

2009 Minister's Awards for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices

Example of a winning application

Business Category	Resources & Infrastructure
How long have you been employing Australian Apprentices?	36 years

Does your business/organisation have a planned induction process?
formal and structured
<p>Details:</p> <p>This company has various methods of delivery for the induction of Australian Apprentices and existing employees signing into a contract of training. Depending on the Australian Apprentices' vocation and work site location, all employees participate in a company induction covering the company values, policies, procedures and safety. This includes a site tour of the facilities and a "Meet the Managers" presentation where key personnel from various business units discuss the core functions of their department/s.</p> <p>The organisation has a structured and intensive induction for 1st Year Trade Australian Apprentices. The Australian Apprentices meet with senior managers and executives to provide an overview of the business and their own career path within the company. Safety personnel cover safety procedures, documentation and demonstrate the safe and correct usage of personal protective equipment. A representative from the Australian Apprenticeships Centre conducts a briefing on the Australian Apprenticeships system - covering the rights and responsibilities of all parties and outline relevant government incentives and allowances applicable.</p>

Does your business/organisation have a training program?
formal and structured
<p>Details:</p> <p>Traditional trade Australian Apprentices follow a customised training program developed in collaboration with industry and TAFE, with the ability to assess more practical competencies assessed on the job. All 1st Year Australian Apprentices participate in a basic training program. This induction, followed by 7 to 9 weeks of theoretical and practical training covers the fundamentals of the trade. These are taught and practised under actual workshop conditions whilst supervised by our Australian Apprentice master.</p> <p>Dual trade and hosted adult Australian Apprentices participate in a customised and fast-tracked training program to suit the operational needs of the business and recognise the prior learning of mature age Australian Apprentices. This includes compressed blocks at TAFE, TAFE modules delivered onsite and study tours to our remote and regional branch locations.</p>



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In addition to the formal trade training provided by TAFE, Australian Apprentices are rotated throughout the various sections of the business where they are exposed to varying workloads, work environments and machinery. A 3 month rotation of all sections is covered during the first 2 years of an Australian Apprenticeship. In the remaining 2 years an Australian Apprentice is encouraged to specialise within their given trade.

For trainees, the organisation has a formal training program for front line management. This training is delivered on site by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and is tailored to balance the needs of the business with that of the participants.

Does your business/organisation provide your Australian Apprentice with learning resources?

Resources provided: staff manual, online access, procedure guides, policy guides, study time and other

Details:

The organisation has access to an infinite number of learning resources available to Australian Apprentices; online, in print, via multi media and even mechanical simulators. Learning resources in the form of workshop manuals, reusability guides and special instructions may be sourced via the intranet site. Hard copies and electronic copies are made available to all employees under Contracts of Training

In 2008, the company launched an "E Learning Tool". This is mapped against an internal career management tool. All Trade Australian Apprentices have a "log in" and are mapped against the tool in their 3rd and 4th Years.

The trade Australian Apprentices are supplied with a comprehensive toolbox, complemented by the 'Tools for Your Trade' initiative.

Trainees have access to Internal Reference Guides, Online Resources and User Manuals. This is possible by utilising the government's User Choice Funding. User Choice makes training affordable and flexible, with the freedom to select RTO's that best suit the vocation and delivery method required.

Does each Australian Apprentice have a designated support person?

Supervisor, colleague, mentor and other

Details:

The company employs a dedicated training team to assist with the diverse training needs of our Australian Apprentices. The key designated support person is the Australian Apprentice master who is continually in contact with all Australian Apprentices on training and related matters. The Australian Apprentice master is not only a trainer, but a confidant and mentor to all trade Australian Apprentices.

Whilst rotating through the various workshops, trade Australian Apprentices are assigned to a qualified tradesperson during the first two years of their apprenticeship and work under their direct supervision where they receive 'on the job' training. A senior tradesman in each work area takes on the responsibility to 'oversee' third and fourth year Australian Apprentice development ensuring that their workmanship follows the requirements of the job at hand and where necessary, again, provides additional 'on the job' training.

Trainees are allocated a designated support person/people in their relevant department, as well as the support of a designated Human Resource advisor with a learning and development focus.

Additionally, trainees and apprentices are provided with the personal contact details of their designated Australian Apprenticeships Centre consultant as a neutral point of contact.

What is in place for each Australian Apprentice to have an opportunity to provide input to and feedback on their training?

Regular formal meetings and informal arrangements

Details:

Every 3 months an 'Australian Apprentice on the Job Evaluation' sheet is completed by the section supervisor and the results are discussed with the Australian Apprentice before they rotate to their new sections. All reports are handed into the Australian Apprentice master for follow-up and actioning if required.

