

THE TAFE PLUS NEWSLETTER FOR INDUSTRY

THIS ISSUE

SURF LIFESAVING

PRIMARY PRODUCTION

PUBLIC SECTOR TRAINING

DUST EXPLOSION AWARENESS

BUILDING LICENCE ASSESSMENTS



this issue

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At TAFE NSW we pride ourselves on providing training to our clients which gets results, ensuring positive outcomes which benefit employees and businesses alike.

Surf Lifesaving NSW approached North Coast Institute to deliver Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to its own trainers, assessors and facilitators, as required by recent legislative changes. As a result, its staff and volunteers are now better-equipped to ensure enhanced safety on the state's beaches.

As drought conditions continue to make news around Australia, Riverina Institute has responded by developing a course in Organic Farming, a farming method which is proving effective in combating the effects of the drought for farmers. And New England Institute is also responding to the needs of primary producers with the delivery of its Certificate II Production Horticulture for the Costa Group, as well as a number of other courses tailored to the needs of individual employees.

TAFE NSW and the NSW Premier's Department are involved in an exciting program aimed at enhancing the career prospects of staff in the public sector. The Public Sector Training Initiative offers a wide range of training and development options and is set to expand significantly as more staff take up this unique opportunity.

Western Institute is ensuring businesses working with dust – including flour mills, food processing plants, and saw mills – are compliant with OHS requirements through flexible delivery of its Dust Explosion Awareness courses, largely delivered on-site. A hands-on demonstration of the conditions required to create a small dust explosion is particularly effective in getting the message across.

And South Western Sydney Institute is assisting the building industry raise standards with a Pre-purchase Building Consultants licensing assessment program. The Institute was approached by the Office of Fair Trading following the introduction of a licence for anyone wanting to continue working in this role or those wishing to enter the industry.

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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Volunteer training secures beach safety

Surf lifesavers in the state's north are now better equipped to train other recruits following a joint training initiative between TAFE NSW – North Coast Institute and Surf Lifesaving NSW (SLS NSW).

Lifesavers advanced their skills in the design, development, delivery and assessment of in-house training courses by completing a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

A grant from in the government's Partnering – Training Program was essential to the success of the training initiative as the SLS relies on the work of volunteers and money raised from fundraising and donations.

Mike Stevenson, Director of Life Saving and Education, Mid North Coast Branch, said that SLS was now a Registered Training Organisation and had to comply with current legislation. This required all trainers, assessors and facilitators to undertake further training.

'This partnering opportunity with North Coast Institute provided important skills development for our members,' he said. 'It's very important that we have accredited trainers and assessors. It was a big boost for our clubs to get access to the training.'

Anne Walsh, teacher at North Coast Institute and SLS member, said the training units had to be contextualised for SLS. Participants studied 14 units during a three-month period. 'Our members now have a nationally accredited qualification which can be used in surf lifesaving as well as outside employment,' she said.

She said people travelled to the Port Macquarie campus during weekends and came from areas

spanning the entire Mid North Coast, as far north as Macksville and south to Forster. 'Some people had a long way to come so we billeted them locally. It was a huge community effort.' Participants tested new training methods and conducted assessment tasks back at their clubs.

Kim Rayner, secretary, Mid North Coast Branch, has been an SLS trainer since the 1980s and was one of the 39 people to complete the Certificate IV. 'I got a lot out of it,' she said. 'I am in my third season of being a chief instructor and the course helped to clarify different methods of delivery and will help in my planning.'



Educators and lifesavers: North Coast recruits ready to train and rescue.

Q: Need to comply with current legislation?

A: TAFE NSW training delivers.

Debbie Kennington, Head Teacher Business said the North Coast Institute was Australia's Best Large Training Provider of the Year (2004) and was well positioned to collaborate with SLS NSW on sourcing further funding opportunities in the future.

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The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment course was customised to fit the requirements of Surf Lifesaving NSW, and was delivered flexibly over a three-month period.

Specialist training aids growers



NSW farmers can tap into the expertise of TAFE NSW to meet productivity targets and tackle issues like the ongoing drought conditions around the state.

Q: Want to meet production challenges?

A: TAFE NSW delivers training in primary production.

Organics offers drought solution

TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute is meeting the skills need of Australia's fastest growing primary industry, organic farming, and helping combat the effects of the drought, with the Certificate in Organic Farming.

The two-year course covers a range of areas including broad-acre and livestock operations, vineyards, orchards, market gardens and domestic organic gardening.

It teaches the practical skills required to implement organic practices, as well as marketing and converting to organics, and is suited to anyone in farming or running a commercial enterprise.

Darryl Ward, Riverina Institute organic farming specialist, urged primary producers to consider ways to incorporate organic farming into their everyday practice. He said farming journals regularly feature stories from producers who are surviving

the drought better because of their previous efforts to increase organic material levels in their soils.

'Some are cropping better than expected given the continuing dry conditions,' he said. 'It is also well reported that consumers increasingly want pure foods with less environmental impact.'

Mr Ward said the Institute had devised a training program which was very flexible and sympathetic to the pressures on today's producers.

