

Meeting the challenge of staff retention

Nationally recognised qualifications target drilling industry retention

Lucas Drilling is one of the largest drilling services providers to Australia's coal and coal seam gas sectors. Lucas partners with many of Australia's blue chip companies, such as Anglo American Coal, Arrow Energy, Xstrata Coal, Origin Energy and Santos to discover, map, extract and deliver coal seam gas; explore for minerals, and carry out environmental remediation. A key to retaining drillers in what is a booming industry is an investment in their workplace training and development.

Meeting the needs of the drilling industry

Lucas Drilling has partnered with TAFE to deliver nationally recognised qualifications since 2007. Since February 2011, Lucas Drilling has had around 70 drillers undergo training in the Resources and Infrastructure Training Package. This has included around 250 units of competency from the Certificate II, Certificate III, Certificate IV and Diploma in Drilling Operations. According to Tony Hawes, Competency, Training and Development Coordinator, TAFE has gone above and beyond to ensure the needs of Lucas Drilling are met.

"I can't fault TAFE. From the beginning, communication has been clear, nothing is too much trouble. I've developed a good working relationship with our TAFE representatives, which I think is essential when you're coordinating the training of such a large number of drillers," said Tony.

Tony Hawes
Competency, Training and Development
Coordinator

Lucas Drilling

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Meeting the challenge of staff retention in a booming sector

Retention is an ongoing challenge in the drilling industry, and offering a nationally recognised qualification is one way of improving the retention of the company's drillers.

"Gaining a qualification that is linked both to pay and career advancement is just one of the strategies we have in place to retain qualified staff. It encourages our people to stay around longer, as we are really enhancing their knowledge and skills in the drilling sector," Tony explains.

Reducing paperwork, maximising productivity

Partnering with TAFE to deliver nationally recognised qualifications, has delivered several benefits to Lucas Drilling. The training has been cost effective, government funding initiatives have been more accessible, and the amount of administration carried out by Lucas Drilling has been minimised, allowing the company to focus on core business.

"TAFE basically has taken the paperwork away. We gain access to TAFE's expertise, resources, assessment tools and subject matter experts, while they handle the processing of assessments. This is a far more cost effective approach, as we don't have Lucas training personnel tied up with paperwork.

Furthermore, as we are not a registered training provider, partnering with a registered training organisation such as TAFE provides us with greater access to government funding and therefore, quality staff at less cost.

It's a competitive industry, and it's crucial our drillers are at the forefront of industry knowledge and skills. With TAFE, we're confident we'll be able to achieve this," said Tony.