

Workforce in transition:

Large scale redundancy



Managing major workforce change

Retrenchment, downsizing and business closures are a constant feature in our economic landscape. Providing the opportunity to retrain and up-skill improves employment prospects for those facing redundancy and maintains the stock of skills in the community.

Good management of major workforce reductions can significantly reduce the stress of downsizing on workers and their families; protect local investor confidence and help maintain the social credibility of the company brand.

This document uses real Tasmanian experiences to show the benefits of structured skills recognition when large companies are facing major workforce reductions.

This information is useful for companies, workers and Registered Training Organisations (RTO).

Case Study I: Ensuring recognition of skills learnt in specialised workplaces

A company was relocating significant operations off-shore. The company contacted Skills Tasmania before the impact on individual workers was known. The company wanted to support formal recognition of skills that workers had developed on the job. Skills Tasmania was able to support this as a *Workforce in Transition Initiative*. The following process was undertaken:

- An independent project manager was appointed
- TasTAFE developed skill sets based on units of competency aligned with company work stream roles
- All employees were invited for skills profiling against those skill sets; 189 employees accepted

- Profiled employees were then invited for assessment by TasTAFE against these skill sets; 151 employees accepted
- 1,141 units of competency were assessed. These units can now be used by the relevant employees as credit towards a recognised qualification.

Essential partners: Skills Tasmania, the company, *MyRPL* profiling tool, an available RTO with necessary assessment capacity (TasTAFE).

Case Study 2: Helping redundant workers access transitional training support

A company was put into administration with closure announced. The known impact on individual workers employment triggered their access to the *Rapid Response Skills Initiative*. Skills Tasmania contacted the company 8 months before job closures would become effective. The following process was undertaken:

- The company committed significant in-kind support, including an HR manager, to coordinate opportunity for their employees to access the transitional training support that is available to redundant workers through the *Rapid Response Skills Initiative*
- All employees were invited to participate in a process of recognition of prior learning
- 83 out of 135 employees accepted and used specialised software to build personalised skills profiles
- 50 employees applied for recognition of prior learning on the basis of their profile
- 42 of these applications triggered assessment for accreditation of 'on the job' skills
- 27 full qualifications and 18 statements of attainment were achieved.

Essential partners: Skills Tasmania; the company; providers of skills profiling software (The Work Lab; *Skillsbook*®), RTOs.

Common case study lessons

- Strong company commitment to workforce transition is valued by staff facing redundancy.
- Early intervention with a lead times of over six months was vital to:
 - working out a company specific solution
 - finding the best fit of available support with company circumstances
 - putting in place 'fit for purpose' project management
 - allowing time for individual follow-up of evidence of prior learning, and
 - accessing appropriate assessors.
- Access to relevant profiling systems and capable RTOs was essential.

Benefits

These processes ensure the future of each redundant worker is supported by a skills profile. Supporting workers together encourages networking, friendships and discussion of future opportunities. This supports the well-being of individuals, families, local communities and economies. Skills recognition also fosters local investor confidence, and helps maintain the social credibility of the company brand.

Further information email: enquiries@skills.tas.gov.au with the subject 'Workforce transition'