Mary Booth is due to complete the Certificate this year and runs Buronga Organics, a 4000-acre certified organic farm at Cootamundra, with her husband David, also completing the course. The farm produces organic beef, goat, lamb and spelt (a kind of wheat), highly soluble and low in gluten.

They moved to Buronga four-and-a-half years ago and before that spent 20 years working a more conventional farm in between Ivanhoe and Cobar. While that farm never became certified organic, it was run with organic principles in mind, such as less chemical use and better soil enhancement.

Mrs Booth said the course had provided benefits beyond new skills. No rain has led to no feed for their animals but they were able to network and find a supplier of straw from a certified organic oat crop. They have also found an organic soya bean and oil producer, vital protein sources for their feed.

The Booths study at the Cootamundra campus and have had one field trip to their property.

'The only reason we have not done more is the season and lack of rain,' Mrs Booth said. 'Last year was the first one on record where no-one was able to strip a crop.'

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primary production

Qualifications boost morale, productivity

TAFE NSW – New England Institute’s Rural Skills Section in Armidale is also working closely with primary producers to provide training in Production Horticulture. Most recently they have developed a partnership with the Costa Group, training employees who work directly with the production and harvesting of their tomato crop.

The company’s Top of the Range Tomato farm at Guyra is a massive production horticulture operation with 10 hectares under glass, in a completely climate and nutrition controlled environment. The current crop is truss tomatoes.

New employees receive training as part of their traineeship, Certificate II Production Horticulture. They gain a greater understanding of their responsibilities in occupational health and safety, use of chemicals, communication processes, plant structure, function and fruit production.

‘The training has enriched the lives of many of the participants,’ said Godfrey Dol, Glasshouse Manager. ‘For some it is the first time they have achieved a qualification and recognition that they are competent in. This has helped reduce absenteeism because people feel more valued and they have a greater interest in their work.’

While the employer provides day-to-day training in the skills required on-the-job, TAFE NSW trainers assess these skills against the requirements of the training package units of competence for completion of the traineeships.

TAFE NSW has worked with management to fit training into times that don’t interfere with production deadlines. For example, training is suspended in the weeks leading up to public holidays or any crisis times where all employees are needed in the glasshouse or packing shed.

New England Institute has also been able to cater to the diverse needs of employees. One of the Production Managers enrolled in Certificate IV Production Horticulture, in an effort to gain a qualification that matched his role in production.



‘This person has a wealth of life and work experience but held no formal qualifications,’ said Pauline Smith, Head Teacher, Rural Skills Section, New England Institute, Armidale Campus. ‘In an intensive industry run by a large corporation it is highly desirable that staff have qualifications. Through working in a one on one training partnership, and by using the input of supervisors and colleagues, the person has been able to document his experience and complete the learning outcomes of the course.’

The Institute is also providing supervisor training for six people who have come through the ranks and who have stepped up to run the work teams in the glass house. These team leaders are currently receiving training in Certificate III Production Horticulture, with initial training sessions focusing on communication, leadership and coordinating work groups. They will all receive training in the SmartTrain chemical application course as part of their program.

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Godfrey Dol (left) and David Costa from Top of the Range tomato farm are reaping the benefits of training from TAFE NSW – New England Institute.

A number of TAFE NSW Institutes, including Riverina and New England, provide courses aimed at primary producers. These courses are designed to meet the needs of individual businesses, with flexible delivery options key to their success.



TAFE NSW and the Premier's Department are working together to enhance career options for public sector employees.

Q: Sector-wide training required?

A: TAFE NSW caters to diverse needs

Developed for public sector employees, TAFE NSW Public Sector Training is now available in a range of subjects from project management to effective communication.

Skills boost for NSW public sector

A joint effort between TAFE NSW and the NSW Premier's Department is providing extra career advancement options for employees in the NSW public sector. It also aims to streamline, simplify and extend workforce development across the sector.

The TAFE NSW Public Sector Training initiative offers a range of staff training and development programs for employees of NSW government agencies.

Peter Henry is Client Relations Manager at the TAFE NSW National Business Office. He said 105 NSW public sector agencies were surveyed in early 2006 about their training needs and priorities. More than 80 per cent responded, and the information gathered was used to develop the program. Three pilot courses ran in November last year, two at Sydney Institute and one at North Coast Institute.

Irene Simatos, Human Resources Teacher, TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute said a number of employees studied Managing Performance and another group, Customer Service in the Public Sector. They came from a range of government departments including NSW Treasury and the Roads and Traffic Authority.

'Both workshops went well,' she said. 'The participants were well-engaged and the feedback has been very useful. We were able to build the courses around the units of competency provided by the different agencies. We are now refining and reviewing training materials.'

Once a workshop is completed students receive an Attendance Statement. They can then opt to complete a work-based project or prepare a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate current competency, providing them with a Statement of Attainment. Further training is then available

to allow students to gain a nationally-recognised qualification in their desired area.

Jenny George is an administration co-ordinator at NSW Treasury. She completed her Certificate IV in Government at the end of last year and used the Managing Performance two-day workshop to complete an additional five units of competency, in addition to the 15 she completed while attaining her Certificate.

