

STEPPING STONES

CAREER PATHWAYS FOR NEW AND CURRENT
EMPLOYEES IN THE TASMANIAN DAIRY INDUSTRY



Stepping Stones

Australia's dairy farmers are highly-skilled professionals who are proud and passionate about their industry.

The Australian dairy industry offers a large variety of fulfilling careers and training opportunities that can help people progress through a dairy career.

Stepping Stones provides information on the different types of careers on a dairy farm and explores the different pathways available for people who are either looking to start a career on a dairy farm, or for experienced people who want to progress their dairy career further.

The important thing about planning a career is that you need to choose the best pathway for you.

Stepping Stones has dairy farmer case studies, advice on dairy careers and progression, and also has some great career tips from farmers.

It covers farm trainees, operators, managers and sharefarmers – whether you want work on a dairy farm or own your own property, Stepping Stones can help you find the pathway to achieve your career goal.

Stepping Stones can be downloaded from: thepeopleindairy.org.au/steppingstones

Why dairy?

Dairy is important

For almost 200 years, Australia's dairy farmers have been producing the dairy foods we enjoy every day. These high-quality products are consumed by millions of Australians and sold around the world.

The Australian dairy industry is a major employer and contributes billions of dollars to the Australian economy. The industry is a vital contributor to regional Australian communities – it creates jobs, provides food and supports the local economy.

There are 391 dairy farms in Tasmania, generating over 10.8 per cent of Australia's milk production. The industry is growing in Tasmania, with over 1,600 people employed on dairy farms.*

A career for life

The Australian dairy industry offers real opportunities for people who want to build a career rather than just have a job – dairy provides a career for life.

Australia's dairy farmers are skilled, innovative professionals who are passionate about their industry. They are committed to the health and wellbeing of their animals, land and communities, and are involved in all phases of the dairy industry whether it is on farm, or off.

The industry offers flexibility and work/life balance, and there is always something new to learn – building, computer operations, plumbing, nutrition, agronomy, machine operating, driving tractors, and looking after an animal's welfare – to just name a few!

New technology on dairy farms, such as automated (robotic) milking is providing the opportunity for a different way to manage dairy farms. Cows are milked automatically, and the farmer manages the process and the information generated through the system. Smaller scale dairy operations are an important focus for these automated operations.

Life on a dairy farm is much more than milking cows – it is a progressive and technologically advanced industry with world-leading practices.

You can get qualified

Dairy industry training is practical and courses relate to what you do on the farm. You can continue to build on your qualifications as you work and there are opportunities to learn about specialist areas.

Industry training is provided through a combination of formal (accredited) and informal programs offered through Dairy Australia, tertiary and vocational education, and regional programs like DairyTas.

Qualifications provide a pathway to reach your career goals and the qualifications you gain will be nationally recognised, which means you can take them anywhere in Australia.



I would encourage farm owners, current farm employees and anyone looking for a great career in dairy farming to read Stepping Stones and explore the resources and tools available at dairyaustralia.com.au and thepeopleindairy.org.au



David Nation Managing Director, Dairy Australia

* Australian Dairy Industry In Focus 2020 (Source: Dairy Australia)

Planning your pathway

Career progression and pathway planning is the key to reaching your career goals. You may be starting in the dairy industry, wanting to progress further or wishing to progress to more senior farm positions.

The model below gives an example overview of what your pathway planning should look like.

And remember, sometimes planning your pathway may seem daunting, so break it into pieces and focus on each goal ahead, one step at a time!

Step one: Where are you now?

Don't just think about your current knowledge or job – consider the skills you have; your interests, the way you behave at work, your general attitude to your job, your workplace and the dairy industry in general.

- Do you like to work outdoors?
- Do you like working with people, animals and/or machinery?
- What are your non-work based skills, hobbies or interests?
- What is your education level?
- Do you have any specific work-based skills?
- Have you completed industry training or courses?
- What type of work do you do, you have any previous experience or training?
- What is your life like outside of work?

Step two: Where do you want to go?

Once you recognise your skills and interests, think about the career pathways that may suit you.

Remember, you might not want to move out of the job you already have, but you may want to learn how to do it better or plan for the future.

- Think about the type of work you really want to do, and why
- Consider the long term, not just your short term needs
- Consider fields of work that match who you are, your interests, and your current skill-set

- Are you looking for career advancement?
- Do you have, or need specialist skills or training to reach your goals?

Step three: Plan your journey

A career pathway is all about focusing on the journey, not just the destination.

You can continue to progress, gain experience and skills right throughout your career, and having a clear pathway helps to achieve your goals.

- Have you planned long term goals?
- Consider study options, training and specialist courses that will help you achieve your goals
- What industry programs can you get involved with?
- Set realistic goals!

Step four: Ask for advice

It's your career pathway – seek out information and speak to people who can offer tips and advice.

