



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.



The right elements for training

Nyrstar Port Pirie

South Australian Country region



Nyrstar operates worldwide and is the largest producer of zinc products in the world. The Port Pirie operation has been employing Australian Apprentices for a good part of its 120-year history.

Nyrstar Port Pirie's Apprentice Coordinator Jamie Keane says training is important to ensure good tradesmen for the organisation and the wider community.

And he's best placed to know—he began his career as an electrical apprentice with Nyrstar Port Pirie in 1984 and is now helping train the next generation.

At the moment, 33 Australian Apprentices are training as fitters, turners, boilermakers, and electricians. They're exposed to a wide range of work, including fabrication, plant maintenance, lathe work, hydraulics and pneumatics.

'They spend 12 months in the workshop and we have six other sections of the plant we send them to, on three-month rotations each, just to give them overall exposure and a bit of experience dealing with different people and getting a good cross-section of work,' Jamie says.

Occupational health and safety is a particularly important part of the training.

'We spend the first seven days of their apprenticeship covering all the different facets of OH&S, plus ongoing refreshers, new training and support throughout the extent of their training,' Jamie says.

'Safety's probably our biggest focus here, even before production. We put apprentices through all sorts of training including working at heights, confined spaces, forklift licences and so on. We even go as far as giving courses on alcohol and drugs, budgeting and superannuation.'

The commitment to health and safety extends well beyond the workplace.

'Our 10 by10 project brings together key stakeholders—the Smelter, the Port Pirie Regional Council, the Department of Health, the Environmental Protection Agency and the community—to work collaboratively to reduce exposure to lead in the environment so children's blood lead levels are kept as low as possible,' Jamie says.

It's about cleaning up the town, and the whole area, and making sure we're doing the right things for the environment. We've spent almost \$56 million on the project in the last four years.'

Doing things right by the local community and making sure their Australian Apprentices feel included is important.

'It's great to see a strong community-based organisation be recognised for their efforts towards promoting career opportunities for local youth,' says Reg Dennis, Field Officer for Statewide Group Training, Port Pirie.

'I've been associated professionally with Nyrstar for about four years, but everyone who lives in Port Pirie has something to do with them. They keep the place afloat.'

Nyrstar also employs Australian Apprentices from out of town and helps them settle in.

‘We have a health and wellbeing program; so we make sure they are fit and healthy. We give all our apprentices a cheaper rate at the local gym, so a lot take that up. We try to encourage them to play sport,’ Jamie says.

Nyrstar Port Pirie’s retention rates reflect this extra support. In the last three years, the company has retained 10 out of 15 qualifying Australian Apprentices.

