

Final report

Shipboard stockperson training course review

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Abstract

This project was undertaken to review and update the LiveCorp shipboard stockperson training course and associated accreditation program. The existing course had not undergone a major review since 2016. Regulatory changes under the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL), including expanded stockperson responsibilities and new reporting requirements, prompted the need to ensure the course remained fit-for-purpose. The review assessed the relevance, effectiveness, and accessibility of the training, and to align it more closely with current industry practices and expectations. The review aimed to ensure that the course costs would continue to be managed on a cost-recovery basis for LiveCorp while remaining affordable and providing value for money to participants.

The project was delivered in five stages. It began with a high-level review of the existing course and accreditation pathway, followed by extensive consultation with exporters, existing course facilitators, and LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons. Insights from this process were used to develop a revised training strategy and course structure. The project included a detailed gap analysis, redevelopment of course content, and creation of online learning modules for delivery via the LiveCorp Learning Hub (Learning Management System (LMS)).

The key outcomes of the project included a modernised course structure, clearer entry and accreditation pathways, and a blended delivery model combining online and face-to-face training. With less administrative burden on LiveCorp, the course can be run more often to meet demand. These updates continue to ensure stockpersons are equipped to meet regulatory requirements and support animal welfare outcomes on livestock export voyages.

Executive summary

Background

This project was commissioned to review and update the LiveCorp shipboard stockperson training course and accreditation program. The main question being addressed was whether the existing course continued to meet the needs of industry and the regulator, considering significant changes to the stockperson's role following the implementation of ASEL 3.0 and the introduction of LIVEXCollect (the data collection, storage and visualisation system approved by the regulator as the way for industry to meet its reporting requirements under ASEL). The project sought to identify areas of improvement to better prepare stockpersons for their responsibilities in managing animal welfare and compliance during livestock export voyages.

The primary target audience for the project was current and prospective LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons, as well as the exporters who engage them and rely on the training course to provide stockpersons who perform their duties to the required standard. Other stakeholders included existing course facilitators, government agencies, livestock vessel owners and peak industry bodies with a direct interest in the delivery and quality of training outcomes.

The results of the project have been used to implement a revised training and accreditation program that is aligned with current regulatory and operational requirements. This will support consistent training delivery, improved learning and enhance animal welfare outcomes across the livestock export industry.

Objectives

The primary aim of the project was to review and update the LiveCorp shipboard stockperson training course and accreditation program to ensure it meets current regulatory and industry expectations.

Specific objectives included:

- conducting a stocktake of existing course materials and delivery methods
- consulting with industry stakeholders to identify strengths, gaps, and emerging needs
- developing a revised training strategy and course structure, including updated content and delivery methods
- creating online learning modules for use in the LiveCorp Learning Hub.

These objectives were achieved across all five stages of the project.

Methodology

The project was led by Patrick Coole of Cooleco, who managed the overall review process, stakeholder engagement, and reporting. Dr Renee Willis was engaged as the project's industry expert and on-board veterinarian, contributing her practical experience in livestock vessel operations and previous delivery of the course to ensure the revised program reflected industry realities. Canopi Learning was engaged as the training specialist, responsible for instructional design, content development, and ensuring the course aligned with best practice in adult learning and digital delivery. Together, the project team combined

regulatory, operational and educational expertise to deliver a course that meets both industry and learner needs. The project methodology included:

- a high-level review of the existing training course and accreditation program, including structure, content, delivery, and regulatory alignment
- extensive consultation with exporters, course facilitators, LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons and other stakeholders to gather feedback on course effectiveness and industry needs
- a gap analysis to identify areas requiring updates or new content
- development of a revised training strategy and course structure, including recommendations for delivery format, participant pathways, and integration into the LiveCorp Learning Hub.

Results/key findings

The review, whilst acknowledging the strong foundations of the existing training course, identified some areas that required attention to enhance the content and its delivery. Stakeholders had expressed the need for clearer entry requirements, a more defined accreditation pathway, and practical components that were more like on-board conditions. Although, the current delivery model was fit for purpose, there was an opportunity to increase course flexibility and accessibility to participants. In response, a revised course structure has been developed, incorporating blended delivery and refreshed content, whilst continuing alignment with both regulatory and industry requirements.

Benefits to industry

The updated training course provides industry with a more reliable mechanism for preparing stockpersons to meet the demands of modern livestock export operations. By addressing concerns around course relevance, delivery consistency and accessibility, the project strengthens the foundation for regulatory compliance and improved animal welfare outcomes. It also offers exporters a clearer framework for selecting and supporting personnel, contributing to better workforce capability.