You can learn about the different jobs available on a dairy farm in this booklet – read the job profiles and the farmer case studies for some great progression tips.

- Talk to people in the industry for advice on how to reach your career goals*
- If you're at school, talk to career advisors and teachers
- Contact training organisations, read course guides and learn about industry programs
- Get involved in Dairy Australia and DairyTas programs
- Learn about dairy industry scholarships

Contacts for further information

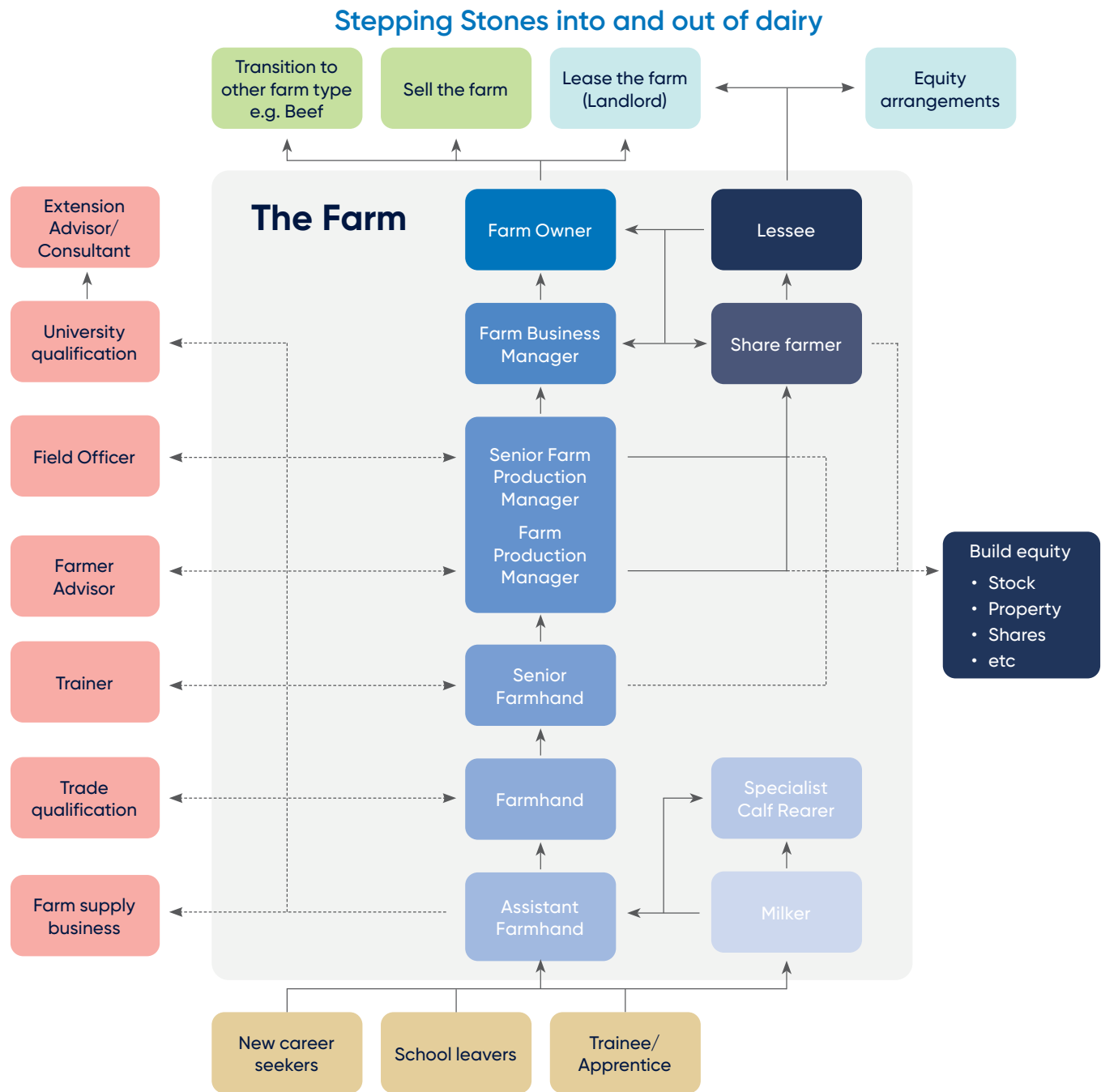
Dairy Australia
T 03 9694 3777
E dairyaustralia.com.au
thepeopleindairy.org.au

DairyTas
T 6432 2233
E admin@dairytas.net.au
dairytas.com.au

*DairyTas has a network of mentors who may be able to help.

Dairy pathways

Stepping Stones is all about showing you the many pathways that are available in the Australian dairy industry. You may be thinking now about starting a career as a trainee on a dairy farm, however one day, you may have the potential to operate your own dairy farm. Or you could be currently working in the industry and are looking for opportunities to progress your position to a more senior role. The model shows a number of pathways on how to enter and progress your career in the Australian dairy industry, including qualifications at each stage.



