

THE TAFE PLUS NEWSLETTER FOR INDUSTRY

THIS ISSUE

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

RADAR REFRESHER TRAINING

FRONTLINE MANAGEMENT

AUTOMOTIVE APPRENTICESHIP

MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING



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What is meant by Quality Training? At TAFE NSW, we believe that description can be applied to any training which has a quality outcome for the organisations with whom we partner. That could mean equipping staff to do their job better, gaining productivity increases from staff input into workplace improvements, or delivering training in such a way that staff gain skills from training they would not otherwise have access to.

For example, TAFE NSW – Western Institute’s Certificate IV Occupational Health & Safety training which is overcoming the tyranny of distance experienced by staff in remote and rural areas through the use of e-learning resources and online delivery.

TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute was able to coordinate training for Sydney Ports Corporation in a timely manner, when the organisation identified an opportunity for refresher training for Marine Services staff operating on Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay.

TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute is delivering training in Frontline Management to workers at Intercast & Forge, Australia’s largest iron foundry. The company challenged staff to implement their learnings by looking at ways of improving workplace processes, and by all accounts the results have surpassed expectations.

A course run by TAFE NSW – South Western Sydney Institute in management communication which features a high level of interactivity is attracting diverse participants from a wide range of industries after going commercial last year.

TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute has won an award for its innovative program which provides on-site training to automotive apprentices at Heartland Holden with the model likely to be rolled out across other industries.

And TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute is providing pre-employment courses to help young people begin a trade course without having to commence a formal apprenticeship with an employer. In turn, the early training is helping businesses in the area take on apprentices who are job-ready and less of a drain on company resources.

Janet Stewart

Director, Corporate Marketing

We’re very excited to announce that from April 2007 TAFELINK will be published exclusively online. TAFE NSW is committed to bringing you information about training successes and those stories will continue to feature in each issue. Now, we’ll also be bringing you more information about the issues affecting your industry, like changes to legislation, new courses, interesting industry news and industry-specific initiatives related to your training needs.

Make sure you sign up to continue receiving TAFELINK in the new online format. See the insert in this issue, or visit www.tafelink.com.au today.



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Remote training challenge met by online delivery

Health and safety issues affect almost every workplace, yet staff in remote or rural areas can find it difficult to access relevant training. TAFE NSW – Western Institute has been innovative in providing employees in remote areas with e-learning resources and online delivery of Certificate IV in Occupational Health & Safety (OHS).

Kathy Stevens, Teacher in OHS, said there was a growing need within industry for training and recognition of OHS skills at an advanced level.

‘We had previously offered training in OHS at this level however had experienced difficulty forming a viable group given our sparsely populated communities and the flexible learning needs of today’s students,’ Ms Stevens said.

‘The availability of online resources provided the ideal way for us to meet the needs of a very diverse group of customers, spread across the geographically dispersed communities in Western NSW.’

Ms Stevens customised the training to meet the variable needs of learners and particular industries. This included the development of learner resources, delivery guidelines and assessments, individual study plans and recognition guides.

‘To enhance the learning experience students have had access to close mentoring with their facilitator and have been provided the opportunity to attend a number of face-to-face workshops throughout the year, which were hosted by facilitators who are currently working in the OHS area,’ she said.

Barb Hepworth, OHS Officer for Orange City Council took part in the course and found it ‘invaluable’.

‘My background is in community services so I didn’t know a lot about safety issues,’ Ms Hepworth said. ‘Everything I’ve learned has been essential to the work I do in my current role.’

She said it is critically important for organisations to have access to someone with detailed knowledge of the legislation and codes of practice which relate to OHS.

‘Through the course I have developed strong research skills which are important to help keep abreast of changes in the sector and to learn from other people’s experience.’

Ms Hepworth believes the online offering was ideal because it allowed her to undertake the study in her own time knowing that support was only a phone call or email away.

Q: OHS skills lacking due to your business location?

A: TAFE NSW e-learning overcomes the distance barrier.

