

**MANUFACTURING IN THE  
MEAT AND SEAFOOD  
PROCESSING INDUSTRIES**



# Understanding the Meat and Seafood Processing Industry in Queensland

The Meat and Seafood Processing industry in Queensland represents a cornerstone of Australia's food manufacturing sector and export capabilities. This sector combines traditional processing methods with advanced food technology to serve both domestic and international markets.

## MEAT PROCESSING IN QUEENSLAND

Queensland's meat processing sector integrates traditional butchery with modern production technologies. In the red meat sector, processors handle a comprehensive range of products including beef, lamb, and goat meat. Many facilities specialise in specific cuts and grades, with particular emphasis on premium export products. Value-added processing has grown significantly, reflecting changing consumer preferences and market demands.

The poultry processing sector serves diverse market segments including retail chains, food service providers, and export markets. Queensland processors have developed particular expertise in producing products that meet halal and other religious certification requirements. This includes considerations for traceability and strict adherence to international food safety standards.

## SEAFOOD PROCESSING IN QUEENSLAND

The seafood processing sector encompasses a broad range of specialised production activities. Wild-catch processing forms a substantial segment, with processors handling species such as prawns, reef fish, and mud crabs suited to Queensland's tropical waters. Many of these processors have developed niche markets by focusing on premium products for both domestic and export markets.

Aquaculture processing includes farmed barramundi, prawns, and other species. These subsectors often combine traditional processing techniques with advanced technology, particularly in areas such as quick-freezing and packaging. Queensland's seafood processing industry has evolved to incorporate sophisticated cold chain management while maintaining traditional processing capabilities.

### Processing Support Industries

The industry is supported by a network of specialised facilities including cold storage operations, packaging manufacturers, and transportation services. These support industries are crucial to the sector's success, providing essential services and materials. Equipment manufacturers and maintenance providers form an

integral part of the supply chain, often developing custom solutions for specific processing requirements.

### Advanced Processing Technologies

Contemporary meat and seafood processing in Queensland relies heavily on advanced technologies. Automated cutting systems and sophisticated trace-back technology are now standard in most facilities. These technologies enable precise processing methods while maintaining food safety standards. Quality assurance systems and temperature monitoring procedures have been developed to meet international standards while addressing local market needs.

### Skills and Workforce

The industry depends on a highly skilled workforce including meat scientists, quality assurance specialists, butchers, and seafood processors. Production supervisors and food safety specialists play crucial roles in maintaining quality and compliance. The sector actively collaborates with training organisations to develop and maintain these essential skills.

### Processing Locations

Processing facilities are strategically positioned throughout Queensland, with significant meat processing centres in Rockhampton, Townsville, and Brisbane. The coastal regions from Cairns to the Gold Coast have developed specialised seafood processing capabilities, often focused on particular species or processing techniques.

### Sustainable Practices

Sustainability has become increasingly important in the sector. Processors are implementing sustainable waste management practices, energy-efficient processes, and water conservation programs. Advanced rendering and by-product processing systems are becoming standard, reflecting both environmental concerns and economic efficiency requirements.

The industry provides significant employment opportunities and contributes substantially to Queensland's export earnings while supporting related sectors such as agriculture, aquaculture, and transportation industries. This processing network ranges from large-scale meat processors to specialised seafood operations, creating a robust and dynamic industry sector.



Livestock Handler caring for animals by maintaining clean and safe holding facilities.



Production line for cutting large quantities of meat.



Storeperson using a barcode scanner to check goods in a cold room.



Processing Supervisor leading a team and managing daily production in a seafood processing facility.



Small goods manufacturing, salami packing line.



Microbiologist testing food quality.

Images in this document have been supplied by Manufacturing Skills Queensland and industry partners. Additional images have been sourced through Adobe Stock or generated using Adobe and Google AI software. Design layout by Liveworm, Queensland College of Art and Design, Griffith University.

## Career Stories

# Innovation and Communications Manager

As Innovation and Communications Manager in the meat processing industry, I work within a sector focused on domestic meat processing. Our core business involves the processing of natural processing products for either retail or food service production. Our industry is undergoing significant technological changes, with innovations being driven by both overseas and domestic developments. Key areas of focus include animal welfare, meat safety, production, waste management, energy and water resources, and refrigeration.