Relief Milker or Milker							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<p>Typical day – rostered for early starts, time off during the day, then evening milking.</p> <p>Tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – check, start and operate the dairy • Animal husbandry – identify cows with mastitis, teat damage, lameness and other illnesses • Assist in the clean up of the milking shed • Assist with collecting cows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery • Happy to start early and to finish in the evening • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This role can be a casual role or a part time contract • The minimum payrate is \$19.84 per hour (from first pay period starting 1 July 2021 – as at time of printing, noting these rates are reviewed annually)* • Flexible hours which may suit your lifestyle 	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Relief Milker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cups on Cups Off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Calf Rearer • Assistant Farmhand
							<p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 1 years experience for Calf Rearer role • Up to 1 month experience for Assistant Farmhand

*Check the latest pay rates at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/pay-rates-2020



Calf Rearer							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
Tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeding calves Wellbeing of calves – monitoring their health, vaccination, treating animals Assist in the clean up of the calf rearing shed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 6 months experience in rearing calves Like working with young animals 'Self starter' – able to work unsupervised Like working outdoors Capable of handling calves Happy to start early and to finish in the evening Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patience and care with animals Ability to take initiative and work independently High level of organising skills Taking pride in the work and the calf rearing facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This role can be a casual role or a part time contract The minimum payrate is \$19.84 per hour (from first pay period starting 1 July 2021 noting these rates are reviewed annually)* 	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Calf Rearing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rearing Healthy Calves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers licence Transport 	Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist Farm Hand Farmhand When will I be ready?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 1 years experience for Farmhand role Up to 1 month experience for Assistant Farmhand

*Check the latest pay rates at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/pay-rates-2020

Rain Barker Assistant Farmhand, Cressy

Rain was not brought up with a farming background. She went to Cressy District High School and from grades three to eight, participated in the Cows Create Careers project as well as cattle handling, sheep and beef cattle judging.

'My teacher thought it would be a good idea to visit a few dairy farms in the area to improve our judging skills. The day we visited Lindsay Thompson's dairy farm at Bracknell was the day I knew I wanted a job in the dairy industry. When I stepped onto the farm, I thought 'this is different!' as it was so different to beef.'

In grade eight, Rain got a part time job on a dairy farm milking on weekends and public holidays. In grade nine, she began a school based apprenticeship and completed a Certificate II in Dairy Agriculture. Rain attended school on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, and then worked on a farm in the afternoons and on weekends.

When Rain finished Grade 10, she started working full time on the dairy farm and found that there are always new things to learn.

Over a few years, Rain spent time working between a meat works company and as second in charge on a farm at Cressy, milking 650 cows. In December 2016, she moved to Ken Lawrence's dairy farm in Westbury, where she now works casually.

The farm currently milks around 540 cows. Rain works alongside three full time and three casual staff members. She enjoys the variety of her role, and completes jobs like milking, feeding and looking after the calves.

'I like that there's a bunch of different things to do on a farm, it's not just about milking cows. I like how interesting dairy is and it's a part of a much bigger picture - I like that I'm a part of that,' Rain said.

Rain has gained many skills through working in dairy. She recently finished a Certificate III in Dairy Agriculture and has also completed an Artificial Insemination (AI) course. The knowledge she has gained through education will help her throughout her career and to progress in the industry.

Rain would like to continue working on Ken's farm and she plans to complete further training. 'Ken wants to give me some more training, so I can move into a higher role on the farm,' she said.



Rain's Tips:

- If you want to work in dairy, get out and talk to farmers.
- Think about doing a school based apprenticeship.

Assistant Farmhand							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – collecting the cows from the paddock • Milk cows in the shed with a more experienced person • Animal husbandry – identify and treat common animal health problems, identify, record and care for newborn calves • Feed management and delivery – load and feed • Feed out hay or silage using machinery • Implement cleaning and maintenance under supervision • Implement milking quality assurance procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery, and can operate equipment (eg. tractor) under supervision • Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Take responsibility for keeping yourself and others safe • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace 	Around \$32,000 to \$45,000	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Assistant Farmhand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cert II in Agriculture • Cups on Cups Off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport 	Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Calf Rearer • Senior Farmhand
							When will I be ready?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 1 years experience for Calf Rearer role • Up to 2 years experience for Senior Farmhand • Completed Cert II in Agriculture

*Check the latest pay rates at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/pay-rates-2020

Linda Pickford Farmhand, Gawler

Linda grew up on a small hobby farm. After year 12, she wasn't sure what career she wished to pursue but knew that she wanted to work with animals.

'I saw a job in the paper for an apprenticeship on a dairy farm and I got it. That's how it all started,' Linda said. 'I had experience on a farm, but not dairy. It was great, a whole new learning experience.'