Ms George studied planning for and supervising performance, career planning and people management units. 'Irene Simatos was a terrific trainer who made the workshop interesting and relevant for everyone there,' she said.

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The following two-day courses will be offered at 19 TAFE NSW Campuses throughout 2007:

- Managing Performance
- Customer Service
- Mentoring and Coaching
- Project Management
- Effective Communication
- Public Sector Fundamentals
- Managing Frontline Service Delivery
- Managers as Leaders

To find out more about the courses and view the course calendar, click here <http://www.tafensw.edu.au/news/pst/index.htm> or go to www.tafensw.edu.au and click on the link 'New Public Sector Training' in the Noticeboard area.

TAFE raises awareness of dust explosions

TAFE NSW – Western Institute is working to improve rural Australia’s safety record with the development of a specific training course, Dust Explosion Awareness, aimed at highlighting the risks of a dust explosion.

The recent fire in a wheat silo in Cootamundra has heightened public awareness of the risks involved in handling grain, including the possibility of a grain dust explosion.

The course is delivered on site and runs for about one and a half hours. One of the highlights is a simulated dust explosion conducted with the type of organic dust that occurs at the place of work.

The demonstration of a dust explosion shows dramatically how little dust is required to cause an explosion ... it really opens people’s eyes to the damage that can be caused,’ said Neil Milton, teacher in charge, Manufacturing General Section, Western Institute.

According to Mr Milton, the damage from an explosion can be horrific and the damage bill can run into millions of dollars. The risk of injury or death is also high. Whilst there have been several dust explosions in Australia in recent years, fortunately no fatalities have occurred.

Under current Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) legislation employers must ensure that the risks associated with fire or explosion are controlled.



A controlled demonstration of a dust explosion.

An explosion can occur when certain conditions present, including dust in suspension, a confined space such as in a storage area, and a source of ignition such as a spark.

Employees who complete the Dust Explosion Awareness course are made aware of the potential for dusts to explode if all factors are present. They also learn that the removal of just one of these factors will prevent an explosion.

The course is aimed at industries where organic dusts are handled or created. These include any area where grain is handled, stored, milled or used. These may be flour mills, pet food plants or other food processing establishments.

Sugar is also highly explosive in certain environments, and saw mills are also a potential risk area as sawdust can be explosive in certain circumstances.

Q: Obligation to staff to maintain a safe workplace?

A: TAFE NSW delivers OHS training where it counts.

According to John Chilcott, HR & Safety Manager, Manildra Flour Mills, this course has benefited all employees as well as the company.

‘All staff at Manildra Flour Mills have undertaken this training and are now aware that the grain dust which is present in all wheat ready for milling and also the flour itself can be explosive,’ Mr Chilcott said. ‘We have seen a greater awareness of potential for an explosion to occur, which has resulted in better reporting of hazardous areas. It has also aided in our cleaning program.’

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Course participants observe first-hand how little dust is needed for an explosion.

TAFE NSW offers a range of OHS courses aimed at assisting businesses stay compliant with current legislation.

Subscriptions

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To be sure that you continue to receive TAFELINK go to www.tafelink.com.au and subscribe.

A new issue of TAFELINK is sent every six weeks directly to your email inbox.

Consultant assessment raises building industry standards

TAFE NSW – South Western Sydney Institute has assisted the building industry raise standards for consultants, assessing more than 55 candidates over a two-year period on behalf of the NSW Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Following the introduction of a licence for Pre-purchase Building Consultants, the OFT approached the Building Section at South Western Sydney Institute, Granville College to prepare an assessment and run the program throughout the State.

Since then, Jeff Thompson, Head Teacher, Building, South Western Sydney Institute, has been carrying out assessments on a regular basis. Including those who have had to re-sit the assessment, more than 160 assessments have been carried out over the last three years.

The assessment is a four-hour examination with candidates assessed in four key areas:

- knowledge of construction
- report writing skills
- knowledge of the Building Code of Australia and
- ability to recognise building defects.

Building Consultants are employed to provide professional advice for residential buildings and to ensure a successful completion of the project.

Assessments are held at the Institute to meet demands in metropolitan areas. They are also held at various Office of Fair Trading premises throughout the state. Standards are high, with an overall mark of 75 per cent needed in order to pass.

TAFE NSW can prepare and deliver an assessment program to ensure people in your industry are meeting licensing requirements.

'The assessment process has been a great success,' Mr Thompson said. 'It ensures that any builder who becomes a Building Consultant is worthy of holding that licence, and capable of producing high quality pre-purchase building reports.'

He said the assessments were also helping consultants highlight and address areas of weakness.

Q: Need to meet licensing requirements?

A: TAFE NSW assessments can get you qualified.

The arrangement between the College and the Office of Fair Trading is continuing, with the assessment now used for anyone holding a NSW Builders Licence wishing to become a Building Consultant.

'The Office of Fair Trading took the decision that if someone had 5 years' experience in the industry a licence would be granted straight away, but the only avenue to get into the business is to sit our assessment,' Mr Thompson said.

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