Future research and recommendations

It is recommended that LiveCorp prioritise the procurement of up-to-date media to enhance course materials and ensure they reflect current industry practices and vessel conditions. The course should be delivered more frequently, when there is a demand for it, to support workforce continuity. In addition, LiveCorp should continue to develop ongoing professional development resources to support newly accredited stockpersons (e.g assessing animal welfare modules), particularly in the period immediately following full accreditation and their transition into head stockperson roles.

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Background

History of the LiveCorp Shipboard Stockperson Accreditation Program

The Australian Livestock Export Corporation (LiveCorp) was established in 1998 with a mandate to improve standards of care of livestock during sea transport. One of its first initiatives was to introduce a training program for cattle stockpersons, later expanding to include sheep and goat stockpersons, stevedores, and eventually on-board veterinarians. The program was developed in consultation with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) (now the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)), exporters, veterinarians, animal welfare organisations, and industry bodies. It combined theoretical instruction with practical handling and aimed to establish a uniform competency standard across the sector. The program was quickly integrated into the regulatory framework via the Australian Livestock Export Standards (ALES), later formalised under the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) in 2005 (Ransley 2008).

The training program continued to expand throughout the early 2000s, with course materials regularly updated based on participant feedback and regulatory developments. The last major review occurred in 2016 under the *LiveCorp Stockperson's Course Review* project (W.LIV.0292). That project delivered a comprehensive training package including a trainer's guide, a participant handbook (the *Shipboard Stockie's Guide*), session PowerPoints, group exercises, and formal assessments. The course content was revised to incorporate a mix of formal presentations, problem-solving tasks, and practical sessions. Key updates included greater emphasis on workplace health and safety, improved structure and learning outcomes, and measures to reduce reliance on individual trainer knowledge. The course was also piloted in 2016 and revised based on participant and trainer feedback, ensuring materials were better aligned with industry standards and expectations (Brightling 2016).

The course has continued to be delivered to meet industry demand, which was twice per year as a virtual format during COVID, and more recently, once per year as in-person instruction. Minor content updates have been made internally by LiveCorp on an as-needed basis. The delivery model has also been constrained by the cost recovery requirement and the availability of the subject matter expert trainers.

Rationale for the current review

Since 2016, a series of significant changes in the regulatory and operating environment have highlighted the need for a comprehensive course review. The introduction of ASEL 3.0 in late 2020 expanded the responsibilities of LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons and placed greater emphasis on recordkeeping, reporting and regulatory compliance. Due to having Independent Observers (IOs) on board, along with the rapid advancement of technology (e.g development of LIVEXCollect, use of apps and cameras) and increased connectivity on board vessels, there's now an increasing reliance and expectation to use digital tools and engage with exporters on regulatory reporting on a clearer, more sophisticated level than ever before.

There was an issue with provisional stockpersons not being able to secure the two voyages required to attain full accreditation, caused mostly by changes in the operating environment where livestock exports moved from using the larger vessels to smaller vessels which do not require multiple stockpersons. Concurrently, exporters reported that many participants were entering the course with limited prior experience, placing additional pressure on the course to deliver foundational as well as advanced skills.

These developments created a clear need to refresh the course content, make the course delivery flexible so it can be held in various locations and quickly if there was a demand by industry, and strengthen the pathway to accreditation.

The project was initiated to address these issues by evaluating whether the existing course still met the needs of industry and the regulator. The main question was whether the course adequately prepared participants to perform the duties expected of a stockperson under the current standards. The review targeted outdated material, delivery methods, and a need for structured pathways for entry and progression. The primary users of the course—stockpersons, exporters and government stakeholders—require a training system that continues to deliver competent personnel and supports continuous improvement in animal welfare outcomes.

Methodology

Stage 1

Stage 1 involved a comprehensive review of the existing LiveCorp shipboard stockperson training course and an extensive consultation process with industry stakeholders. The objective was to assess the existing course's content, delivery methods, and alignment with regulatory requirements, as well as to gather insights into the experiences and expectations of those directly involved with the training and accreditation process. The consultation also included discussions with stakeholders to address their expectations and requirements for stockpersons progressing through the accreditation process, as well as exploring solutions to ensure a consistent pool of accredited stockpersons is available to meet industry demands whenever necessary.

