

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

### Example of a winning application

<b>Business Category</b>	Construction & Property Services
How long have you been employing Australian Apprentices?	21 years

<b>Does your business/organisation have a planned induction process?</b>
<b>formal and structured</b>
<p><b>Details:</b></p> <p>All employees and Australian Apprentices receive a formal Global Company induction and a Business Unit site specific induction for the area they work in. All staff delivering inductions attend training sessions to ensure consistency in the delivery to new employees and ensure that items specific to that business area are covered.</p> <p>Topics covered include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions of employment and new employment documentation, including position description</li> <li>• Group Management Systems (GMS) overview – policies, procedures, AS/NZS 4801, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001</li> <li>• Federal Safety Accreditation overview, where applicable to position</li> <li>• Viewing of corporate and safety DVD and includes an induction PowerPoint Presentation – produced in-house</li> <li>• Employee Reference Handbook that includes where to find sections</li> <li>• Introduction to key personnel, including a site tour of applicable facilities</li> <li>• Allocation of tools, materials, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>• Emergency Management requirements</li> <li>• Introduction, names and responsibilities of supervisor in their duties and their role and mentor</li> <li>• An induction checklist is completed to ensure all information is communicated and/or collected for personnel files, the induction training is currently under review to ensure the process is fit for purpose and to identify continuous improvements.</li> </ul>



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- When an employee/apprentice changes work site, they receive a site specific induction to the new site that details specific Hazards and control measures, reporting requirements, work responsibilities, location of amenities, First Aid Officer, Emergency Wardens, Work Instructions, competence requirements, etc.
- Site visits and job rotations occur to assist broadening an Australian Apprentices' knowledge and scope of company activities and different works.

<b>Does your business/organisation have a training program?</b>
<b>formal and structured</b>
<p><b>Details:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The company has developed core competence training and awareness programs that detail requirements intended to develop and provide for understanding of company and legislative requirements, development of individuals and to assist in the succession planning into the future for the individuals and the company alike.</li> <li>• Individual Training Plans are also developed for each apprentice in consultation with supervisors and mentors and the approved training provider. Other operational training plans are developed in consultation with relevant parties for specific life skills and/or trade requirements.</li> <li>• Australian Apprentices are included in the company's internal programs which assists in building individual development and capability and is provided in-house by our dedicated training area and/or in consultation with our approved external training partners.</li> <li>• Training Plans identify early career development, transition and long term mentoring to provide the Australian Apprentice and company with clear goals and identify future leaders.</li> <li>• The company directly employs Australian Apprentices where possible to ensure they are "part of the family", other Australian Apprentices are hosted across multiple trade areas.</li> <li>• Employees are provided with business/management skills post trade in order to ensure potential and new leaders have the appropriate core skills base. This has seen a number of employees complete multiple qualifications.</li> <li>• The company actively participates with sponsorship of community based programs, schools and colleges to provide opportunities for employment options and direction or careers.</li> <li>• All Australian Apprentices, along with all other workers, participate in annual Performance Development Reviews.</li> </ul>



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## 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:

All Australian Apprentices:

- Are issued with a Reference Handbook which contains an overview of the Company's systems, policies and procedures as well as common safety tips and 'where to find' for each. This is issued at time of induction.
- Have access to our Group Management System in hard copy where held on project sites or via the intranet site.
- Receive site specific training/induction before the commencement of work on sites which includes an overview of our policies, procedures and applicable work instructions. Site specific training may be identified at this induction. Access is available to apprentices and trainees at work sites within the mobile coverage network and at all office locations.
- Have paid study time provided, usually during normal work hours and on-the-job learning is encouraged.
- Have access to digital cameras and other similar media devices for the collection of evidence as well as copies of completed work based processes.
- Are provided with further support for learning through various mentoring support persons.
- Are able to log training completed on the job in a dedicated training log book, especially where supervision and instruction has been completed for general competence based training; formal or informal.

The group employs a nationally accredited plant assessor, supported by the RTO. This process ensures that high risk training and nationally accredited plant training is completed by approved methods and allows for further skills development and queries to be handled in-house.



