

From Orchard to Opportunity: Growing the future of the almond workforce together

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INTRODUCTION

Recruiting new people into the almond industry is becoming increasingly challenging. While our industry continues to expand and provide long term employment opportunities, the two biggest barriers we face are -

- **Limited housing availability in rural areas; and**
- **The lack of formal accredited training pathways.**

These challenges make it harder to attract and retain reliable staff, despite the steady demand for year round work.

By addressing these issues, our industry can create stronger opportunities, ensuring a sustainable workforce and supporting ongoing growth within the almond industry.

ROOM TO IMPROVE

Housing our workforce in rural regions is becoming increasingly difficult for all industries.

- Caravan parks & camping grounds ill-equipped for stays more than a few days, limited security
- Lack of ablutions blocks
- Rental properties scarce across the regions
- Burden falls to employers to house workers on farms
- Short term employees living on farm often require additional management

BUILD IT & THEY WILL COME



Employers approaching councils have the opportunity to band forces within industries, including almonds, processers, vegetables, fruits, vines, and other small operations, and we could address the issues of accommodation with peak industry bodies, councils, development boards, and local and state governments. Constructing short to medium term housing facilities for hire could be a huge benefit to everyone. As we all require workers at various parts of the year, the development could be available to grey nomads, itinerant workers, and holidaymakers as the work requirements decrease.



GROW WHAT YOU KNOW

On the job training on farms is invaluable, but accredited training is important and often essential.

Educating new workers as well as upskilling the current workforce can unfortunately hit a few roadblocks along the way.

- Lack of accredited training organisations within SA offering production horticulture certification (other states may have different opportunities)
- Lack of accredited trainers
- Low attendance for courses
- Funding issues

The ABA offers workshops for irrigation, soils, nutrition, spraying etc. Attending the industry-based workshops can have great benefits for both employers and employees, gaining skill-based knowledge from industry leaders.

A program could be set up to utilise accredited trainers to run the workshops, allowing attendees to gain recognition of competency towards units contained within Horticulture certificates.

Employers will see the benefits as the workers will have access to qualified trainers and information being industry-specific, as well as being certified in the appropriate modules. Employees will gain knowledge and skills, and this can increase their confidence and employability, leading to further pathways in our industry.



WHERE TO FROM HERE

- Bringing in new short-to-medium term accommodation to attract workers
- Offer accredited workshops that are industry based to attract new workers, as well as retaining existing staff
- Upskill and train staff

CONCLUSION

Great opportunities exist within the almond industry for both employers and employees (new and current) to push the industry to continue growing. As future plantings are planned and the industry expands, more demands will be felt to ensure stability, long term employment, training and education, and accommodation.

With inputs and investments from local councils, governments and the Almond Board of Australia, the growth of the industry looks bright.

Almond farming comes with challenges, but with a growing industry offering stability and long term careers, it's a chance to plant roots and grow the future.