Our industry demonstrates strong diversity across gender, ethnic, and social backgrounds. We're committed to sustainable development goals and are working towards net-zero emissions targets. Students interact with our products through their daily diet, as our products are consumed at nearly every meal occasion.

My day-to-day role is very diverse, centred on providing healthy options that feed the community. I came to this position with a background in marketing and sales leadership roles, having limited prior knowledge of manufacturing. What attracted me to this industry was the opportunity to continue working in a sector that offers huge growth potential for all employees.

I'm still growing in my knowledge of meat processing and consider myself a novice in many aspects. The most valuable industry-specific knowledge I've gained relates to understanding the value of healthy food options for the community and seeing how the whole paddock-to-plate supply chain comes together. In my role, I've developed key skills in leadership, effective communication, and adaptability/flexibility.

The most challenging aspect of my position is managing the influence of climatic conditions on the process. However, seeing people succeed makes it all worthwhile.

For students interested in this industry, I recommend several subject areas. In general studies, accounting, agricultural science, design, digital solutions, earth and environmental science, engineering, and food and nutrition are particularly beneficial. For applied subjects, agricultural practices, building and construction skills, business studies, and industrial technology skills are valuable.

My advice to Year 10 students considering a career in manufacturing is simple: "Please consider all rewarding opportunities."

***"Our industry demonstrates strong diversity across gender, ethnic, and social backgrounds."***



## Industry Map



### FINDING INDUSTRY NEAR YOU

Want to see what Industry is around you? Here's how to do it on Google Maps!

Start by going to:

[maps.google.com](https://maps.google.com)

**Quick tip:** Sign in if you want to save places for later!

Begin finding Pathways to Industry by typing what you're looking for using the knowledge you have, and include where you want to find it, for example:

"livestock processing facility QLD"

For this specific industry here are some terms to try:

- Industrial meat processing
- Abattoir
- Animal processing
- Livestock processing
- Meat packing facility
- Industrial seafood processing
- Seafood export processing

Add "industrial" or "commercial" to filter out retail locations

Include terms like "facility" or "plant" to find actual processing sites

Use "processor" rather than "shop" to find industrial operations

Try "manufacturer" to find value-added processing facilities

### Some general search tips:

- Always include both "QLD" and "Queensland" in separate searches
- Add your postcode or "near me" to find stuff nearby
- Moving around the map? Click "search this area" to find new places
- Want to see how big a place is? Switch to Satellite View!
- Use Street View to get a closer look
- Found something interesting? Save it to your lists

Don't forget to check regular Google Search too! Sometimes you'll find different results there.

### EXTENDING YOUR INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE ONLINE

Here are some useful web search queries to find out more about this industry:

- automated meat processing systems
- advanced cutting technologies
- preservation method innovations
- cold chain monitoring systems
- pathogen detection technology
- ultrasonic meat tenderizing
- high-pressure processing
- automated grading systems
- traceability technologies
- advanced packaging methods

### EXPLORING INDUSTRY PATHWAYS ONLINE

Search for manufacturing jobs in Queensland using platforms like Seek, Indeed, and LinkedIn. Filter results by location and experience level to find opportunities ranging from production line work to engineering roles. Use specific keywords like "advanced manufacturing careers" to discover industry trends and requirements.

[seek.com.au](https://seek.com.au)

[au.indeed.com](https://au.indeed.com)

[linkedin.com](https://linkedin.com)

## Industry Pathways

In Queensland, an industry training pathway blends secondary school education with hands-on vocational training, allowing students to gain practical skills and qualifications while completing their high school certificate.

These pathways often involve partnerships between schools, TAFEs (Technical and Further Education), and industry, providing students with apprenticeships, traineeships, or work experience in their chosen field.

This combination of classroom learning, and real-world experience gives students a head start in their careers and helps them transition smoothly into the workforce or further tertiary education.

### What does an industry training pathway look like?

The four education and training levels serve as a general guide and represent the most common educational and/or entry-level requirements for these roles.



#### LEVEL 1

Typically requires skills equivalent to the completion of Year 10, a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, or a Certificate I or II. Australian Apprenticeships may be available at this level.



#### LEVEL 2

Typically requires skills equivalent to a Certificate III or IV, or at least three years of relevant experience. Australian Apprenticeships may also be available at this level.



#### LEVEL 3

Typically demands a level of expertise equivalent to a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, often gained through TAFEs or Registered Training Organisations. Some universities also offer programs at this level.