OHS courses are offered at most TAFE NSW Institutes, helping businesses make sure their staff are competent in ensuring legal compliance to OHS regulations and are equipped to develop, implement and promote safe working policies and practices.

Western Institute will introduce the Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety in 2007 for people wanting to further develop their skills and knowledge.

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For staff in geographically isolated areas, online training is often the answer.

TAFE NSW is meeting the needs of businesses with its e-learning initiative for OHS, which is offered through a number of Institutes, including Western Sydney and Riverina Institutes.



Sydney Ports Corporation has greater responsibility to stakeholders following reforms to the shipping industry.

Q: Identified a skill gap in your employees?

A: TAFE NSW can help you stay accountable.

TAFELINK Online goes one better

Every month, TAFELINK brings you articles on training initiatives which are happening around TAFE NSW Institutes.

These stories aim to demonstrate how business can benefit from a training partnership with TAFE NSW. This could be from the extensive range of courses on offer; our ability to customise those courses to suit individual industries or organisations; and the flexibility TAFE NSW has to alter the way we deliver training based on specific business needs.

From April 2007 TAFELINK will be published in a new-look online format.

Every month, you'll still get the same range of stories about TAFE NSW training, but we'll also be bringing you more information about the issues affecting your industry. This could include changes to legislation, new courses, interesting industry news and industry-specific initiatives related to your training needs.

To continue to receive TAFELINK in the new online version, visit: www.tafelink.com.au now and sign up today!

Desire for improved navigation safety prompts refresher training

TAFE NSW is helping Sydney Ports Corporation (SPC) achieve its vision to be an internationally-respected commercial port manager, providing facilities to promote and support trade growth for the benefit of the New South Wales economy.

TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute's Ultimo College, Maritime Technology section has partnered with SPC to provide refresher training in response to reforms which aim to bring greater commercial focus, inter-port competition and customer responsiveness to the management of international shipping.

In a bid to improve navigation safety in all conditions, the Corporation recently identified an opportunity for refresher training in radar equipment operation for Marine Services staff operating on Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay.

'The course was customised exclusively for Sydney Ports,' said Matthew Bolton, Head

Teacher, Marine and Aviation Studies, 'but it has been so successful we are planning to roll it out as a full commercial course to be widely available in the near future.'

The participants, Shiftmasters, Pilot Cutter Masters and other marine staff, attended three sessions which were delivered using the ship/radar simulator on Institute premises.

'The Sydney Ports Marine staff requested refresher training in marine radar operation, navigation in restricted visibility and collision avoidance skills using radar,' Mr Bolton said. 'The benefit to participants is that when they come to do higher level courses they are more proficient at radar operation.'

With this training, the Corporation is fulfilling its requirement as an employer, and gaining better-trained staff and safer operations on Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay.

'The Institute was most helpful and willing to meet our requirements and answered our call for assistance by providing me with good information and back up,' said Brett Heath, Systems and Operations Support Manager, SPC. 'They then followed up on what was needed to see the course through.'

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TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute was able to step up at short notice to meet the training needs of Sydney Ports Corporation when it required refresher training in radar technology.

Frontline Management course helps staff gain new skills

Supervisors from Intercast & Forge, Australia's largest independent iron foundry group, have benefited from TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute training in Frontline Management which has helped the company increase productivity.

Intercast & Forge identified a lack of supervisory skills in a number of its staff. In order to address the problem, the company approached Western Sydney Institute to deliver training. At the same time, it challenged staff to find innovative ways to add value to the company.

Staff from different shifts were encouraged to undergo on-site training, and 13 supervisors and team leaders chose to sign up for the Certificate IV Frontline Management course. Most of the participants had come from a trade background and had not had much opportunity to gain extra qualifications, largely due to their long working hours and overtime requirements.

John West, Workplace Trainer & Assessor, Western Sydney Institute, said three teams were formed to look at projects that could yield savings for the company in a number of critical areas including Occupational Health and Safety and production rates.