The stocktake component entailed a thorough examination of all course materials, including the trainers' guide, participant handbook, presentation slides, assessment tools, and supplementary resources. This review aimed to identify outdated content, inconsistencies, and areas lacking sufficient coverage, particularly considering recent regulatory changes such as the implementation of ASEL 3.0 and the introduction of LIVEXCollect.

Concurrently, stakeholder consultations were conducted to capture a wide range of perspectives on the course's effectiveness and relevance. Discussions with exporters, trainers, LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons, and government representatives revealed that while the course had historically met industry needs, updating its structure and content could help to ensure it reflected the operational realities of the stockperson's role as it is today.

The entry requirements for course participants were also discussed, and a stronger criterion was requested by stakeholders in order to raise the level of standards for stockpersons who attained accreditation. It was suggested the accreditation process needed refinement to ensure there were no unclear areas, and the practical training components, although thorough, did not adequately replicate the shipboard environment. Additionally, the fixed-location, in-person delivery model was seen as limiting, particularly for candidates based outside key livestock export hubs. There was broad agreement that the course should be updated to provide clearer expectations, more applied learning opportunities, and greater flexibility in how and when content is delivered.

As part of Stage 1, two major changes to the accreditation process were proposed. First, establish a refined process with clear instructions for provisional and full accreditation pathways to be shared with stockpersons. Second, introduce a mechanism that would allow stockpersons whose accreditation had recently lapsed to be re-accredited without redoing the entire course, provided they could demonstrate relevant experience and up-to-date knowledge of industry practices. . These recommendations aimed to streamline the accreditation process while maintaining confidence in the competency of accredited personnel.

Stage 1 milestone report provides further analysis of stakeholder feedback, industry data, and the rationale behind the proposed changes to the course and accreditation program.. In addition, an updated *LiveCorp Stockperson Accreditation Program V2.0.0* document was developed to formalise all aspects of the accreditation process, along with a policy document and form templates for the new ESAP.

Stage 2

Building upon the insights gained from Stage 1, Stage 2 focused on formulating a comprehensive training strategy and designing a revised course structure. The primary goal was to create a program that effectively addressed the identified gaps, aligned with current industry practices and regulatory standards, and met the diverse needs of stakeholders.

The development process involved several key components. A workshop was held with the project team—including Canopi Learning and LiveCorp—to test and refine the proposed course structure and delivery model before finalisation. A detailed gap analysis was conducted to pinpoint specific areas where the existing course content was deficient or outdated. This analysis considered recent industry developments, technological advancements, and evolving regulatory requirements. The course objectives and learning outcomes were then redefined to ensure they encapsulate the competencies required of a modern shipboard stockperson, emphasising both technical skills and regulatory knowledge.

The delivery model was re-evaluated to improve accessibility and flexibility. Recognising the logistical challenges faced by participants, especially those in remote locations, the strategy proposed a blended learning approach. This model combined online modules, accessible through the LiveCorp Learning Hub, with a shorter in-person component. The online components allow participants to engage with theoretical content at their own pace, while the face-to-face sessions focus on practical skills and assessments.

The major structural change in the revised course was the shift to a blended delivery model. The in-person component was reduced from the original 3.5–4 days to 2 days, with approximately 1.5 days' worth of theoretical material transitioned to online modules delivered via the LiveCorp Learning Hub. This format allows participants to complete foundational learning independently before attending the face-to-face sessions which concentrate on practical application through interactive exercises, including low-stress stock handling.

In selecting which modules to deliver online, consideration was given to both the advantages and disadvantages of online learning. Online delivery offers flexibility, allowing students to study at their own pace and choose when and where to engage with the material. This flexibility also broadens geographical access, enabling a wider range of students to participate. Additionally, online platforms provide more options for course planning, accommodating different learning styles of the course participants. However, there are also challenges, such as the potential for isolation, the need for strong self-discipline, and the need for reliable technology and internet access. These factors were carefully weighed to ensure a balanced and effective approach to online learning.

