



Australian Government

A U S T R A L I A N A P P R E N T I C E S H I P S

Your Life. Your Career. Your Future.



Minister's Award for Excellence for Commitment to Australian Apprenticeships

Finalist

Jean Dupavillon

Drafting Manager

Opus International Consultants



Jean Dupavillon had always loved drawing, and during high school his teachers suggested he should follow his enthusiasm and consider a career in drafting.

After graduating from high school, Jean tried to find a position in the field, but had no luck. Rather than giving up, he enrolled at Ultimo TAFE in a four-year part-time drafting course. He worked full-time in a car yard during the day, and took night classes.

'After three months, there was an ad put up at TAFE saying that a small engineering consulting firm, Tierney & Partners, was offering apprenticeships,' Jean recalls.

'In hindsight it would have been easier to decide that if I couldn't get into that industry, I should try something else. But I knew if I stuck to my guns I'd get there, one way or another.'

Jean began his drafting apprenticeship with Tierney & Partners at the end of May 1978.

'My mentor Philip Plowman was a very big influence on my whole career path because of the dedication and patience he had in training me. That really meant a lot to me—that's what made me decide "I want to become a drafting manager" so I could mentor, as I was by him.'

When Jean was in the third-year of his apprenticeship, he was encouraged to work on an urgent project in the Fiji office, which boosted his confidence and skill level, and opened up more opportunities. In December 1981, Jean completed his apprenticeship with a Structural Engineering Certificate and began work as a draftsman.

But his training wasn't over. Ten years later, the computer-assisted design technology AutoCAD was released, and Tierney & Partners became the first firm in New South Wales to use it. So it was time for Jean to re-train.

'Now everything was drawn on the computer. That was a real culture shock. Basically I had to re-train myself and get skilled up quite quickly. I was then charged with upskilling most of my draftspeople using AutoCAD,' Jeans says.

Jean achieved his dream of becoming Drafting Manager in 1996. In March 2003, Opus International purchased Tierney & Partners, which further expanded Jean's opportunities as a mentor.

As Drafting Manager, Jean was responsible for delegating work, checking quality, liaising with the engineering staff and guiding junior staff.

'Mentoring is about listening to the individual as much as telling them. Hearing what they want to do and guiding them along the right path.'

Jean developed a register to track his Australian Apprentices, including their achievements at TAFE and their past work. In 2005, he began mentoring new Australia Apprentices from across Australia as part of a two-week induction program, for which he developed specific training.

'I was tasked with writing an AutoCAD training manual which was a huge challenge and took me many months,' Jean says.

He updates the manual each year and Opus International apprentices around the world use it.

It's clear Jean loves his job.

'I take pride in having an input and maybe even influencing the direction apprentices take. I try to inspire them to have dreams like I did, because here I am, I've done it. If I can have a positive influence on just one career path I'll be happy with that.'