#### LEVEL 4

Typically requires qualifications equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree or higher. This level of education is usually pursued at a university.



## Industry Pathways - Leading Teams



Leading a team is about more than just managing tasks; it's about inspiring, motivating, and guiding a group of individuals towards a shared goal. A good team leader fosters a collaborative and supportive environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute their best.

### ROLE OF A TEAM LEADER.

- **Setting a Vision:** Clearly define goals and objectives, and communicate them effectively to the team.
- **Providing Direction:** Guide the team's efforts, ensuring everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- **Motivating and Inspiring:** Encourage and support team members, recognising their achievements and fostering a positive work environment.
- **Facilitating Collaboration:** Promote teamwork, open communication, and constructive conflict resolution.
- **Delegating Effectively:** Assign tasks based on individual strengths and skills, empowering team members to take ownership.
- **Monitoring Progress:** Track the team's performance, providing feedback and making adjustments as needed.
- **Developing Individuals:** Support the growth and development of team members through mentoring, coaching, and training opportunities.

### QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD TEAM LEADER.

- **Strong Communication Skills:** Clearly and effectively convey information, actively listen to team members, and provide constructive feedback.
- **Integrity and Trustworthiness:** Act with honesty and ethical principles, building trust and respect among team members.

- **Emotional Intelligence:** Understand and manage their own emotions and those of others, fostering empathy and positive relationships.
- **Decisiveness:** Make informed and timely decisions, even in challenging situations.
- **Accountability:** Take responsibility for the team's performance, both successes and failures.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Identify and analyse challenges, develop creative solutions, and guide the team through obstacles.
- **Adaptability:** Adjust to changing circumstances, embrace new ideas, and remain flexible in their approach.

### JOB TITLE

Industry roles where qualities of leadership, effective communication and specialist knowledge are valued.

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Process Plant Manager
- Technical Manager
- Supply Chain Manager
- Human Resource Manager
- Finance Manager
- Marketing and Communication Manager
- Business Manager
- Business Development Manager
- Meat Processing Supervisor/Manager
- Level 3
- Operations Manager
- Team Leader
- Production Leader (Food and Beverage)
- Production Planner
- Safety Inspector

For further information, visit:

[manufacturingmatters.com.au/careers/](https://manufacturingmatters.com.au/careers/)

## Industry Pathways - On the Tools



Jobs involving hands-on work with technology are increasingly common, blending technical expertise with manual dexterity and problem-solving skills. These roles often involve building, repairing, installing, or maintaining technological equipment and systems.

### QUALITIES NEEDED FOR THESE ROLES:

- **Manual Dexterity:** Skilled and precise use of hands and tools to manipulate small components and perform intricate tasks.
- **Technical Knowledge:** Understanding of the technology they work with, including its principles, operation, and maintenance.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Ability to diagnose issues, identify solutions, and apply critical thinking to resolve technical challenges.
- **Attention to Detail:** Accuracy and precision in their work, ensuring that equipment is assembled and functioning correctly.
- **Patience and Persistence:** Ability to work through complex tasks methodically and remain focused, even when facing setbacks.
- **Communication Skills:** Clearly explain technical issues to colleagues or clients and work effectively in a team.
- **Physical Stamina:** May involve lifting, bending, and standing for extended periods.
- **Up-to-date Knowledge:** A willingness to learn and stay current with rapidly evolving technologies.
- **Adaptability:** Adjust to changing circumstances, embrace new ideas, and remain flexible in their approach.

### JOB TITLE

Industry roles that can be considered 'on the tools' which requires different levels of training and specialist knowledge.

- Microbiologist
- Industrial Engineer
- Quality Engineer
- Artificial Intelligence Engineer
- Data Analyst
- Environmental Engineer
- Meat Safety Inspector
- Sustainability Officer
- Process Improvement Analyst
- Quality Assurance Officer
- Engineering Assistant
- Systems Engineer
- Compliance and Safety Officer
- Trainer and Assessor
- Butcher
- Process Operator
- Quality Control Officer
- Process Worker
- Factory Worker
- Storeperson
- Warehouse Operator
- Machine Operator
- Assembly Worker
- Abattoir Worker
- Boning Room Operator
- Rendering Plant Operator
- Production Operator (Meat Processing)
- Smallgoods Maker
- Slaughterer
- Livestock Handler
- Meat Packer

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## Future Industry



### FUTURE TRENDS AND INNOVATION

The future of Queensland's Meat and Seafood Processing industry aligns with Australia's national economic priorities, particularly in food security, sustainable manufacturing, and advanced processing technologies. These changes support the Future Made in Australia plan's goals of strengthening sovereign manufacturing capabilities and developing advanced food processing skills.