The former course structure involved four trainers, presenting over four days with two half-day practical sessions, a group of 18-24 participants, delivery of 29 modules via PowerPoint, concluding with a written exam. By contrast, the revised course adopts a more focused and efficient model. It is structured to be delivered by two trainers, an industry subject matter expert and an Australian Accredited Veterinarian, with guest speakers supporting specific sessions. The revised structure includes six hours of online content, two days of in-person delivery (with half a day practical) and online assessments. Participant numbers are capped to a maximum group size of 12, and entry is more controlled by a staged nomination process, giving priority to exporter referred participants, followed by those with existing expressions of interest, and finally the wider public if places remained unfilled. The revised course format and refreshed content was trialled at a pilot course, allowing time for any refinements to be made before the conclusion of the project.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	
1. Registration (8:30)	14. Recap, questions, today (8:30)	22. Recap, questions, today (8:30)	33. Recap, questions, today (8:30)	Expectations of the role and system
2. Introductions & housekeeping (8:45)	15. ESCAS (8:45)	23. Cattle diseases & causes of death at sea (8:45)	34. Dairy cattle (8:45)	Pre-shipment
3. Animal welfare (9:15)	16. Workplace Health & Safety at sea (9:30)	24. Cattle management at sea (9:30)	35. Other species (9:00)	Onboard management
4. Overview of stockies' role (9:45)		25. Ventilation and heat stress (10:00)	36. Discharge overseas (9:15)	Stock handling
5. ASEL (10:00)			37. Crisis management: group exercise (9:45)	Management of sick or injured stock
Morning tea (10:30)	Morning tea (10:30)	Morning tea (10:30)	Morning tea (10:30)	Post-shipment
6. Before you leave home (11:00)	17. Stocking rate, feed and water calculations: group exercise (11:00)	26. Short haul voyages (11:00)	38. Record keeping and reporting (11:00)	Course integrity
7. Shipboard personnel (11:30)		27. Incident reporting case study (11:15)	39. Returning home (11:30)	
8. Joining the vessel (12:00)	18. Euthanasia and carcass disposal (12:00)	28. Responsible drug use (11:45)		
9. Loading (12:15)		29. Choosing the best treatment: group exercise (12:00)	40. Exam (12:00)	
Lunch (12:45)	Lunch on bus trip to sheep feedlot (12:45)	Lunch on bus trip to cattle feedlot (12:45)	Lunch (13:00)	
10. Low stress stock handling - theory (13:45)	SHEEP (13:45)	CATTLE (13:45)	41. Results & feedback (13:45)	
	19. Low stress stock handling -sheep practical (Group 1)	30. Low stress stock handling - cattle practical (Group 1)		
	20. Sheep treatment & post-mortem (Group 2)	31. Cattle treatment & restraint (Group 2)	Farewell (15:00)	
Afternoon tea (15:00)	Afternoon tea (15:15)	Afternoon tea (15:15)		
11. The Australian Government regulators (15:30)	SHEEP (15:30-17:30)	CATTLE (15:30-17:30)		
12. Sheep diseases & causes of death at sea (16:00)	19. Low stress stock handling: sheep practical (Group 2)	30. Low stress stock handling: cattle practical (Group 2)		
13. Sheep management at sea (16:30-17:30)	20. Sheep treatment & post-mortem (Group 1)	31. Cattle treatment & restraint (Group 1)		
	21. Evening session - slide show & open discussion (19:30-20:30)	32. Evening session - slide show & open discussion (19:30-20:30)		

Figure 1 Previous course agenda

LiveCorp Learning Hub - Online Modules

Module
Module 1 - Introduction to live animal exports
Module 2 - Overview of the stockies role: Part 1
Module 3 - Before you leave home, joining the vessel and returning home
Module 4 - Shipboard personnel
Module 5 - Low stress stock handling theory
Module 6 - Loading
Module 7 - Discharge overseas
Module 8 - Workplace Health and Safety at sea
Module 9 - Sheep diseases & causes of death at sea
Module 10 - Cattle diseases & causes of death at sea
Module 11 - Thermal comfort theory
Module 12 - Australian Government Regulators
Module 13 - ESCAS
Module 14 - Introduction to Assessing Animal Welfare
Module 15 - Entry Assessment
Plus all Assessing Animal Welfare modules

Figure 2 Modules selected for online delivery

In person modules & agenda	
Day 1	
Time	Module
8:00 AM	Registration
8:30 - 9:00 AM	Introduction & housekeeping
9:00 - 10:00 AM	Module 15 - Overview of stockies role: Part 2
10:00 - 10:30 AM	Module 16 - ASEL
10:30 - 11:00 AM	Morning tea
11:00 - 11:30 AM	Module 17 - DAFF presentation and Q&A
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Module 18 - Managing livestock onboard livestock vessels
12:30 - 1:15 PM	Lunch
1:15 - 2:00 PM	Module 19 - ASEL calculations - stocking rate, feed & water
2:00 - 2:45 PM	Module 20 - Application of management plans
2:45 - 3:00 PM	Module 21 - Thermal comfort management
3:00 - 3:30 PM	Module 22 - Buffalo management at sea
3:30 - 3:45 PM	Afternoon tea
3:45 - 4:30 PM	Module 23 - Safe livestock handling onboard livestock vessels
4:30 - 5:00 PM	Module 24 - Record keeping & reporting practices
5:00 - 6:00 PM	Drinks and nibbles networking session
6:00 PM onwards	Evening session - Slide show & open discussion