In the 3rd/4th Year of their Australian Apprenticeships, Personal Development Plan discussions begin with the Australian Apprentices. This allows the apprentice or trainee to add value and input to their studies, with the opportunity to nominate for external or specific product training. A Personal Development Plan is created and assessed yearly to ensure the goals and expectations of the previous year are met and new goals are set.

Feedback is also communicated via internal training evaluation forms and with an "open door" approach supported by the Australian Apprentice master and the Training and Human Resources departments.



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What is in place to assist your Australian Apprentice complete their training?

Formal and informal arrangements

Details:

Flexibility is one of the company's keys to successful completion for Australian Apprentices. The business allows apprentices and trainees to study either on or off the job, during business hours or outside of hours, in the classroom or via correspondence, in block release or in regular day release. To support this flexibility, the apprentices and trainees currently have access to government initiative such as Commonwealth Trade Learning Scholarships, Youth Allowance, Living Away from Home Allowance and Wage Top Up.

The company currently employs Australian Apprentices who are: existing employees, school leavers, mid career apprentices, adult apprentices and rural and regional apprentices. With such diversity, the Human Resources department works closely with the Australian Apprenticeships Centre to assess any incentives and allowances that may be of benefit to all parties. The company currently utilises the Commencement and Completions Incentives, Mature Aged Worker Incentives, Apprentice Training Vouchers and Targeted Assistance for Rural and Regional Areas.

In collaboration with TAFE, the Training team are able to assess more competencies on the job via a tailored logbook system. This working document is a competency recording system based on the National Automotive Qualification to evaluate the type of work carried out by each apprentice. By regularly reviewing and assessing the logbook, any skills gaps or deficiencies can be addressed early on to ensure optimum standards are achieved.



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How does your business/organisation demonstrate EXCELLENCE as an employer of Australian Apprentices?

Training Excellence, Diversity & Industry Alliance

- The company currently employs trainees and apprentices from a Cert III level and above and covers skill shortage vocations such as diesel mechanics, boilermakers, auto electricians, electricians and part interpreters. Other vocations currently under contracts of training are warehousing, business administration, front line management and human resources. There are currently 70 trade Australian Apprentices, 6 hosted trade Australian Apprentices and 36 trainees.
- The company maintains a close working relationship with RTO's in the provision of training aids and materials along with visits from lecturers onsite to provide high quality, industry specific training. The relationship with TAFE has seen a significant investment with the donation of plant and machinery to TAFE. This includes a customised Workshop within the TAFE facility for the use of all heavy diesel students.

Talent Management and Succession Planning

- With the introduction of the internal career management tool, Australian Apprentices are mapped against a company career path that can take them in various directions, for example: from a Trades Position to a Sales role. When mapped against this program, Personal Development Plans are created with ongoing professional development goals to achieve. Through this means, key positions within the company are identified and Australian Apprentices can be developed over time to meet the core skills of these critical roles. Due to an ageing workforce and ongoing skills shortage, the melding of the career management tool with the Australian Apprenticeships system is an invaluable work force planning initiative for the company.

Productivity

- With a senior management team comprised of long standing employees with trade backgrounds, the Front Line Management program has improved productivity across multiple departments. The final project delivered at the culmination of this Program has introduced innovation, efficiency, structure and cost saving initiatives to the business as a whole.
- The company has diversified the pool of trade Australian Apprentices to incorporate adult Australian Apprentices (including redundant manufacturing workers). The maturity and life skills of these adult Australian Apprentices has assisted in the fast tracking of their training and produced work output much higher than what is expected of an equivalent year Australian Apprentice.

Reward, Retention & Economic Stability

- The company's Australian Apprentices have the chance to rotate to remote and rural branches to gain exposure to South Australian Industry and Infrastructure.
- A major prize is also awarded to the 4th year group based on set criteria. The successful Australian Apprentice receives a trip to Melbourne, where Australian Apprentices compete for the award of Australian Apprentice of the year. As a result of this diversity, the retention rate for "school leaver" Australian Apprentices in the past 5 years has been 100% to successful completion and above 85% across all Australian Apprentices.



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- Existing employees are invited to up-skill themselves via the Australian Apprenticeships system. This has allowed employees who were at risk or disengaged from their current roles to study and change career paths. Training plans and delivery are developed to maintain a work/life balance in line with operational needs. As a result, retention of existing employees has increased.

In the current economic climate, the company remains dedicated to retaining and replenishing Australian Apprentices. The company has received additional assistance via the Securing Australian Apprenticeships Incentive to ensure 11 trades people successfully completed their Australian Apprenticeship since January 2009. With the projects like the South Australian Mining Expansion on the horizon, the company will continue to develop, retain and recruit Australian Apprentices throughout 2009/2010 and in to the future.