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<b>Does each Australian Apprentice have a designated support person?</b>
<b>Supervisor, colleague, mentor and other</b>
<p><b>Details:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Australian Apprentices have access to a designated apprentice supervisor/mentor who is an experienced tradesperson. Selection is based upon the current works being completed and their desire to see apprentices and trainees succeed. The company has many different levels of mentor support available to provide professional and personal support. Most have completed the Lifeline program 'Safe Talk'</li> <li>Each apprentice and trainee is encouraged to utilise their direct supervisor, foreperson or leading hand as a professional support resource.</li> <li>Recently introduced review process where on a quarterly basis each Australia Apprentice can provide feedback or vice - versa on development to date or any areas of concern that may require attention.</li> <li>Technical supervision or support is also provided by a qualified and suitably experienced tradesperson working alongside the apprentice on construction projects.</li> <li>The company is a sponsor of the Oz Help Foundation, which is an employee assistance and development program targeted at Australian Apprentices in the construction industry. All apprentices and trainees attend life skills workshops and can access the confidential and free counselling services of an Oz Help professional social worker.</li> <li>The company utilises an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which provides free counselling support to all employees and their families. Employees can have confidential assistance with work problems, financial concerns and personal issues.</li> <li>Regular meetings are held with the RTO providers through an Enterprise Reference Group meeting to ensure feedback is provided on current training programs and offer improvement options where required.</li> </ul>



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## 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:

Apprentice and trainee feedback is facilitated through:

- Australian Apprentice supervisor/mentor meetings - discussing performance issues, expectations, opportunities for further development, etc. This forum encourages two-way dialogue and Australian Apprentices are encouraged to actively participate in this process. There has been great success in this area in improving outcomes for all.
- Informal site contact with relevant supervision and management staff.
- Tool Box meetings are held on a regular basis, and provide the opportunity for open consultation and feedback.
- A formal Business Improvement procedure, where any employee can raise suggestions and ideas to support continuous improvement. Feed back to the originator is seen as a valuable communication tool.
- A formal grievance and dispute procedure, where any employee can raise concerns with Human Resources and have access to an independent, confidential resolution process.
- Written feedback provided through Australian Apprentice Site Diaries. This tool has been effective in helping to better manage the placement and rotation of Australian Apprentices to ensure that they acquire the necessary skills and variety of work experience.
- Employee Development Performance Reviews - held annually and can be called upon as required.

Work experience is provided to pathway and Vocational Educational trainees in a formalised manner throughout the year. This provides an introduction to the workplace and to specific careers. This has resulted in positive feedback from education providers and students, with a number of Australian Apprenticeships being offered to participants who express interest in joining the organisation at the end of the school year.



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

### A formal arrangement / Informal arrangements

#### Details:

Processes in place can be formal or informal dependant on requirements and outcomes:

- The company can offer a variety of different sites and work to assist Australian Apprentices in knowledge building and assist in completion of specific units of learning.
- Formal Performance Development Reviews are held regularly, at which performance is discussed, as well as strengths, achievements and areas for development. Objectives and targets may also be established to provide targets for Australian Apprentices to strive for.
- Regular supervisor/mentor meetings are held in either a formal or informal basis - encouraging an open flow of communication between apprentices/trainees and their supervisors/mentors.
- Paid time is made available for completion of theory based learning and for attendance to Oz Help life skills and other similar programs.
- Support is made available from senior management down to direct supervision - to ensure that Australian Apprentices receive the assistance they require to successfully complete their training, as well as encourage them to continue working with the company once their apprenticeship is completed.
- Tool Kits are supplied to assist Australian Apprentices, who can then elect to purchase or just use in the completion of works.
- Rotation to different projects in order to gain wider base line skills or experience.
- Opportunities to lead tasks and teams is examined in an Australian Apprentice's later years - 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- Career Map pathway planning assists the development process.



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

The company has strong family values and ethics which result in a culture based on fairness, trust and integrity and ensures that these values are upheld whilst exceeding statutory obligations.

People are the heart of the business providing the expertise that ensures the company is an industry leader in diverse business activities. The company recognises that success depends on integrity, staff retention and reward, supported by a culture of discipline in following the Group Management System, which incorporates procedures and codes of conduct. This is demonstrated to employees on a regular basis with 'Hand Shakes' awarded to employees for outstanding effort or for thinking outside the square in the completion of works or client requests.

The company encourages and assists employees to acquire the knowledge and skills required to maximise their performance in their roles. It supports developing or redirecting careers as individual's self determination and empowerment or organisational needs change by offering training programs over a wide range of qualifications, ranging from business, human resources, carpentry, mechanical, panel beating, auto electrical, concreting, laboratory skills and other traditional trades. This also includes post trade training including Diplomas and Degrees.

Of the 57 Australian Apprentices (five hosted) 25 are employed in skill shortage trades, and 20 are over the age of 30, 5 within the skill shortage trade. The company is committed to providing the client a quality project and providing customer satisfaction for all works being completed safely; and is committed to technical and "soft skill" training.

