



“Crackers”

March 2009

Definitions of a Cracker:
Surprise that goes off with a BANG
Something to chew on between meals
Someone or something special

Welcome to the first “Crackers” report

Welcome to the first of a series of monthly newsletters to participants in the North West Rural Skills Connect Program. This edition has enclosed the first of two surveys that will circulate to you, the second being out in late August.

It is important that you respond to the survey which collects information for the State Government. This information will show the funding body, Regional Development Victoria, that the support from Rural Skills Connect is making a difference to skill shortages and to our farming communities.

I would like to share with you some of the support I hear daily from businesses who love to employ farmers in the North West to encourage you in your preparation and search for a job. For those that are amongst the majority who have undertaken training, well done! I have included a list of the sorts of training people have done and a list of the type of jobs that have resulted in people’s job search.

In future editions I will include some typical jobs that frequent local papers and on the internet with suggestions on what you need to do when applying.

I hope these Cracker reports give you a few things to chew over in the coming months. I look forward to hearing of more success in farmers starting new jobs so keep in touch.

Plan B for farmers builds confidence for the future

The purpose of North West Rural Skills Connect initiative is to bring new employees into traditional skills shortage industries such as machine operations, engineering and transport.

At the present time, farmers in the North West are struggling financially and are considering taking off farm employment to supplement their income.

To date, over 140 farmers and farm workers already having taken up the challenge to prepare **Plan B** for earning an alternative income.

Those farmers and farm workers from Swan Hill, Mildura and the Buloke Shire who haven’t registered to get training and assistance can do so online at www.nwruralskillsconnect.com.au or by calling Majella Ballard, Project Manager, on 03 50188 188.

Training Report

Here is what training has been funded so far by North West Rural Skills Connect since September 2008.

Earthmoving tickets	29
Polyethylene Butt Welding	21
White Card OHS ticket	19
First Aid Level 2	9
Sell yourself with a resume	17
Certificate 2 Engineering	8
Fork Lift ticket	9
Truck license or upgrade	59

You can get a resume written at your local resource centre or just ask Majella.

Check out your local resource centre for training that might interest you.

In many cases, we can arrange funding if its work skills related such as forklifts, OHS or even transport and machinery licensing.

“Plan B” in your back pocket, gives you confidence to get on with your farming commitments right now.

Want to do some training? Contact Majella.
In most cases there is NO COST to you and the training is delivered close to where you live.



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Success in the North West with hunt for jobs

Don't forget to post back the enclosed March survey. It's your chance to show the State Government that training and support from Rural Skills Connect is working.

Response to both surveys is mandatory.

Many off farm businesses recognise the value of farmers' work ethic and resilience. Approximately 60% of the participants in the program have undertaken some training such as truck licenses and welding qualifications and are ready to work, in-fact 30% of participants have already secured employment off their farms. Most of the farmers and farm workers who have participated in the program and begun employment have done the hard work themselves. We all know farmers are well networked

and very resourceful so the jobs are most likely to come from someone you already know. There has been nearly 34 participants who have gained a truck license or upgraded their license to the Multi-combination license to drive B-Double's. One of the key success stories of the program to date is the commitment from the Mildura Transport Cluster to provide short term driving jobs to participants just entering the transport industry to gain that all important experience.

What jobs are farmers doing off farm?

Kalari are a Portland based transport company who have the contract for delivering the Kulwin Mine (near Ouyen) Mineral Sands to Iluka's Hamilton processing plant.



B-Double Tipper Tanker
Source: www.kalari.com.au

They are going to interview in late April, for 15 full-time B-Double driver jobs and they are looking keenly to the farmers in the North West to provide them with willing candidates. Don't be put off by these jobs being permanent full time

positions. Often like mining, the hours and shifts are well suited to farmers who are also operating a farm with job sharing a consideration.

If you're from Buloke Shire and interested in these jobs, please consider completing the attached application form to register your interest. Fax or post this application form directly to Gen8 on 55721914 or phone me on 0439 612 317 to discuss further.

Kalari will visit the region to talk to the community about the work over the coming weeks.

These are some of the types of jobs that participants in North West Rural Skills Connect have taken over the last 6 months.

Farm Manager	1
Civil Contracting work	1
Mining- welding poly pipe	1
Retail	1
Education	1
Welding	4
Driving Excavators etc	6
Truck Drivers	27



The Skills Store recognises you!

Skills Stores in Mildura and Horsham provide a service to the participants in North West for the recognition of your current skills. The purpose of Skills Store is to match your competencies learned over the years with qualifications.

A great example of this is in Mildura where a group of farmers have started the process of having their welding skills assessed. They will complete any gap training over the coming weeks and end up with Certificate 2 Engineering – Metal Fabrication to their credit. For these farmers, it has been an eye opener about the Recognition process (called RPL short for Recognition of Prior Learning) and many have said they will now look at other skills and qualifications they can get. The guys are looking forward to spending some time off the farm together in training and getting hands on experience using TIG and MIG welders.

Lack of confidence about skills was the main reason cited for not applying or jobs in engineering but training and a qualification are the answers to those concerns.

To get started with Skills Store, you just need to phone Majella on 0439 612 317 and get a meeting arranged with the local Skills Store consultant.

**For further information contact Majella Ballard, Project Manager, North West Rural Skills Connect
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