



“Crackers”

May 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 second “Crackers” report

Thank you to all those who responded to the survey in the last “Crackers” report. This information allows us to demonstrate in real terms to the funding body that Rural Skills Connect is working well and important to the future of farmers and their communities. The final survey is VITAL and will be out in late August.

In this report, I want to draw your attention to the benefits of getting involved in programs in your communities. A farmer’s comment to me was “I’ve learnt some important things about myself, just by getting involved.”

Also in this edition, you’ll find an explanation of Labour Hire for all those actively seeking employment and another plug for getting a resume done. Even if you say you’ll never use it.

The training report shows just how active some farmers and farm workers have been since the project started in September last year, as does the list of jobs that folks have been able to get.

**The key message here is “HAVE A GO”
and do it now while there is someone here to lend a hand.**

“I’ve learnt some important things about myself, just by getting involved.”

There are two Catchment Management Authorities in the North West, North Central and Mallee. Both have been running environmental employment programs and many of the farmers and farm workers I talk to through Rural Skills Connect are employed by the CMA in their area.

These programs are due to finish in June 09 and to my knowledge aren’t taking new workers on, BUT I want to highlight the benefits of getting involved because the CMA programs are NOT the only things going on right now and in the future.

Read about those benefits over the page.

Training Report

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

Earthmoving tickets	41
Polyethylene Butt Welding	21
White Card OHS ticket	27
First Aid Level 2	13
Sell yourself with a resume	30
Certificate 2 Engineering	11
Fork Lift ticket	31
Truck license or upgrade	134
Other training	78

(The Other training above includes but is not limited to: food handlers, Cert 2 Construction, Cert 3 Business Administration, Diploma of Agronomy & Horticulture and Cert 4 Training and Assessment)

Why do you need a resume?

“I’m not currently looking for a job in the paper or on the internet so this doesn’t apply!” I hear you say. You run the risk of seeing that “heaven on a stick” job and you kiss your chances goodbye because you’re just not ready. If you get a resume done and at least one job application done with help from Rural Skills Connect, you can always use that for reference later on. Rural Skills Connect project ends September 2009.

“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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Why get involved in employment and training?

The key benefits to workers on the Catchment Management Authority (CMA) programs have been:

Income & flexibility

The income in many cases is a real god-send. To have an off farm income and working for usually 3 days a week, there is the flexibility to get harvest or other farm jobs done, and work on the program.

New Skills

New skills in most cases lead to qualifications when working on programs like those with the Catchment Management Authority (CMA) employment programs. Rural Skills Connect is working with Skills Store and the CMA team to ensure that all skills gained in the course of the work done can be recognised formally as competencies/qualifications. If you have worked on a CMA program and have only got qualifications for the “training” in the classroom you did, like Chainsaw operations and First Aid, then look again. Contact me to discuss how to have all the work competencies you gained recognised as qualifications.

Social networking

The other benefit is Social Networking. The most common comment I got from farmers who were considering employment through the CMA environmental employment programs was something like “I’ve been my own boss for all these years, I don’t think I would make a very good employee!” They proved themselves wrong in most cases and the comments that comes back after getting involved goes like this; “I’ve learnt some important things about myself, just by getting involved.” Getting involved provides the time to chat with folks that are in similar situations back on the farm and realising that working within a team isn’t so bad, especially where you don’t have all the weight of responsibility on your shoulders.

I encourage you to get involved with activities off the farm so you don’t miss out on these benefits.

Can you see yourself wearing a new hat?

These are some of the types of jobs that participants in North West Rural Skills Connect have taken over the last 7 months, some after exiting farming but the vast majority as a supplementary income while continuing to farm.

- Farm Manager • Civil Contracting work • Construction – welding poly pipe • Retail assistant • Education – trainer, tutor or teachers assistant • Welder • Machine operator - Excavators, Bobcat, Front End Loaders, Backhoe, Forklift, etc
- Truck Drivers – MC, HC and HR • Bus drivers

What is labour hire all about?

Labour hire is a service provided to business where the Labour Hire company provides the labour at an hourly cost to the business and invoices them directly. The workers go and do the work, get paid an hourly casual rate by the labour hire company, not the employer. This sort of arrangement is common in Agriculture in contracting teams but it also applies to some work in manufacturing, business administration or maintenance and labouring jobs. Once you have registered with the Labour Hire agency they actively seek business clients that would be interested in using the skills they have to offer.

REMEMBER BUSINESS JUST LOVE THE WORK ETHIC OF PEOPLE OFF THE LAND.

You can also register with any of these businesses for their recruitment services. Once they have your resume, they can match you up with employment opportunities.

I have listed some Labour Hire agencies for your information.

- Altus Personnel Swan Hill & Mildura 03 5032 2933 or 03 5023 8840
- Employment Works Swan Hill 1300 306 311
- MADEC Labour Hire Euston and Mildura 03 5021 3472
- WorkCo in Donald 03 5497 1821
- Skilled Mildura 03 5023 6688
- Prestige Mildura 03 5023 3990

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