Linda has been a Farmhand for four years. She has worked full time for over two years in her current role at the Frampton family farm, which milks around 400 cows.

Linda works split shifts. She milks in the morning and comes back to the farm in the afternoon to complete a wide variety of jobs including, fencing, maintenance, irrigation, animal husbandry and tractor work. In the evening she milks again.

'I'm on a roster so if I have something on, we can work around it. And if they need me to work in on a different day, I'm happy to go in.'

Linda enjoys working on the Frampton's farm because she's always learning. Her role gives her a sense of achievement and she has progressively gained more responsibility.

'I like working with animals and I love when we are calving. It's hard work but so much fun at the same time. There's a reason behind everything you do on a farm - you can see how you're helping to improve the farm and feel a sense of achievement at the end of the day,' she said.

Linda has completed her apprenticeship and the Certificate III in Agriculture, which sparked her desire to learn more. She is currently studying the Certificate IV in Agriculture which is supported by her employers. 'My boss is really supportive,' she said. 'The Frampton's have helped me to learn. They take me to discussion groups, which is really great. You learn so much.'

Linda is planning to continue working and progressing in the dairy industry. 'I'm happy to continue working in dairy. Possibly in the future, I would like to get in a share farming arrangement, probably on a small farm with up to 200 cows. That would be good.'



Linda's tips:

- You need a positive attitude
- Be willing to work and to try new things.
- If you haven't been on a dairy, research it so you know what to expect before you walk onto a farm.

Farmhand							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – check, start and operate the dairy unassisted. • Animal husbandry – identify cows with mastitis, teat damage, lameness and other illnesses. Manage the program for cows due to calve, regularly observe and attend to animal health needs, assist in calving cows. • Carry out farm vaccination and drenching programs • Feed management and delivery – determine pasture availability and oversee its allocation • Operate and maintain feeding equipment • Implement farm pest and weed programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery • Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Able to take responsibility for keeping yourself and others safe • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace • Can work independently and follow farm procedures 	Around \$33,000 to \$50,000	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Farmhand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cert III in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport • Keep saving • Look at the option of raising stock • thepeopleindairy.org.au/stepping-stones/calfcosts.htm 	Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Farmhand
							When will I be ready?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 years experience for Senior Farmhand • Completed Cert III in Agriculture

Laura Hill Senior Farmhand, Telita

Laura grew up in the farming industry and from a young age, helped on her family's farm.

Laura is an experienced Farmhand on her family's 600 cow dairy, where she has undertaken a wide variety of stock management and husbandry tasks. Recently, Laura's job has changed to allow her flexibility while being a full time mum.

However, now with a one-year-old son, Carter, Laura's job has changed to allow her flexibility while being a full time mum.

'I was managing young stock and general husbandry practices on the farm, but I am no longer in charge of that. Now, I milk and often help with odd jobs, particularly with stock and at harvest time,' Laura said.

After Year 12, Laura completed a Certificate II in Agriculture on her parent's farm in Telita. She worked on a 50 bale rotary, milking 600 cows, and was also involved in the cropping and beef side of the operation.

Laura grew her knowledge about the industry and after a year, she decided to move to Westbury with her husband and began working on a 400 cow dairy farm in Meander. By changing properties, Laura saw how much diversity there is in farming methods, with no two properties the same. She also realised that there are many different ways to be successful on a dairy farm. During this time, Laura completed the Certificate III in Agriculture.

Laura enjoys farming because she can always push herself to do new things. She has learnt a lot, including how to build fences, drive tractors and operate machinery, and how to look after an animal's welfare while achieving good production.

Laura enjoys calving season and being responsible for the wellbeing of the cows and calves. She has pride in knowing that she can make a difference, and likes being able to look back to see everything she has achieved.

Completing a Certificate II, III and working in the farming industry has allowed Laura to meet many interesting people and helped her to become who she is today. She returned to her family's farm five years ago, and enjoys working in an industry that offers flexibility while being a mum.

Laura and her husband, Andrew, have purchased their own house and plan to one day run their own farm. In the meantime, Laura is enjoying the lifestyle that the dairy industry provides.



Laura's tips:

- If you want a job on a farm, visit the employer instead of sending a resume. It's better to meet face to face so they can get to know you.
- Get in and give it a go: most people will give you a shot if you are prepared to try. We have hired people with no farming background, but they are willing to try.

