

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

Example of a winning application

Business Category	Electrotechnology
How long have you been employing apprentices	6 years

Does your business/organisation have a planned induction process?
formal and structured
<p>Details:</p> <p>The organisation's Australian Apprentices are located in regional Queensland from Thursday Island to Stanthorpe. The organisation conducts a formal induction program on the first week of the Australian Apprentices commencing employment. These inductions are conducted in three locations throughout Queensland, and all locations conduct the same program. On the first morning the Australian Apprentices are welcomed into the industry by an Executive Management member and in one location the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy was present. Content covered over the five days of induction include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Forum, covering terms and conditions of employment and overview of organisation, • Issue of clothing and personal protective equipment and demonstration of correct use, • Behaviours and values/ code of conduct. During this presentation young Australian Apprentices are buddied with mature apprentices, • Financial Planning, Union presentation, Electrical Safety Office presentation, • Registered Training Organisation (RTO) induction, Department Education Training and the Arts presentation, Australian Apprenticeships Centres presentation; and • Health and Safety, including a total Safety Culture program termed 'Zero Incident Process'. <p>After the initial program Australian Apprentices complete a work place induction. This is another formal process conducted by the workgroup supervisor covering all relevant points for the actual work environment, including that allocation to a mentoring tradesperson.</p>



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Does your business/organisation have a training program?

formal and structured

Details:

Each Australian Apprentice is provided with an annual training plan for each year of their apprenticeship. This is a formal plan and includes the following types of training:

- Generic Field Induction training conducted in two parts for a total of 4 weeks off job training,
- Regulatory training each three months covering first aid, resuscitation and rescue, including additional safety training
- Formal off job training associated with the Australian Apprenticeship,
- Workgroup rotations, each Australian Apprentice is rotated into a different work group every three months to gain broad experience and assist in gaining required competency. Majority of the Australian Apprentices graduate before nominal duration,
- Rotation with other employers mainly electrical contractors to gain different experience at no cost to host employer
- Trade Professional Program for Australian Apprentices in years three and four of apprenticeship. Program is a two stage program delivering three units of competency from the Front Line Management training package. Implemented into Australian Apprentice program to assist Australian Apprentice's transition into responsible tradespersons. This program is optional with around 85% take up.

It should be noted that scheduled Australian Apprentice training has priority in this organisation.

Does your business/organisation provide your Australian Apprentice with learning resources?
Resources provided: staff manual, online access , procedure guides, policy guides, study time
<p>Details:</p> <p>The organisation provides all resources required for all of the Australian Apprentices to complete training. All tooling, personal protective equipment, clothing, textbooks, calculator and drawing equipment and all travel and accommodation required for off job training and workgroup rotations are provided as well as an allowance for Australian Apprentices in remote locations.</p> <p>All of the Australian Apprentices are able to access additional support to ensure successful completion of off job training. This can be in the medium of formal tutorials funded by the organisation in or out of working hours. The organisation ensures each Australian Apprentice has the every opportunity to complete their Australian Apprenticeship.</p> <p>Some high performing second year Australian Apprentices are offered the opportunity to commence tertiary studies, Associate Degree in Engineering as an external student at the University of Southern Queensland. All course costs and any other associated costs with this study are met by the organisation. Assignment time during working hours, additional 5 days of study leave each semester and exam leave is provided. For our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Program (A&TSI) the organisation partnered with the Australian Technical College NQ to develop and implement a 12 week pre-vocational program for the A&TSI Australian Apprentices.</p>

Does each Australian Apprentice have a designated support person?
Supervisor, colleague, mentor, coach
<p>Details:</p> <p>The organisation has a dedicated working group termed Vocational Programs to support all Australian Apprentices. This team comprises eleven positions, Manager, Apprentice coordinator, Trainee coordinator, Apprentice Field Officers (five in total, based in each region) and three Administration Support Officers. There is also a formalised Australian Apprentice mentoring program to promote mentoring among tradespersons and provide skills to assist tradespersons to pass on experience. In the organisation all tradespersons to act as Australian Apprentice mentors.</p> <p>Australian Apprentices are rotated into a new workgroup each month and the organisation ensures the Australian Apprentice knows who their direct supervisor is and then introduced. There is also a policy document on Australian Apprentice Supervision. Every Australian Apprentice and tradesperson has direct access to this document in hard or electronic form.</p>

This Supervision document provides the Australian Apprentice guidance around supervision and support. All the Australian Apprentices are encouraged to approach the Australian Apprentice Field Officers if they have issues outside of work which could impact on their Australian Apprenticeship. The Field Officers spend considerable time providing pastoral care. There is also an Employee Assistance Program which Australian Apprentices have access to which is provided by another organisation and is completely confidential.

