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Powercor Australia

Winner of the Minister's Award for Excellence for
Employers of Australian Apprentices 2008
(Geelong Region, Victoria)



Powercor, Victoria's largest electricity distributor, supplies electricity to regional and rural centres in central and western Victoria and to Melbourne's outer western suburbs.

The company employs 70 apprentices in lineworker and systems electrician trades, and has 39 staff members undertaking a technical traineeship.

Powercor places emphasis on developing leadership, communication and team work skills in addition to developing trade skills. The company rewards staff performance through its annual awards.

'Apprentice performance is reviewed by the company on a regular basis, with an annual awards function held to recognise achievement of the higher performers,' says apprentice coordinator Steven McConnell.

'The company CEO rewards and encourages excellence through gifts and certificates.'

As apprentice coordinator, Steven's role is to ensure apprentices complete their training both on and off the job successfully. Steven makes recommendations to improve the way the apprenticeship program operates based on feedback from apprentices, mentors and managers.





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'A Placement Program has also been established to enable apprentices to gain experience in all aspects of the industry,' Steven says.

'This includes work on a green field site in regional Victoria where key learning and practical skills are tested in a "non-live" work environment under supervision. Apprentices are also given the opportunity to develop their leadership, communication and team work skills in this environment.'

Powercor encourages apprentices to undertake additional training, including IT training and leadership development, or even study toward a Diploma in Management from Deakin University.

'Study time is allowed and managed locally within each depot. Apprentices having difficulties with the school have the opportunity to gain extra tuition from within the workforce and the RTO. The company also pays for our systems electrician apprentices to sit a refresher course prior to sitting external exams.'

It is this kind of support that has seen many apprentices complete their training successfully.

'Powercor enjoys a 99 per cent apprenticeship completion rate and has employed 149 apprentices and trainees since 2001.'