Day 2	
Time	Module
8:00 - 8:30 AM	Recap, questions
8:30 - 9:00 AM	Module 25 - Responsible drug use
9:00 - 9:30 AM	Module 26 - Incident reporting case studies
9:30 - 10:00 AM	Module 27 - Euthanasia, post-mortem & carcass disposal
10:00 - 10:30 AM	Morning tea
10:30 - 11:00 AM	Module 28 - Group exercise: Choosing the best treatment
11:00 - 11:45 AM	Module 29 - Contingency & crisis management
11:45 AM - 12:30 PM	Theory Assessment
12:45 - 1:30 PM	Lunch on Bus to Feedlot
1:30 - 2:30 PM	Module 30 - Livestock inspection, restraint & treatment - Practical
2:30 - 3:30 PM	Module 31 - Low stress livestock handling - Practical
3:30 - 3:45 PM	Afternoon tea
3:45 - 5:00 PM	Module 32 - Onboard livestock handling - Practical
5:00 - 5:30 PM	Feedback Q&A on bus
5:30 PM	Farewell

Figure 3 Updated course agenda for in-person component of pilot course

In terms of content, the course was significantly updated to place stronger emphasis on communication skills, exporter expectations, regulation approved arrangements, and the commercial and welfare implications of poor performance. Participants at the pilot were guided through the regulatory context, including ASEL and LIVEXCollect, with updated resources such as the *Stockperson's Handbook* and references to relevant LiveCorp research outputs. The course design aimed to reinforce decision-making accountability, prepare participants for the realities of on-board work, and promote consistent industry standards in animal welfare and compliance.

Consideration was also given to the administration and management of the course. Previously the course required a course coordinator and three trainers. Most courses were attended by at least one representative from LiveCorp, in the most part for awareness. LiveCorp also provided significant logistical support remotely for managing participant enrolments, bookings, catering etc. To streamline communication and provide logistical support during the pilot course delivered towards the end of the project, a LiveCorp course administrator attended in person, allowing for a more efficient management process given the reduced number of trainers.

The outputs from this stage were documented in the *Milestone 2 Report – Revised Training Strategy & Structure*, which provided detailed recommendations and rationale for the proposed course changes. A revised *Training Course Overview* and *Draft Revised Course Agenda* were also produced, setting out the proposed structure, delivery model, and content flow. These documents together outlined the complete blueprint for the updated training package and provided the foundation for course redevelopment in Stages 3 and 4.

Stage 3

Stage 3 focused on the development of revised training materials aligned with the strategy and structure produced in Stage 2. Using the approved course blueprint, the project team undertook a complete update of the course content, with an emphasis on aligning learning outcomes, delivery methods and assessments across both online and in-person components. This included developing session outlines, updated PowerPoint presentations with integrated trainer scripts, revised Stockperson Handbook (previously called the Stockie's Guide), and practical exercises that reflected realistic shipboard scenarios. The structure of modules/topics largely remained the same with most changes being made within existing presentations.

Particular attention was paid to simplifying complex concepts and increasing the visual and interactive content in the training materials. Course designers applied adult learning principles to ensure the materials could engage a diverse range of participants, including those with varying levels of literacy, experience, and familiarity with maritime operations. Materials were drafted to support consistent delivery, regardless of who delivered the course, and to ensure alignment with the latest version of ASEL and other regulatory requirements.

Relevant personnel from DAFF were provided with the course materials for several modules related to ASEL, regulations and reporting for review and their feedback was incorporated.

All training components were developed to suit a modular delivery format. This included a clear distinction between pre-course (online), in-person, and post-course (on-the-job) components. Course content was designed to be standardised and managed by introducing a version control document to prevent fragmentation or unauthorised changes by individual trainers. All revised materials underwent internal review and were iteratively refined based on input from LiveCorp.

Supporting documents such as a revised course agenda, practical assessment instructions, and trainer notes were finalised at the end of this stage. These were packaged to ensure the program could be delivered by trainers with relevant subject matter expertise.

Stage 4

In Stage 4, the course materials selected for digital delivery were prepared and integrated into the LiveCorp Learning Hub.


