convenience, to discuss the implications of the removal of funding from private RTO's to fund TAFE SA. Please contact our CEO, Mr Darren Arney, with a possible time to meet with you to discuss this important issue further on either [darren@grainproducerssa.com.au](mailto:darren@grainproducerssa.com.au) or 0488 186 707.

Yours sincerely



Garry Hansen  
Chairman  
Grain Producers SA Ltd

cc Minister Gago: minister.gago@sa.gov.au