

## **RURAL SKILLS CONNECT CONNECTING INDUSTRY TO SKILLED LABOUR**

**Cr Roberto Paino, Rural City of Wangaratta**

### **Abstract**

The Rural Skills Connect program is a simple, cost effective program which provides rural workers (mostly farmers) with training programs and opportunities to gain formal qualifications in areas they are already skilled in but are currently unrecognised. Industries experiencing skill shortages are linked with participants with many of them being gainfully employed. The types of jobs being filled are: welders, transport operators, mechanical/machinery operation, horticulture, hospitality and aged care. The program was first undertaken throughout North East Victoria then rolled out across Victoria in Sept 2008. It was recognised by winning the Economic Development Australia - National Strategic Award for 2008.

### **Biography**

Councillor Roberto Paino has been a Councillor with the Rural City of Wangaratta since 2003 and was elected Mayor in December 2004, an office he held until December 2008. In July 2009 Cr Paino was elected as the Chair of Regional Cities Victoria. During his term as Mayor, Cr Paino was involved with a number of major developments in the municipality including: \$3.5 million library in partnership with Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE; Funding attraction for a new Performing Arts Centre; The 2030 Community Vision; Redevelopment of the Municipal Offices into a Regional Government Centre with 8 State and Local Government departments; and Population growth through the skilled migration as well as the attraction of domestic migration.