The project team worked with the learning hub provider, Canopi Learning, to convert the pre-course modules into an online format compatible with the platform. This included digitising written content, uploading presentation videos, and generating narrated videos. Online quizzes were developed for each module, with participants able to complete them through their personal profiles on the learning hub. An online assessment was also developed for completion at the end of the online modules. The learning hub has the functionality to allow trainers to track individual progress and ensure that modules were completed prior to attending the in-person component.

Accessibility and device compatibility were key considerations throughout this stage. All materials were tested to ensure they could be accessed on a range of devices, including tablets and smartphones, and that users with limited digital literacy could still engage with the system. Additional functionality, such as printable assessment alternatives, was also developed to ensure inclusivity.

By the end of Stage 4, the full suite of online modules and resources was live in the LiveCorp Learning Hub and ready to be used for the pilot course. The integration process ensured that course participants could access learning materials in advance, complete assessments online, and interact with course content in a structured and reliable way.

1 ENTRY →
 2 PROVISIONAL →
 3 ACCREDITED


27/42 Mandatory items completed



Shipboard Stockperson Training Course - Online Modules

You will need to complete all of the following before the in-person course

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Module 1 - Introduction to live animal exports	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 2 - Overview of the stockies role: Part 1	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 3 - Before you leave home, joining the vessel and returning home	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 4 - Shipboard personnel	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 5 - Low stress livestock handling theory	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 6 - Loading	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 7 - Discharge overseas	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 8 - Workplace health & safety at sea	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 9 - Sheep diseases & causes of death at sea	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 10 - Cattle diseases & causes of death at sea	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 11 - Thermal comfort theory	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 12 - Australian government regulators	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 13 - ESCAS	LAUNCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module 14 - Introduction to Assessing Animal Welfare	LAUNCH
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Module 15 - Online modules assessment	LAUNCH



Assessing Animal Welfare

You need to complete all of the following learning to become qualified.

Figure 4 LiveCorp Learning Hub user view of online content

Stage 5

The final stage involved the delivery of a pilot course to test the revised training program and gather feedback for further refinement. The pilot aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the new course structure, content, and delivery methods in a real-world setting.

The pilot course was conducted on 4–5 February 2025 in Darwin, Northern Territory. The in-person components were delivered by the project team. DAFF presented virtually to the course participants on day 1 and had the opportunity for Q&A after. Two other industry subject matter experts were able to present to the participants on their specialised subjects (LIVEXCollect, buffalo handling and life on board). Participants included a diverse group: a feedlot worker from Vietnam, a veterinarian from New Zealand, individuals already working as on-board stockpersons, and experienced Australian cattle station and feedlot staff. The new format also gave the opportunity for participants to attend for awareness training, which was taken up by two DAFF staff. This diversity provided a robust test of the course's applicability across different backgrounds and experience levels. Additionally, remote attendance to the classroom session was trialled with one participant viewing a livestream of the presentations shared via Microsoft Teams.

Following the pilot, several refinements were made to address operational and content-related feedback. The course agenda was re-ordered to allow for earlier starts and to hold practical sessions in the cooler morning period. References to sheep were added to the practical components to ensure relevance across livestock species. Administrative improvements included clearer instructions on what participants should wear for the practical sessions, ensuring participant feedback forms were completed before departure, and better timing of the final assessment. Additionally, the module on responsible drug use has been converted into a delivery format for demonstration and discussion-based learning during the practical session at the feedlot, rather than for during the in-person session



Figure 5 Pilot course – Darwin February 2025



Figure 6 Pilot course – Darwin February 2025 practical session

Findings

Stage 1

The project team completed a full stocktake of course materials and consulted with a wide range of stakeholders across industry and government. This process identified the need for clearer entry requirements, a revision to the accreditation pathway, and updated course content. Key outputs included the *Stage 1 – milestone report*, a shortened summary, and the development of: the *LiveCorp Stockperson Accreditation Program V2.0.0 a*

Stage 2

Using findings from Stage 1, a revised training strategy and course structure were developed. This included a new delivery model, modular course format, and defined participant pathways. Outputs included the *Milestone 2 Report – Revised Training Strategy & Structure*, a revised *Shipboard Stockperson Training Course Overview*, and an updated course agenda to be tested in the Stage 5 pilot course.

Stage 3

All course content was updated to align with the new strategy. This included presentations, trainer notes, Stockperson Handbook, group exercises, assessment tools, and practical session plans (see Table 1 in the appendix). The material was restructured to support blended delivery both online and in-person and standardised to ensure consistent delivery. Updates were made to all core training documents listed in the project's document control register.