The teams undertook an intensive study of the relevant areas and analysed current productivity levels to highlight where improvements could be made. They then had to present their findings to the company. The company is very pleased with the results, which have surpassed expectations.

'The course has given participants a look at company issues from management's viewpoint,'

a company spokesperson said. 'They have initiated projects such as increasing machine capacity through design modifications, improving productivity and safety and reducing work content.

'At a time when productivity and efficiency is critical in the global economy, it is encouraging to see our operators initiating change to reduce cost.'

Benefits of the Frontline Management program included:

- participants applying their learning in their operational environment
- greater awareness and application of OHS responsibilities
- networking, cooperation and friendship amongst the Team Leaders.
- a focus on continuous improvement.

Q: Wanting to challenge staff to gain skills and add value?

A: TAFE NSW training can get the best from them.

'The success of this partnership program comes from the commitment from senior management and TAFE NSW, as they strive to achieve Intercast & Forge's corporate goals,' said the spokesperson.

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Intercast & Forge staff took on the challenge to gain new skills and identify areas where productivity could be increased.

Frontline Management training by TAFE NSW has helped Intercast & Forge identify numerous opportunities for improving work practices and the business bottom line.



TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute’s training partnership with Heartland Holden has yielded some impressive results – and an award for innovation – after just one year.

Award-winning auto apprentice program on a roll

By turning the traditional automotive apprenticeship on its head, TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute and the Heartland Holden Group have won a national award for Innovative Automotive Business Training Strategy at the 2006 Automotive Training Australia Limited Annual Awards.

‘This is tremendous recognition of the efforts of Western Sydney Institute’s Blacktown College Automotive section and Heartland to deliver innovative vocational training for automotive apprentices,’ said Dianne Beamer, Minister for Western Sydney.

Training is delivered at Heartland Holden’s head office and individual dealerships across Western Sydney and Blacktown College and has already resulted in improved participation and retention rates among apprentices.

The delivery is a model of efficiency likely to reduce training time from the traditional three-year apprenticeship to just two and a half years.

The award was accepted by Michael Cochrane, Head Teacher Automotive Blacktown College and Mark Jordan, Fixed Operations Manager, Heartland Holden.

‘The training has been going extremely well, with many benefits to the company,’ said Mr Jordan. ‘Around 80 per cent of the training is done at head office, on our product. This results in a highly-motivated group of students who support each other and are trained to our standards under our supervision.’

Students spend more time gaining on-the-job training experience, resulting in better productivity for the company, quicker skills acquisition and more involvement by company personnel.

‘The first-year apprentices in 2006 were already at a level that amazed their supervisors within 6 months of starting the training,’ Mr Jordan said. ‘These guys are typically around 16 or 17, and by the end of the course they’ll be on the floor with every skill we have to give them.’

Heartland Holden is a privately owned company that was formed in 2001 by the merger of five Holden dealerships in Western Sydney, resulting in the largest single franchise motor group in Australia.

‘The individual dealerships that made up Heartland Holden already had exceptional records in the areas of customer service and we are committed to building on those strong foundations for many years to come,’ Mr Jordan said. ‘This training is one way for us to do this. We’ve ironed out a few kinks in the training and put more resources towards it. I’m confident 2007 will be even better than last year.’

Gary Renshaw, Director of Education, Western Sydney Institute Blacktown College, said the next step was rolling the program out to smaller employers with one or two apprentices.

‘The model would be the same but it would mean the training was available to a range of employers, rather than a large employer like Heartland which has enough apprentices to run its own program,’ Mr Renshaw said. ‘Then it will be applicable to apprentices in any trade area in any industry.’

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Q: Want to shake up the way training is delivered?

A: TAFE NSW can provide a flexible solution to meet your needs.

The model being used by TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute to train Heartland Holden automotive apprentices could be applied to almost any industry.

Training helps with more effective communication

TAFE NSW – South Western Sydney Institute offers a commercial course in management communication. The course features a high level of interactivity which is popular with participants from a wide range of industries.

