

WiMT

Empowering Women in Maintenance Trades
Connecting Women to Trades Grant- NSW State
Government

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1.0 Executive summary

Project 2023-1061 had two parts, EWIT were responsible for the delivery of an immersive experience to promote trade opportunities in meat processing. The Women in Maintenance Trades programs were a joint initiative between AMPC, EWIT and TAFE NSW to attract more women into the meat processing industry and to support meat processing plants to consider recruitment strategies including the engagement of more women into traditional trade roles. They were delivered at plants across NSW as part of the Connecting Women to Trades NSW Government grants.

Working with AMPC and TAFE NSW, EWIT created a 3-day program that was designed to build on knowledge, experience and confidence over the 3 days. The programs focused on Maintenance Trades in the meat processing industry including plumbing, electrical, fabrication and fitting & turning. Participants were given the supports of the Applied Principles of Positive Psychology- PERMA theory, navigated human skills and the importance of human skills in the workplace including communication skills, time management skills, organisational skills and the ability to work in a team and; to experience the educational side of trades through hands on experience at TAFE.

The project objectives included:

- Job readiness (non-accredited) training for the program participants
- Careers information to provide insights and knowledge on trades, apprenticeships and applying for trades roles
- Marketing & promotions by EWIT for the program to generate participation
- Work tasters and employment via VR experiences hosted by AMPC and hands-on practical experiences by TAFE NSW

Collaboration was achieved through regular meetings with all stakeholders, discussions around program content, locations, activities and promotions. Programs were delivered ahead of schedule in Yanco/Leeton, Casino/Wollongbar and Singleton. Program 3 was moved forward to align with plant recruitment schedules.

Outcomes of the program included:

- One participant who had previously been rejected on application by the employer has now passed their aptitude testing and is at interview stage for electrical apprenticeship. Unfortunately, the participant was not successful in securing the employment.
- 4 out of 33 participants to complete the program identify as First Nations
- 5 participants have reached out to EWIT for additional support with resume development
- 1 participant is now looking for work experience as a Fitter & Turner because of the interactions from the program
- Industry partners have a better understanding of how to connect with women for non-traditional trade roles from the experience of connection at the immersion days
- 58 regional women have expressed an interest in trades!

Whilst the outcomes were not in line with the KPI's of the program, it is important to recognise that this has occurred due to the genuine need in the community for information on trades, particularly for women and connection to opportunity. The program was heavily taken up by school aged participants looking to secure career advice and guidance and may take several years to receive a trackable outcome.

2.0 Introduction

This report will outline the delivery of three Empowering Women in Maintenance Trades program across regional NSW including participant data, program successes and program challenges. Programs were successfully delivered ahead of schedule in Casino/Wollongbar, Singleton and Yanco/Leeton. Program 3 was moved forward to align with plant recruitment schedules. It will detail the results of the programs and future recommendations.

3.0 Project objectives

The agreed project objectives:

3.1 Job Readiness Training

EWIT delivered the following sessions as part of all 3 WiMT Programs:

- Positive Psychology Workshop- providing tools to thrive in the workplace
- Human Skills Workshop- understanding the value of human skills and their place in the world of work particularly maintenance trades.
- Included sessions on job search skills including the four pillars- finding a job, applications (resume & cover letter), interviews and onboarding. These were included in programs 2 & 3 formally as the need was identified in program 1 that a skills gap was present.
- Supported and coordinated the delivery of industry immersion days for each of the 3 programs and collaboration with TAFE to support delivery of hands-on components.

3.2 Careers Information

The following was provided in all 3 WiMT programs:

- Explanation of apprenticeships and the AASN contract-
Program 1 delivered by ASA
Program 2 & 3 delivered by TAFE NSW (Changed due to double up in information in program 1)
- Inclusion of Think Digital VR experiences for one hours session on day 1
- Link to career opportunities on day 3 via employment speed interviewing, guest speakers and industry connections including to AASNs, local councils, employers and labour hire agencies

3.3 Marketing & Promotions

EWIT utilised the following sources to promote and market the WiMT programs across the applicable regions:

- Social Media platforms: Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn
- Local newspapers
- Workforce Australia providers including Local Jobs Team

- NSW RIEP Officers and Schools in region
- Community organisations
- AASN Providers
- Radio- including Triple M interview (copy supplied)
- Word of mouth- encouraging participants to bring family and friends
- TAFE NSW networks
- EWIT EDM

The below table provides an outline of where each participant came to register from across the 3 programs:

Source	Number of registrations from source:
Social Media	15
RIEP/School referral	23
Word of mouth	5
TAFE NSW referral	3
Workforce Australia	8
EWIT EDM	4
TOTAL:	58

3.4 Work Tasters and Employment

The following work tasters and employment experiences were provided for each program :