Recent regulatory changes, major industry events, shifts in trade practice, and relevant research findings were included in the updated course materials. Due to the dynamic nature of the livestock export industry, allowance is made in the course administration arrangements for trainers to review and make minor updates to course materials before each course is held, if it is clearly documented for version control. This will ensure that learning materials do not become stagnant and that each course is relevant to current regulatory requirements and industry practice.

Stage 4

The online components of the revised course were uploaded and configured in the LiveCorp Learning Hub. This included all pre-course modules and online assessments. The system was tested across devices and made accessible to participants and trainers. Printable versions of the online assessments were created to be used as a backup in the event of failure of the online system.

Stage 5

The revised course was piloted in Darwin in February 2025. The blended format of six hours of online content and two in-person days was delivered successfully to a diverse group of participants. Participant feedback was captured using an online questionnaire. Feedback was generally positive, and several refinements were made post-delivery, including changes to the agenda sequence, extending the duration of the in-person days, additional species references in practical sessions and improved administrative guidance.

The new course structure breaks up delivery of information between online learning components, classroom-based in-person presentations, and practical demonstrations and discussions. On review of the mixed delivery format of the course, the trainers found the participants were more engaged and most likely to contribute to open discussion during sessions in the field. Some of the more practical in-person presentation materials on responsible drug use and treatment selection have now been recommended for delivery as demonstration and discussion-based learning during the practical session at the feedlot. It is also possible for further in-person presentations such as the introduction to ASEL to be adapted to online learning. This would mean that the classroom session could be used for group exercises on the subject, providing further opportunity for dialogue and questions and ensuring that participants are able to apply the theoretical knowledge.

Piloting remote attendance to the classroom sessions did allow delivery of presentation-based course materials to a participant in New Zealand; however, it was difficult for the trainers to coordinate the mixed format alongside a busy course agenda and therefore relied heavily on LiveCorp administrative assistance. Despite the attentive presence of the participant, there were a couple of instances where being in-person would have allowed them to more effectively contribute to discussions and group exercises. The hybrid format is not recommended for future course delivery.

For the pilot course, LiveCorp's existing assessing animal welfare (AAW) online training modules were required to be completed by participants within one week of the in-person component. This created significant administrative burden as some participants did not complete the modules on time and required multiple reminders. As part of the refinement process the AAW modules were moved in the course sequence required to be completed prior to the in-person component.

Digital access was generally easily obtained by participants. Attendees from DAFF had trouble accessing the LiveCorp Learning Hub due to security restrictions on their devices. In future, participants from government departments may need to make arrangements for accessing the LiveCorp Learning Hub using private devices.

The use of two trainers for the pilot was found to be appropriate given the revised format and smaller participant cohort. The LiveCorp course administrator was on-site to provide logistical and administrative support. This was found to be very beneficial and supported the new two-person delivery format and has been documented as a required resource going forward. Details of roles and responsibilities are documented in the *Course Administration Checklist*.

The use of a guest presenter, an operational staff member from an active cattle exporter, was well received by participants. The presenter covered the topic of buffalo management at sea using a slightly modified version of the standard course presentation template. The guest presenter was able to deliver key required messages while presenting engaging, recent examples of their own experiences. Overall, the use of a guest presenter was very beneficial, and the revised course structure includes the recommendation for the course coordinator to attempt to secure at least one guest presenter for each course.

Several refinements were made to the presentations based on participant, trainer and LiveCorp feedback to capture information or messaging identified as missing from presentations, to ensure exercises reflected real-world scenarios and to address a few minor errors in content.

Conclusions

This project delivered a comprehensive review and redevelopment of the LiveCorp shipboard stockperson training course and accreditation program, in response to changing regulatory requirements, operational practices, and industry expectations. The revised course structure, developed through consultation, strategy design, content development and pilot testing, reflects a significant shift towards a more flexible, practical, and standards-aligned training model.

Key insights from the project include the need for a clear accreditation pathway, standardised training delivery, and greater emphasis on participants gaining regulatory knowledge and communication skills. The introduction of a blended delivery model, with online theoretical content supported by condensed in-person practical sessions, addresses long-standing accessibility and consistency challenges. These changes will enable more frequent course delivery if required, whilst preparing stockpersons for real-world conditions, along with improved alignment with ASEL and reporting expectations, including LIVEXCollect.