‘The classes are interesting because of the mix of students,’ said Leon Williamson, who ran the course at Liverpool campus in 2006. ‘We had TAFE NSW teachers, IT support people, middle management, as well as staff from Liverpool City Council, Telstra and Integral. Some wanted to improve communications skills, others needed the qualification in order to be eligible for an internal promotion or to progress in their careers.’

The Graduate Certificate in Management Communication covers:

- change management
- report writing and presentation
- team building
- conflict management
- running and participating in effective meetings and
- negotiation and public speaking.

Margaret Bird, Investigations Analyst – Complaints, Integral, has completed six months of the course, and has already been able to apply many of the skills she has learnt in her job.

‘It’s really helped me to deal more effectively with customers in what can be a stressful situation, by putting myself in their shoes and keeping my cool,’ Ms Bird said.

Integral is supporting Ms Bird’s attendance of the course, which was a requirement when she took on her current role. She has found the class interaction to be a valuable feature of the course.

‘Because the other students had diverse roles and came from different workplaces, I was

constantly getting a different perspective, and could sound out their opinion,’ she said.

The high level of interaction was partly due to students taking turns leading the group each week, which helped them fulfil the communication requirements of the course while giving them practical experience in presenting.

‘The students were effectively teaching, and learning from, each other,’ Mr Williamson said.

The course is ideal for people in lower to middle management in both private and government sectors; employees in service industries such as health and community organisations; education employees; and private enterprise managers who want to add to their skills.

Q: Need your managers to communicate more effectively?

A: TAFE NSW trainers lead by example.

Attendance is one night a week for three terms. In the fourth term attendance is negotiable depending on individual needs. Entry requirements are also flexible and take into account previous work and study experience.

‘It’s a really practical way for managers to assess their own communication styles, develop their strengths and determine the most effective way to apply what they’ve learnt to their own organisation,’ said Mr Williamson.

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Staff dealing with customers, or managing teams, can benefit greatly from a Management Communications course.

The TAFE NSW Management Communications course is ideal for managers who want to develop their leadership skills.

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Q: Want a head start when taking on apprentices?

A: A TAFE NSW pre-employment course can help them hit the ground running.

Solving skills shortages in the Riverina

TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute is providing pre-employment courses to help young people begin a trade course without having to commence a formal apprenticeship with an employer. At the same time, they're giving business a helping hand, and improving the skills shortage problem in the Riverina region.

Tumut Campus offers a pre-employment trade course in Automotive and Metal Fabrication. The courses are structured so that students can gain their welding and automotive qualifications at the same time.

'This allows them to gain experience in both fields and maximise their employment opportunities,' said Mark Grove, head of Riverina Institute's Tumut Campus. 'It also means that when an apprenticeship becomes available, the successful student can move straight into the apprenticeship course with a credit for the studies they've completed.'

Students undertaking pre-apprenticeship courses are very attractive to employers, because they have shown an interest in and developed some basic trade skills. This cuts down on the time the employer needs to spend getting a new apprentice familiar with the work environment. For a small operation, having an employee who can effectively 'hit the ground running' is invaluable.

Jordan Learmont, now an apprentice welder at Roddy Engineering in Tumut, commenced a pre-employment course in February 2006 and



Jordan Learmont was snapped up for an apprenticeship after completing his pre-employment course at TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute.

was snapped up by Roddy Engineering just six months later.

'Starting some welding while I was still at school and then doing the pre-employment course at Riverina Institute gave me a head start when going for an apprenticeship,' Mr Learmont said.

According to his supervisor, Frank Roddy who is a business partner at Roddy Engineering, the benefits of the pre-apprenticeship training have been 'obvious'.

'Jordan was already trained up on how to weld and we could put him to work straight away,' Mr Roddy said. 'He actually came here for work experience and even though at the time we weren't planning to employ another apprentice, his skills were so impressive for someone so young that we put him on.'

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TAFE NSW pre-employment courses for apprentices help graduates and businesses alike get a head-start.