



ISS Institute  
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4 April 2012

To whom it may concern

**Letter of Support for Richmond Loh's application for the George Alexander Fellowship**

This letter offers support to the Dr Richmond Loh's application for the George Alexander Fellowship. AgriFood Skills Australia was established in 2004 by the Australian Government to actively support the development, implementation and continuous improvement of quality training and workforce products and services, including training packages. Thus, we are in a position to provide comment on the potential benefits from expanded skilling in individual companies set against the broader context of industry-wide developments.

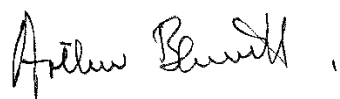
I refer you to The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation report titled, *"Final Report - 2005/641 - Aquatic Animal Health Subprogram: current and future needs for aquatic animal health training and for systems for merit-based accreditation and competency assessments."*

The executive summary of this report concludes,

'There is a shortfall in both total capacity and more prominently, in the availability of high skill level individuals within both laboratory and field service provision areas. It was widely recognised that many of the traditional pathways for training groups of such skilled individuals was through mentorship and self-education within State and Commonwealth Governments. These are now severely restricted due to a changing role of Government and ongoing tightening of resources. A significant proportion of all stakeholders felt that current Australian training opportunities were either completely absent or of insufficient depth. Seventy-three percent (73%) of survey respondents felt that the demands for aquatic animal health services were likely to increase over the next 5-10 years, which will only exacerbate the currently recognised shortages.

Through discussions with an array of industry stakeholders across Australia there appeared to be sufficient training available for farmer level individuals but not for specialised aquatic animal health diagnostic professionals.'

AgriFood Skills Australia supports this application as we recognise the challenges facing industry in attracting and retaining specialists and professionals across the sectors we represent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Arthur Blewitt", followed by a comma.

Arthur Blewitt  
CEO