Senior Farmhand

The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – organise and oversee staff involved in the dairy operation, oversee the milk quality assurance program and OHandS program • Animal husbandry – administer drenches, vaccines, mineral supplements and other appropriate animal husbandry • Monitor the reproductive performance of the herd • Feed management and delivery – set up, operate and monitor concentrate feed equipment, determine the most appropriate time to graze fodder crops • Pasture production and cropping – determine paddock rotation for optimum pasture utilisation, follow weed management policy • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – oversee the maintenance program for farm vehicles, equipment and implements • Supervise the OH+S practices on farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery • Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time • Be computer literate in regard to report writing and financial management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace • Be able to supervise staff and staff training • Communication skills and the ability to resolve conflicts 	Around \$40,000 to \$50,000	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Senior Farmhand/ Farm Supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cert IV in Agriculture • Cups on Cups Off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport • Keep building your dairy assets • Keep building stock • Think about farm equipment purchases 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Production Manager <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3-5 years experience for Farm Production Manager • Completed Cert IV in Agriculture

Steve Saltmarsh Farm Production Manager, Midlands

Until Steven started working for the Mount Patrick Estate dairy at Moltema in 1986, he had no dairy experience.

'I used to stay with a friend on a dairy farm and milked a few cows, and it just bred from there really. Once I got my first full time farm job, I got to see the benefits of dairy,' Steven said.

Steven found working on a dairy farm highly rewarding and it gave him the opportunity to learn so many new skills – building, plumbing, nutrition, agronomy and machine operating, to just name a few.

By 1994, and with eight years of experience under his belt, Steven took up a management position on a dairy farm. During this time, Steven started going to dairy discussion groups, workshops and field days which he found to be an extremely valuable way of gaining knowledge about the industry, as well as a great social break.

'There are so many good workshops and courses out there. The more knowledge you have, the more prepared you are,' Steven said.

In 2009, Steven progressed his position to Farm Production Manager. He now oversees seven employees and coordinates staff and contractors so the operation runs smoothly. 'My role is to oversee the the milk production, day to day running of the farm and staff management. I run the farm as an owner would,' he said.

Steven believes dairy is a great industry to be involved in; it offers a work / life balance as well as many opportunities, especially with robotics and technology being used more in the industry.

Even though dairy is hard work at times, Steven finds the Tasmanian industry exciting. He has completed a Certificate II, III and Diploma of Agriculture and Steven's son is currently completing a dairy apprenticeship.

'There is a good future for people who want to work in dairy.'



Steve's best aspects of dairy:

- The people you meet
- Seeing the results of your actions through production and better animal health
- Looking after cows, especially the calves
- You learn many skills: you're a builder, plumber, nutritionist, agronomist, machinery operator, and more!
- Work/life balance and watching his children at school sporting events
- Walking through a paddock of cows grazing in spring
- The job is never boring!

Farm Production Manager							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – Identify and correct problems in the machine function and operation • Animal husbandry – select cows for AI and assist with bull selection, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff • Feed management and delivery – set the rotation and oversee the delivery to all livestock, oversee the sourcing and reticulation of water to livestock to meet their requirements • Pasture production and cropping – determine the soil fertiliser program using soil fertility and production data, determine nitrogen applications based on seasonal conditions • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – maintain and develop paddock infrastructure including fencing, water troughs, laneways and drainage, implement the dairy maintenance schedule including the replacement of rubberware, machine testing and maintenance • Administration – ensure the farm is compliant with workplace legislation, organise rosters and allocate tasks • Staff management recruitment – recruitment, selection, induction, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management • Minimum of a Certificate IV in Agriculture (or equivalent) • High level people management skills • Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements • Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff management and leadership • Communicate with farm workers and source goods and services external to the business • Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting • High level of responsibility and decision making • Negotiation skills and conflict management • Troubleshooting skills • Liaise and gather ideas outside the farm 	Around \$60,000 to \$75,000	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Farm Production Manager: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma of Agriculture • Cert IV in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport • Asset building to continue • Keep building stock and herd improvement 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Business Manager • Share Farmer • Farm Owner <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 years experience for Business Manager role • Resources and up to 5 years experience for share farmer or ownership role • Completed Diploma of Agriculture



Farm Business Manager							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business Milk harvesting – Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques Animal husbandry – organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff Feed management and delivery – manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations Pasture production and cropping – determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers Plant equipment and infrastructure Maintenance – maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas Administration – manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent) High level people management skills High level Business Management skills Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business Staff management and leadership Communicate with farm workers and source goods and services external to the business Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting High level of responsibility and decision making Negotiation skills and conflict management 	Around \$90,000 to \$120,000	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community Dairy Australia leadership programs Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Farm Production Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma of Agriculture Cert IV in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers licence Transport Asset building and looking at other wealth creation opportunities (e.g. purchasing and leasing out a flat or house) 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share Farmer Farm Owner <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and up to 5 years experience for share farmer or ownership role Completed Diploma of Agriculture

Stuart and Karen Burr

50 per cent Share Farmers, Ringarooma

Stuart and Karen Burr have been dairying for around 20 years and are in their fifth year of a share farming partnership. They are 50 per cent share farmers with owners Stan and Geoff Cox at the New River Road dairy farm Ringarooma, milking 360 cows on 150 hectares.