For the livestock export industry, the updated course supports improved animal welfare outcomes during sea transport and provides exporters with greater confidence in the capability of LiveCorp Accredited Stockpersons. The development of mechanisms for re-accreditation also contributes to workforce continuity and addresses recruitment challenges.

Learnings from the project point to a need for ongoing investment in up-to-date training resources, including multimedia content that reflects the shipboard environment. Future priorities include maintaining the currency of course materials, supporting early-career stockpersons through targeted professional development, and continuing to monitor delivery outcomes through feedback and quality assurance mechanisms.

Future research and recommendations

The project highlighted several challenges that may inform future investment in stockperson training and workforce development. A key issue is the need for more current and context-specific media to support course delivery, particularly high-quality visual content that accurately reflects shipboard conditions. Investment in this area would enhance the learning experience and support consistent delivery across different trainers and locations.

Another finding highlighted the need to be able to deliver courses as frequently as demand required to ensure timely access for new entrants and to reduce bottlenecks in workforce accreditation. Under the new format, LiveCorp has the flexibility to schedule courses when demand requires, which could be multiple courses each year, including regional or in-house delivery options where feasible.

Finally, there is also a clear opportunity to strengthen ongoing support for newly accredited stockpersons. Future work could focus on developing structured professional development resources to support individuals in the early phases of their career, particularly immediately following accreditation and as they transition into head stockperson roles.

References

Brightling, P. (2016). *LiveCorp Stockperson's Course Review – Development of Stockperson Training Course Materials*. MLA Project W.LIV.0292, Harris Park Group.

Ransley, R.M. (2008). Competencies, education and training in the international animal transportation industry – sea transport. *Veterinaria Italiana*, 44(1), 263–272.

Appendix

Table 1 List of updated documents and materials

AREA	TYPE	DOCUMENT/RESOURCE NAME
Accreditation	Governing document	Shipboard Stockperson Accreditation Program
Accreditation	Administration	Accreditation Certificate
Accreditation	Administration	Provisional Certificate
Accreditation	Administration	Certificate of Completion
Accreditation	Administration	Exporter Evaluation of Provisional Stockperson Form
Accreditation	Administration	Stockperson applied learning report
Course admin	Governing document	Shipboard Stockperson Training Course Overview
Course admin	Administration	Course Administration Checklist
Course admin	Administration	Shipboard Stockperson Training Course - Agenda
Course admin	Administration	Course flyer template
Course admin	Administration	Application form template
Course admin	Administration	Joining instructions template
Course admin	Administration	Authority to share personal details form
Course admin	Administration	Talent release form
Course admin	Administration	Course feedback form questions - To be set up online for each course
Training materials	Trainee guidance	<i>Stockpersons Handbook 2025</i>
Training materials	Trainee guidance	ASEL stocking rate feed & water exercises
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 1 - Introduction to live animal exports
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 2 - Overview of the stockies role: Part 1
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 3 - Before you leave home, joining the vessel & returning home
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 4 - Shipboard personnel
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 5 - Low stress livestock handling theory
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 6 - Loading
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 7 - Discharge overseas
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 8 - Workplace health & safety at sea
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 9 - Sheep diseases & causes of death at sea
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 10 - Cattle diseases & causes of death at sea
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 11 - Thermal comfort theory
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 12 - Australian government regulators

Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 13 - ESCAS
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 14 - Introduction to Assessing Animal Welfare
Training materials	Articulate Rise Module	Module 15 - Online modules assessment
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Introduction and housekeeping
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 15 - Overview of stockies role - Part 2
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 16 - DAFF Presentation and Q&A
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 17 - Managing livestock on board vessels
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 18 - ASEL Calculations -stocking rate, feed & water
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 19 - Euthanasia, postmortem and carcass disposal
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 20 – On-board management of heat stress
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 21 - Buffalo management at sea
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 22 - Application of management plans
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 23 - Safe livestock handling on board livestock vessels
Training materials	Session plan	Evening session Q&A with exporters - session plan
Training materials	Session plan	Module 24 - Livestock inspection, restraint & treatment session plan
Training materials	Session plan	Module 25 - Responsible drug use - Session plan
Training materials	Session plan	Module 26 - Low stress livestock handling session plan
Training materials	Session plan	Module 27 – On-board livestock handling session plan
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 28 - Contingency and crisis management
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 29 - Incident reporting case studies
Training materials	PowerPoint presentation	Module 30 - Record keeping and reporting
Training materials	LiveCorp Learning Hub	Assessment A - Template
Training materials	LiveCorp Learning Hub	Assessment B - Template