- Program One: Singleton
 - Electrical (in industry and TAFE)
 - Hydraulics (TAFE)
 - Fitter & Turner (industry)
 - VR Experience
- Program Two: Casino/Wollongbar
 - Electrical (TAFE & industry)
 - Metal Fabrication (TAFE)
 - Machining (TAFE)
 - Fitter & Turner (industry)
 - VR Experience
- Program Three: Yanco/Leeton

- Electrical (TAFE & industry)
- Plumbing (TAFE)
- Fitter & Turner (industry)
- VR Experience

4.0 Methodology

The project was conducted in collaboration with TAFE NSW, AMPC, Industry Partners (JBS, EC Throsby and Casino Food Co-Op) and EWIT. Regular planning sessions and updates were hosted by EWIT with all parties involved to ensure cohesion and understanding of roles and responsibilities. Shared drive was established to ensure one source of truth when sharing information. Link to drive here: [Women in Maintenance Trades](#)

Registrations for all 3 programs were at 58, with 33 participants attending the program at a conversion rate of 56.89%. All 33 participants who commenced the program successfully completed with a completion rate of 100%.

Design of the program was changed after the delivery of program 1 to enhance engagement and provide additional support to TAFE NSW to be able to deliver 2-hour components.

Changes included:

- Interactive sessions placed into each day of the program
- VR session moved to morning instead of after lunch
- Removal of AASN session as same information covered by TAFE NSW
- Inclusion of job search skills session to support finding employment including how to find a job, applications and interviews.

5.0 Project outcomes

The program has been delivered on time, to budget and to scope. Additional information will be provided on outcomes in final report.

Outcomes to date

- One participant who had previously been rejected on application by the employer has now passed their aptitude testing and is at interview stage for electrical apprenticeship. Unfortunately the participant was not successful in securing the employment.
- 4 out of 33 participants to complete the program identify as First Nations
- 5 participants have reached out to EWIT for additional support with resume development
- 1 participant is now looking for work experience as a Fitter & Turner because of the interactions from the program
- Industry partners have a better understanding of how to connect with women for non-traditional trade roles from the experience of connection at the immersion days
- 58 regional women have expressed an interest in trades!

6.0 Discussion

Programs were meant to be able to accommodate up to 20 participants each- however we did not meet this on any occasion despite significant marketing reach, community support and connection with the NSW RIEP officers. Conversion from registration to participation was at 56.89% with 33/58 attending. Participants received a phone call as soon as they registered, a text message outlining program information as well as an email highlighting key locations, timings and items to bring. Engagement was high for each program with 31 out of 33 participants successfully completing the program at a conversion rate of 93.93%.

It was very pleasing to see that four of the participants identified as First Nations with three coming from the same family, we had a grandma, aunty and grandchild. There was interest from women of varying age ranges from 15 upwards, differing cultural background and socioeconomic statuses. The difference in the participants whilst interesting, did not deter from some shared goals each participant seemed to have on varying levels; lack of confidence, lack of belief they could work in trades and a desire for more information and experience.

The programs were adjusted each time after discussion with stakeholders and participant feedback. It was recognised that a practical activity needed to be delivered each day to continue with engagement and motivation after program one. This was adjusted on program 2 & 3 to include a practical TAFE activity on day 1 & day 3 to compliment the plant visit on day 2. It was also determined that the VR component would be better as a round robin to minimise watching, this was also changed from program 2 & 3.

Feedback from the program participants showed that 100% of participants found the program interesting and engaging and would recommend to their friends. All participants also noted that they learnt something new about maintenance trades throughout the program.

It was incredibly disappointing to see the female applicant at one of the plants not be successful after her second-round application and keen participation in the program. The participant was able to get past the aptitude test, interview but lost out to another candidate who was more suitable.

The results over time may achieve the KPI's however with the limitations of the program, long term tracking would be needed to truly determine outcomes for the participants.

7.0 Conclusions / recommendations

- 1- Programs like this are vital to the connection of women to maintenance trades and the meat processing industry. With less than 3% of women currently taking up trade-based roles, education is critical.
- 2- Longer term tracking of participants would help with gaining insights and outcome results. It would give a better idea of pain points, key career milestones and additional support required.
- 3- Programs would benefit being run on a regular basis to continue any progress with plants around D&I recruitment.
- 4- Plants would benefit from additional training around D&I recruitment practices to support the recruitment of more women and gender diverse humans.
- 5- Redefining the programs to be run with school students would greater support a pipeline of women interested in maintenance trades in the meat processing industry.

8.0 Bibliography

NA

9.0 Appendices

- Run sheets for all 3 programs
- Copies of participant feedback for all 3 programs
- Registration pages for all 3 programs