Share farming steps

Stuart grew up locally and his first experience of farming was through an Agricultural Traineeship on a dairy farm after leaving school. He went on to complete a Dairy Apprenticeship and spent over four years on the same farm.

After 10 years of dairying, Stuart left the industry to pursue other opportunities. At the time he felt he was not ready for share farming, and was lacking some of the knowledge and experience for the extra responsibility.

After four years, Stuart was offered a management position with a 650 cow dairy herd. He took up the offer and completed a number of industry courses such as the 20/12 Pasture Program, Countdown Downunder and InCalf.

Stuart left the management position after six years to take on a 50 per cent share farming position on the Cox's farm. After 15 years in the industry, Stuart saw the opportunity as a share farmer to build an asset, compared to being a manager where it would take much longer to get the same gains. It offered Stuart and Karen an opportunity to grow equity in an asset, secure benefits around acquiring and rearing young stock, and manage an expanding enterprise.

The first three years of share farming were tough; the first year was especially hard with the poor season and lower milk price of 2009, but buying in on a low in the industry was important.

Stuart and Karen's priority was establishing a secure business. Karen has a strong financial management background and brought her cash flow knowledge to the business. Stuart and Karen made debt reduction and securing a cash profit a big focus.

They now have strong equity in a larger herd plus heifers and calves, and after three years of hard work and consolidation to get their business and finances into shape, their equity position is close to 70 per cent.



One of Stuart and Karen's main success factors has been having a good relationship with the farm owner. They have had a supportive owner and a farm that has the potential for development and growth, giving both parties the opportunity for progression. Stuart and Karen's goals are to be debt free and to employ others to assist on the farm, so they can step back a little.

Stuart and Karen's key messages:

- Have goals of where you want to be
- Have a mentor and people outside the farm who you can get advice from and discuss things with
- Be involved in industry programs and participate in activities to grow knowledge – good pasture management is critical
- Sound financial management is important in the early stages of a share farming business
- Manage both the good times and bad – budgeting is very important in managing tight times and industry fluctuations
- Get in on a down – invest when cow prices are lower
- Take time to learn about the industry. It is important to keep cash flow managed and up to date, especially in the early months of the season when costs are up and income lower

Share Farmer or Lessee

The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques • Animal husbandry – organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff • Feed management and delivery – manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations • Pasture production and cropping – determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas • Administration – manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management • Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent) • High level people management skills • High level Business Management skills • Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements • Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business • Staff management and leadership • Communicate with farm workers and source goods and services external to the business • Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting • High level of responsibility and decision making • Negotiation skills and conflict management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharefarmers are regarded as 'Independent contractors'. They share the farm income 	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Share Farming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma of Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Farmer: • 33% Share – All mobile farm machinery • 50% Share – All mobile farm machinery and all stock • Lessee: • Lease property and own all mobile farm machinery and all stock 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessee • Farm Owner <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on the resources and equity you have built up

The Share Dairy Farming in Australia – Model Code of practice for share dairy farming with guidelines and tools for assessing share farming arrangements is available at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/share-dairy-farming

Information about leasing is available at thepeopleindairy.org.au/planning-for-the-future/leasing

Leigh and Kellie Schuurings 50% Share Farmers, Mella

Over ten years Leigh and Kellie Schuurings have built a substantial asset to own 1,000 cows and replacement stock.

From a young age, Leigh wanted to work in agriculture. His preference was to work on a beef enterprise but he was able to find a job on a dairy farm. Dairy wasn't unknown to Leigh, as he had occasionally helped out on his grandparent's dairy farm.

After school, Leigh started working as a Farmhand on different dairies until he progressed to a second in charge (2IC) role. When Kellie left school, she worked as a factory hand for six years.

Leigh worked 2IC for two years before taking on a 10 per cent share farming position, while Kellie started working on another dairy farm. He then moved to managing a small 280 cow dairy farm on wages, and progressed into a 33 per cent share farm position on the same dairy.

The Schuurings reared calves and purchased young stock. They purchased second hand equipment and Leigh moved to a 33 per cent share farm role on a larger 400 cow farm.

'I like how fast you can grow an asset, but you have to be on the same page as the farm owner,' Leigh said. 'If you're on the same page about how you want to run the business, then the business will go forward hugely.'

Leigh and Kellie aimed for a 50 per cent share farm position and took on debt to increase stock numbers. After four years, they moved to a 50 per cent share farm role on another farm, milking 400 cows before growing to 650 cows over four years.

The couple now own 1,000 cows and have been 50 per cent share farmers for seven years. Leigh and Kellie work alongside one casual, one part-time and two full time staff members.

'One staff member is doing a Certificate IV and our part timer is doing a school based Certificate II, so she's still at school but comes to the farm to work,' Leigh said.