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:

All the Australian Apprentices have a formal evaluation conducted every three months. A formal document to record the Australian Apprentice, Supervisor and Field Officer comments is used. This is the medium used to capture Australian Apprentices input and feedback.

These evaluations are reviewed by the Apprentice Coordinator and entered into a database. Any feedback requiring action is allocated within Vocational Programs. The organisation values Australian Apprentice's comments as ultimately they are the customers for the training outcome. A business key performance indicator is in place to ensure formal visits are conducted with Australian Apprentices. Australian Apprentices are also encouraged to approach the Field Officers and any one individual within Vocational Programs with issues and suggestions affecting their training.

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

A formal arrangement

Details:

This organisation has a very high retention rate, approximately 98% for all of the Australian Apprentices. There are two main reasons for achieving this retention rate;

- Firstly having a dedicated team address any training issues and implement actions and allocate resources to ensure a positive outcome; and
- Secondly a part of the recruitment process is to identify if the applicant has the desire and academic ability to complete their Australian Apprenticeship in their chosen trade.

The organisation conducts assessment centres to test all shortlisted applicants and also utilises the assessment centre to explain to applicants about the roles and trade types and explain daily tasks completed by Australian Apprentices and tradespersons.

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

The Australian Apprentice program is around 10% of the organisation's trade base workforce. The organisation is committed to having a high quality Australian Apprentice program that delivers outcomes for the Australian Apprentice, business and industry. The Australian Apprentices cover the following Australian Apprenticeship types; Distribution Linesperson, System Electrician, Communication, Mechanical Fitter, Boilermaker, Sheetmetal worker; and Fitter .

The Australian Apprentice program has three distinct programs:

External Australian Apprentices – These positions are annually advertised in local newspapers and online to attract local school leavers and mature applicants.

Sponsored Australian Apprentices – this program targets current employee's that are interested in completing an Australian Apprenticeship. This may be individuals that were employed as Power Workers and Trades Assistants and managers who wish to develop into tradespersons. If the individual is lacking in the academic ability or has not attended any formal training for a long time, the organisation enrolls and meets costs associated with the individual completing components of the TAFE Access 10 course. These individuals maintain their conditions of employment including salary and full time status. This program is around 30% of the annual intake of Australian Apprentices.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Program - This program was implemented in 2008 and now 10% of the annual Australian Apprentice intake is allocated to this program. Part of this program was to include a 12 week pre-vocational program to assist Australian Apprentices with both on and off job training components of an Australian Apprenticeship.

It was recognised that the financial hardship mature age Australian Apprentice's can experience, especially those with families. The organisation implemented an Australian Apprentice salary schedule that has Australian Apprentices 21 years of age or older on a base salary rate of \$43,200 for a nine day fortnight. This has resulted in the age demographics for the entire program being around 50% being school leavers and 50% being mature applicants.

The organisation invests resources in the Australian Apprenticeships program. While it is acknowledged that the organisation has a responsibility to train for the whole of the industry, it also desires to be an employer of choice and would like all of the Australian Apprentices to take up employment as a tradesperson. There is a Graduating Australian Apprentice process which assists Australian Apprentices in their final year to gain employment with the organisation. One option under this process is that a graduated Australian Apprentice may be offered a 12 month fixed term employment to allow the individual further time to secure a position as a tradesperson. Currently approximately 85% of the graduated Australian Apprentices are offered full time employment.



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This organisation appreciates that it has many outstanding Australian Apprentices, this is reflected in their quarterly evaluations by tradespersons and supervisors and in their results from formal off job training. These Australian Apprentices are acknowledged and rewarded annually with an Australian Apprenticeships category in the Above & Beyond award program. Each year a large number of nominations are shortlisted to three finalists. The Australian Apprentices and their families are then invited to an Awards Ceremony in which their achievements are outlined and the overall winner presented with the yearly award by the organisations Chief Executive.

This organisation recognises that the future of the industry is reliant on training today and has implemented and resourced an Australian Apprenticeship program that is of high quality which achieves the desired outcomes for both the Australian Apprentice and the organisation.