Through the development of training plans for workers the company has been able to offer a career pathway for numerous workers, apprentices and trainees.

The company was the Southern Region Winner for Employer of Choice 2007 and in 2009 was listed on the Honour Role. Being listed on the Honour Role enhances the Employer of Choice standing in the wider community and among industry peers, and allows involvement in training sessions to pass on to other industries concepts and proven methods in order to enhance employment conditions and be potentially recognised as Employer of Choice companies.

The organisation has membership of industry reference groups and is actively involved in the improvement or training delivery and processes that directly effects Australian Apprentice outcomes.

The company prides itself on building on successful recruitment, training and retention of employees and standing in the industry. It has been identified by Federal Government Departments and peers as a genuine preferred employer and workplace training provider.

The company introduced internal CIC (Career Identification Companion) program – providing career succession planning and a mentoring program.



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Complete training opportunities for migrant workers is offered and the company currently and, has in the past, sponsored from East Timor, Philippines and UK.

The company is committed to school based work experience programs as well as supporting community based programs such as U Turn and White Lion. It employed an Australian School-based Apprentice who has since become full time, through the sponsorship of the U-Turn Automotive Certificate Course, to assist marginalised youth to gain employment. Since then another participant of this program was employed in the field of Australian Apprentice Panel Beater. Given the opportunity, both are progressing well and are valuable employees.

A considerable number of adult apprentices have been employed and offer dual trade opportunities.

Employee surveys are conducted internally by an external provider as well as external national benchmarking. Both of these surveys rate the company higher for employee engagement than industry standards.

Various health and wellbeing strategies have been implemented including Boot Camp, Gym Memberships, workplace massages, Flu shots, Fun run sponsorships (City to Casino topped at 150 entrants and the Burnie Ten 43 entrants) Employee Assistance Programs – free, independently provided counselling and assistance for employees and families. The company's People Policy commits management to support work/life balance practices.

The company offers contemporary and proactive Return to Work and Rehabilitation Programs and has been recognised by the Tasmanian Work Cover Awards for Best Return To Work Program 2007.

Sponsorship of Civil Engineering Faculty at the University of Tasmania is provided, offering work experience to undergraduates, and offering scholarships to Civil Engineering students. The company currently sponsors a thesis for an Honours student in wind energy and carbon credit offsets within broader business holdings.

Nominations and commendations for Australian Apprentice of the Year Award - Best Automotive Apprentice in Further Studies 2007, Outstanding Achievement of Off-the job Training and On-the Job Performance 2005, 2nd Year Apprentice of the Year Finalist 2005, 1st Year Apprentice of the Year Finalist 2004, Best Attitude Towards Training and a further two Australian Apprentices this year have been nominated for Trade Excellence in Apprentice of the Year by their training provider.



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Australian Apprentices are provided with a full tool kit upon employment and offer a payment plan that is tailored to suit their income, if they select to buy it. If not, the company still supplies the tools but retains ownership.

All Australian Apprentices are offered their Tool for Your Trade voucher openly and they select the tools they need to complete their trade, effectively giving ownership to them prior to their nine month period.

Australian Apprentices are paid over award wages, travel allowance and are reimbursed for any other out of pocket purchases aligned to training and/or the completion of works.

Personal illness is allowed for and advance paid leave to assist, as required, for long term recovery periods. The company offers alternate duties to allow a quicker managed return to the workplace.

A major focus for the company is the safety of the workforce including any hired persons and provision of the necessary training and tools to ensure safety is enhanced in the workplace, as well as allowing for them to provide the direction to any subcontractors utilised.

All Australian Apprentices are actively involved, as for all employees, in safety discussions, including site inspections, hazard analysis and controls.

The company actively promotes a healthy life style and offers paid memberships to gyms, fun runs and boot camps, this includes time away from the job. Quit Line assistance for smokers is also sponsored. The company has also commenced occupational medical assessments for the workplace to improve the workplace and minimise workplace injuries, therefore making a safer workplace.

There has also been an investment in new plant and equipment that is technologically advanced and allows for more efficient completion of tasks and lessens the potential for manual handling injuries.

This organisation sees Australian Apprentices as the potential future leaders of the company and time spent now completing valid and effective training will see it prosper and continue into in the future.

This is a second generation family based business that has been operating for over 62 years and the third generation is actively being trained now and has been over the past years to ensure the company will continue in the way intended by its owners, family owned and operated. One is a current Australian Apprentice, another completing a Business Degree.