Leigh and Kellie have three children and enjoy the lifestyle that dairy farming provides. Through programs like Cows Create Careers, they also promote the dairy industry as a rewarding career pathway to students in the region while continuing to plan for the future.



We've also started to look at figures and the next steps to what else we can do with our money. We're thinking about buying our own dairy more seriously. We've looked at our current position and to the future – we can keep share farming, or we can do something for ourselves.'

Leigh and Kelly's tips:

- Recognise your own strengths and weaknesses, believe in yourself
- Goals change so they need to be reassessed as necessary
- Be wise with money, learn to budget and develop budgets
- Having an agistment bill each month was forced saving
- Ask lots of questions and seek advice
- Ride the highs with the lows
- Learn from both the good and not-so-good bosses
- Treat your staff well
- Have a close circle of friends who you can share the good and bad times with
- Extra income equals extra responsibility – seeing the accounts as a share farmer was a great reality check
- Good communication with the share farmer and staff is vital – be open, honest and have respect for each other.
- Both people in the share farming business (husband and wife or partner) must have the same goals and ambitions, otherwise it does not work!

Paul and Rachel Hamilton – Farm Owners Mark Twose and Debbie Townsend – Share Farmers Successful Share Farming

The relationship between farm owner and share farmer is critical to the success of a dairy business.

'It's a business partnership and with any business arrangement, you've got to have trust in the other party,' Paul Hamilton, farm owner, said.

Paul bought a 150-acre property 28 years ago, with an 18 per cent interest rate and a six-unit herringbone. The operation has now expanded to 2,500 acres and milks 580 cows.

Over the years, the Hamilton's have had farm managers and share farmers. Current share farmers, Mark and Debbie, have been working with the Hamilton's for two seasons.

'A share farmer can be a hard worker, but it's more than just hard work. You've got to have the ability to organise and plan for the future.'

Paul believes that a good farm owner / share farmer relationship is vital to the ongoing growth of the operation. 'You've got to have faith in the other person. I have faith in Mark and Debbie, and I think they have faith in me. Honesty is also an absolutely crucial part.'

'You also need the maturity to be in a business relationship where you say, 'that's my job, I'm going to do it' – and you've got to believe and have faith that each party is going to do what they say.'

'You can know how to milk cows and get good production, but you also have to be organised and be able to budget. You have to make sure the cash flow is going to work with the enterprise cash flow which varies month to month. Having the knowledge to milk cows is 10 per cent of what's required.'

Paul also recognises the farm owner's role in the partnership and understands that an owner can have an influence over business outcomes. There must be an understanding of what each party wants from the business, and the share farmer must be able to achieve their goals.

Paul believes that Mark and Debbie are an asset to the business. They plan to continue their partnership and aim to reach 250,000kg milk solids.



Paul's tips:

- Starting with nothing is hard but that's the evolution – we grow potatoes and do lots of other things, we take every opportunity to make the business grow.
- There must be an understanding of what each party wants from the business
- Honesty – if the farm owner or share farmer say they are going to do something, that they actually do it.

Michael Palmer and Eliza Anderson Apprentice to Share Farmer to Owner, Sisters Creek

Michael completed a four year farming Apprenticeship, beginning at the age of 16, in 1996. When he finished the Apprenticeship he was employed for four years on wages on a farm at Sisters Creek. This farm was milking 135 cows in the first year and increased to 265 cows by year three on 107 hectares. At the end of each of these years Michael purchased 25 cows off the farm owner. Michael then had 100 cows which he owned at the end of his Apprenticeship. Michael had no debt on these cows, he owned them outright as he saved through each of these years to purchase the cows.

During this period Michael also bought some bricks and mortar, a house not far from the dairy farm increasing the value of his assets. Over time this house increased in value and he was able to use it as collateral with the bank for future purchases.

Michael worked his way up to 50 per cent share farming on this same farm and purchased 250 cows and the machinery from the farm owner. He used the bank to finance this new debt and had his parents and the farm owner as a guarantors for this loan.

The farm owner then leased the dairy farm next door and Michael leased their 150 cows and purchased another 50 cows.

The relationship to date was working well with the farm owner. There was constant discussion about the enterprise, how it was going and the future plan of the farm between all parties. After a two year period the farm owner then purchased this leased dairy farm.

Over the next ten years cow numbers increased to 600, a rotary dairy was built and the farm owner continued to purchase adjoining land. Michael purchased 30 per cent of a 36 hectares block in his name during this period. The plan for 2014/2015 is to milk a minimum of 800 cows on this Sisters Creek property.

Michael and Eliza continually reared the maximum number of heifer calves every year that they could, so they did not have to go out and buy cows. They have increased their equity by increasing stock numbers and had forced saving (with the rearing cost of the calf and heifer into the herd). The farm owner was continually spending on infrastructure (irrigation, laneways) to improve the productivity of the dairy farm for both themselves and the share farmer to constantly increase production profitably.



