

The Promotion of Agriculture to Schools Initiative

The issue addressed by this initiative is to enhance the standing of agriculture and related industries in the school curriculum and therefore improve school students' knowledge of agriculture, their understanding of where their food comes from etc. and potentially encourage them to consider agriculture as a career.

Issue: There is no national coordination of promotion of agriculture to schools despite all stakeholders wishing to see that happen.

The following developments have occurred:

1. A national group has been convened mainly of representatives of state, government and related agencies. This group met in Sydney in August with representatives from most states and territories either in person or by phone.
2. This group agreed to support a scoping study of the problem and seek funding through the cooperative venture. A consultant has been engaged for a scoping study which will provide a general strategic direction for national investment by industry in this initiative.
3. A national database has been prepared of people working in this area and those who are interested. This includes representatives from organisations such as:-
 - CRCs
 - Universities
 - Government Department
 - Royal Agricultural Societies
 - State Farmer Organisations

Other bodies expressing interest include research and development corporations and also members of the public. The database will be expanded as necessary.

4. The state representative group meet by teleconference from time to time and provide support for the development of the application to the cooperative venture.
5. It is contended that a lot of money is expended to date and is wasted primarily on producing materials which are state based, go out of date, are poorly promoted and distributed.
6. It is also contended that teacher professional development is a key issue to be addressed and it is in this area that the LandLearn initiative in Victoria and the AgAware initiative in Queensland have been successful.

Conclusion: This project is aiming to develop an overall strategy which will allow industry organisations in particular CRCs and RDCs to invest in the promotion of agriculture to schools on a national basis