#### KEY TRENDS INCLUDE:

**Digital Manufacturing:** Integration of artificial intelligence and machine vision technology in meat processing, enabling precise cutting patterns and yield optimisation. This includes advanced scanning systems that improve portion control and reduce waste in both meat and seafood processing.

**Alternative Protein Integration:** Development of hybrid protein products and new processing techniques aligned with the growing alternative protein sector. This includes facilities capable of processing both traditional and plant-based proteins to meet changing consumer demands.

**Advanced Processing Technologies:** Implementation of robotics and automated handling systems in processing facilities, supported by industry-specific digital skills training programs. This includes cobots (collaborative robots) working alongside skilled butchers and seafood processors.

**Sustainable Manufacturing:** Adoption of closed-loop manufacturing processes, including biogas generation from processing waste, water recycling systems, and advanced packaging solutions focused on recyclability and shelf-life extension.

### FUTURE ROLES IN THE INDUSTRY

#### Leadership Roles:

- Alternative Protein Production Manager: Oversees hybrid protein manufacturing

- Digital Operations Director: Leads smart factory implementation
- Food Safety and Compliance Manager: Coordinates traceability initiatives
- Skills Development Leader: Implements digital manufacturing training

#### Technical Roles:

- Food Technology Specialist: Maintains advanced processing equipment
- Digital Systems Technician: Programs automated cutting systems
- Cold Chain Innovation Specialist: Develops new preservation techniques
- Robotics Maintenance Engineer: Services automated handling systems
- Industry 4.0 Trainer: Supports workforce digital transition

### FUTURE SKILLS FOCUS

Emerging skills requirements across all levels include:

- Digital literacy and data analysis
- Automated systems operation
- Sustainable manufacturing practices
- Advanced cold chain management
- Cross-disciplinary communication
- Food safety and compliance expertise

These emerging roles emphasise the integration of digital technologies and sustainable manufacturing processes. The industry offers new career pathways through technical training programs and micro-credentials, with particular focus on developing digital skills in traditional processing roles.

## Other Resources

For further information, visit:

### MANUFACTURING MATTERS

[manufacturingmatters.com.au](http://manufacturingmatters.com.au)

### MANUFACTURING SKILLS QUEENSLAND

[msq.org.au](http://msq.org.au)

### QUEENSLAND STATE GOVERNMENT

Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning

[statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/industry/critical-industry-support/industry-roadmaps](http://statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/industry/critical-industry-support/industry-roadmaps)

Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing, and Regional and Rural Development

[nrmrrd.qld.gov.au/manufacturing](http://nrmrrd.qld.gov.au/manufacturing)

### BUSINESS QUEENSLAND

[business.qld.gov.au/industries](http://business.qld.gov.au/industries)

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

[rdabrisbane.org.au](http://rdabrisbane.org.au)

### QUEENSLAND BEEF PROCESSING STRATEGY

[statedevelopment.qld.gov.au](http://statedevelopment.qld.gov.au)

### INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Australian Meat Industry Council

[amic.org.au](http://amic.org.au)

Queensland Seafood Industry Association

[qsia.com.au](http://qsia.com.au)

## Other Core Industries to Discover

Check out these other core manufacturing industries to understand the similarities and differences between them!

<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>M3</b>	M1 Aerospace and Defence
<b>M4</b>	<b>M5</b>	<b>M6</b>	M2 Chemicals, Hydrocarbons and Refining
<b>M7</b>	<b>M8</b>	<b>M9</b>	M3 Food and Beverage
<b>M10</b>	<b>M11</b>	<b>M12</b>	M4 Furniture and Other Products
<b>M13</b>	<b>M14</b>		<b>M5 Meat and Seafood Processing</b>
			M6 General Manufacturing and Engineering
			M7 Pharmaceutical and Medical Technology
			M8 Polymers, Plastic and Rubber
			M9 Printing and Graphic Arts
			M10 Pulp, Paper and Packaging
			M11 Renewables
			M12 Textiles, Clothing and Footwear
			M13 Timber and Wood
			M14 Transport Equipment and Machinery