Then in 2005 Michael and Eliza purchased an ex. dairy farm at Rocky Cape with Michaels' parents as equity partners. The property was used to run all the replacement stock and potatoes were grown to assist with paying the interest bill to the bank. In 2012 Michael and Eliza made the decision to convert it back to a dairy farm including building a new 30 aside herringbone shed with cup removers.

Michael and Eliza decided to convert this property to dairying as they had surplus cows and wanted to dairy in their own right. They also had a very good capable employee that was keen to become a manager on the property. Another property at this time was leased, which is close to the home dairy farm, to run the young stock.

Over this 28 year period Michael and Eliza have had very good people working for them. Their longest serving employee has been with them for 17 years and four young men have done their farming apprenticeships under Michael. Michael and Eliza place emphasis on ensuring their people are happy and have a good work life balance.

In conclusion, Michael & Eliza emphasise that they would not have been able to take the different steps to get to where they are today without a supportive farm owner. They contribute part of their success to having farm owners that want the share farmer to succeed and 'being on the same page' as them.

Farm Owner							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<p>Tasks will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques • Animal husbandry – organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff • Feed management and delivery – manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations • Pasture production and cropping – determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas • Administration – manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management • Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent) • High level people management skills • High level Business Management skills • Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements • Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business • Staff management and leadership • Communicate with farm workers and source goods & services external to the business • Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting • High level of responsibility and decision making • Negotiation skills & conflict management 	Depends on farm size and productivity	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for your young staff • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Farm Owner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma of Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your farm • Milking Shed and all equipment needed to run the farm system • Livestock 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase your involvement in Dairy Industry; e.g. RDP Board, Dairy Farmer organisation and other industry boards, Leadership programs.

Note: If you are farm owner looking at moving out of active dairy farming see thepeopleindairy.org.au/planning-for-the-future



Planning Your Dairy Career – Example

Career Vision: Where do I want to get to with my Dairy Career?

50% Share Farmer

How long will it take me to get there?

10 Years

Where Am I Now?

What is your current role?

Assistant Farmhand

How long have you been doing the role?

1 year

What level of training have you achieved to date?

Certificate II including 'Cups On Cups Off'

When will you be ready for the next step in your Dairy Career?
(use the Stepping Stones tables as a guide)

I am ready to take the next step to the Farmhand level

Longer Term Planning – Resources and Money

If your plan includes Share Farming then you need to start building resources (e.g. equipment) and your bank balance.

Fill out the table to get an idea of the money involved in getting ready for share farming

The Stepping Stones program will provide a way to get financial and business management advice

Resource	Cost	When
<i>Quad Bike</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>Next year</i>
<i>Tractor</i>	<i>\$80,000</i>	<i>2 years</i>
<i>Other farm equipment</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>5 years</i>
<i>Cows eg 350 cows with young stock</i>	<i>\$450,000</i>	<i>10 years</i>

Short Term Planning

What is your next role?



What training and experience do you need?

I need to get to Cert III Ag

What level of finances and/or farm equipment do I need to acquire?

Aim to have \$2000 saved by the end of the year

Action	When
<i>Discuss my advancement with the farm owner</i>	<i>Next week</i>
<i>Enrol in Cert III Ag</i>	<i>2 weeks</i>
<i>Start saving</i>	<i>Now</i>

Longer Term Planning – Training and experience

What AQF level do you need to achieve to enable your Career Vision



How many years will it take to get the AQF level you need?

6 years

What contacts do you need to make to allow you to work in the various farm roles along the way to your career vision?

Young Dairy Network regional events

Action	When
<i>Join the Young Dairy Network</i>	<i>3 weeks</i>
<i>Look up the RDP website to find upcoming events</i>	<i>1 week</i>
<i>Sit down with my current boss seek his/her advice on next steps</i>	<i>Next week</i>



Planning Your Dairy Career

Download this document at: thepeopleindairy.org.au/planning-for-the-future/stepping-stones

Career Vision:	Where do I want to get to with my Dairy Career?
	How long will it take me to get there?

Where Am I Now?

What is your current role?
How long have you been doing the role?
What level of training have you achieved to date?
When will you be ready for the next step in your Dairy Career? (use the Stepping Stones tables as a guide)

Short Term Planning

What is your next role?



What training and experience do you need?

Longer Term Planning – Resources and Money

If your plan includes Share Farming then you need to start building resources (e.g. equipment) and your bank balance.

Fill out the table to get an idea of the money involved in getting ready for share farming

The Stepping Stones program will provide a way to get financial and business management advice

Longer Term Planning – Training and experience

What AQF level do you need to achieve to enable your Career Vision



How many years will it take to get the AQF level you need?

[illegible]



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