



# Transdev turns it around

Transdev Australasia has turned safety training around in its Queensland bus operation and introduced a successful safety culture across its entire business to take home the pinnacle award in the 2014 NSCA/GIO Workers Compensation National Safety Awards of Excellence.

**In 2008** Transdev Queensland (TDQ) faced an underperforming safety record of 19 WorkCover claims, 27 medical treatment injuries, 35 First Aid Injuries and 108 Lost Time Days. On top of this, the injuries and absences had led to low staff morale.

“With safety promoted as Transdev’s number-one priority, we needed to ‘walk the talk,’” says managing director Colin Jennings. “TDQ was keen to position itself as an employer of choice, but its underperforming safety record was damaging its credibility.”

At the time, as the company’s relatively new managing director, Jennings observed a lack of safety training for drivers.

**Mentoring**  
A team of mentors supports new drivers on the job after their induction.

So a training audit was undertaken in conjunction with the business planning and budget process.

“It was found that a brief five-day initial induction was provided to drivers, without follow-up,” Jennings says.

Jennings responded by appointing two full-time in-house trainers and assessors to develop and deliver induction and annual refresher safety training and ongoing driver assessments. The trainers have extensive industry experience and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or greater, says Jennings.

In addition, six driver mentors were appointed. The mentors support new drivers on the job after their induction. The mentors must have at least five years’ experience in the bus industry, relevant industry qualifications, demonstrated knowledge of company policies and procedures and an exemplary safety and performance appraisal record, according to Jennings.

An external training consultant was also engaged to lead the development of a series of in-house training packages in line with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

“These programs were also linked with the Transport & Logistics (TLI) national package, strengthening pathways for our staff to [gain] nationally recognise[d] qualifications via recognition of prior learning,” adds Jennings.

Other external training providers have been used to deliver additional compliance training, such as dealing with bullying and harassment and working in confined spaces.

Overall, new drivers attend a 17-day New Start driver training program comprising classroom, on-road and safety training. Drivers also complete VigilVanguard driver

assessments (video assessments of drivers in the field that were introduced in 2012), twice-yearly performance appraisals and annual driver update training.

However, implementing this program has not been smooth sailing. For example, many of the staff were resistant to changing the status quo and participating in the new training and assessment.

“One of the ways this was overcome was to make attendance itself one of the measures within performance appraisals,” says Jennings.

So far, the training program has been a success. By 2013, WorkCover claims had dropped to three, medical treatment injuries to zero, First Aid Injuries to eight and Lost Time Days to 24. On top of this, staff engagement had risen from 43 per cent in 2010 to 71 per cent in 2013, says Jennings, pointing to the company’s employee opinion survey. And, since the introduction of the video assessments, at-fault accidents have halved from 94 in 2012 to 39 in 2013.

In addition, Transdev Australasia implemented a new company-wide approach

**33**  
PER CENT

REDUCTION IN THE  
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to safety to create a shared safety culture and to engage staff across an almost 24-hour-a-day business with 10 business units and multiple depots, stations and terminals around Australia and New Zealand.

In 2012 the company reviewed its safety communications. “Internal research was conducted, which found that, in the past, safety communication had been inconsistent and impersonal, and that localised issues had been overlooked in favour of a ‘blanket’ approach,” says Transdev Australasia’s director of corporate affairs, Mark Paterson.

In response, the 2013 ‘Safety Starts With Me’ campaign was developed. Transdev says it created a consistent campaign that could be adapted for local implementation.

This included print and digital collateral, local events and a roadshow. The campaign marked the final year of Transdev’s five-year strategy (2009 to 2013) to improve its safety performance.

The 2013 Staff Communications Survey recorded high levels of staff engagement with the ‘Safety Starts With Me’ campaign.

“It returned the highest levels of recollection by staff over all communications programs and initiatives, with 88 per cent of participants identifying the 2013 campaign in the survey,” Paterson says.

In addition, 2013 saw a 33 per cent reduction in the number of vehicle and vessel collisions across the business over the past year, he adds. 



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