

# Regional Employer's Alliance Project

## Upper Hunter, NSW Pilot Project



## Cross Sector Recognition of Mobile Plant Operations

Report 5 December 2008



Australian Government  
Department of Education, Employment  
and Workplace Relations



## 1.0 Introduction

This is the third report on the project designed to address cross sector recognition of light mobile plant operations skills in the Upper Hunter sub-region.

This report provides an overview of the third phase of the project which has been focused on the development and piloting of an assessment toolkit for grader operations. The grader was selected as the most suitable item of mobile plant for the pilot process because of its widespread use across a range of sectors including civil construction, mining and local government, all of which are significant employers in the Hunter region.

## 2.0 Objectives

Whilst some of elements of the project have evolved through the life of the project, the objectives have remained resilient throughout and remain in their original form:

- A viable model for flexible career pathways which are mobile across sectors utilising light mobile plant in the Upper Hunter.
- Commitment from leaders within the sectors utilising light mobile plant in the Upper Hunter to support the model.
- Commitment from training providers to support the model.
- Establishment of an agreed framework for the issuing of appropriate certification across national packages.
- Showcase presentation for the model.
- Funding for the implementation of the model.

## 3.0 The Process

The analysis work undertaken in Phase 2 indicated that the best option to use as the basis of a practical recognition framework was Unit BCCP3006B from the Certificate III in Civil Construction (Plant Operations). This unit provides the most comprehensive set of Elements of Competency and Performance Criteria and can be adapted to a wide range of contexts. It is more comprehensive than the equivalent Unit from the Certificate III in Surface Coal Operations and neither the Local Government package nor the Agriculture provide any form of structured Elements of Competency and Performance Criteria that can be used to build a recognition or training program on.

The research undertaken in Phase 2 also determined that an RTO cannot issue certification for Unit BCCP3006B without the candidate also completing a complementary OH&S Unit. The unit selected for this purpose was BCCM1001C – Follow OH&S Policies and Procedures from the Civil Construction Package. This requirement has been established because of the potential risks associated with the operation of the grader and the need to ensure that the operator is fully aware of these risks and able to integrate appropriate management strategies into the practical operation of the equipment.

An Assessment Toolkit, included as **Attachment 1**, comprising specific assessment tools for Units BCCP3006B and BCCM1001C was developed and trialled in the field with a company that deploys operators on both mine sites and civil construction sites.

The feedback from this trial has been used to identify the steps that need to be taken to complete the journey to an effective, regional solution for recognition of competencies in the operation of mobile plant across multiple sectors.

## 4.0 Project Outcomes Phase Three

A critical element in conducting a successful pilot was gaining commitment from an employer, active in at least two industry sectors to provide access to both equipment and staff to complete the testing of the Assessment Toolkit.

RTO's with current registration in the relevant industry packages also had to be engaged to supervise the assessment process and issue the certification upon completion of the process. Two RTO's were involved in the trial, each with one of the two required national packages on their scope of registration. Pegasus has Certificate III in Surface Coal on its scope and Hunter Plant Operator Training School has Certificate III in Civil Construction on its scope of registration. With the agreement of both parties, the assessor was provided by Pegasus as he had the appropriate experience in both civil construction and mining.

These critical arrangements were established and dates established in November for the trial. Following a number of delays due to problems with weather and equipment availability, the trial was completed.

The employer who agreed to participate in the pilot is a primarily a civil contracting company actively involved in major projects on both mine sites and civil construction projects such as roads and dams and needs to have mobile plant operators accredited under both the mining and civil construction packages to meet the requirements of their contracts.

The pilot involved 6 participants and each were initially checked against the Understanding Recognition Guide included in Report 2 which outlines three options that may enable recognition of competency to be provided to the candidate without the need for additional assessment work. The three options are:

- Direct Credit for an existing Unit of Competency deemed identical to that being sought
- Credit Transfer for a Unit of Competency that is technically equivalent but with different Unit Titles and Numbers
- Importation of an appropriate Unit of Competency from another training package

None of the participants was able to provide evidence that would trigger any of these recognition options. Therefore each participant was deemed appropriate candidates for the Assessment Tool developed for the pilot.

The completion of the Assessment Tool, including the Grader Operations and OHS Units took approximately 2 hours per person, with a range of evidence gathered during this period, including practical operational skills and underpinning knowledge.

The assessor was satisfied that the participants were able, through the body of evidence provided during the assessment process, to demonstrate their competency. He recommended the issuing of a total of three units of competency for each participant:

1. BCCP03006B – Conduct Grader Operations – Cert III Civil Construction (Plant Operations)
2. BCCM1001C – Follow OH&S Policies and Procedures - Cert III Civil Construction (Plant Operations)
3. MNCO1016A - Conduct Grader Operations – Cert III in Surface Coal Operations

Certification for Units BCCP03006B and BCCM1001C will be issued by Hunter Plant Operators Training School and MNCO1016A will be issued by Pegasus.

Some minor adjustments have been suggested to the Assessment Toolkit:

1. Combine the Grader Operations and OHS Units into one Assessment Booklet for easier work in the field
2. Strengthen Self Assessment Advice for Employees.
3. Modularise the Civil Construction and Mining components. Clear indications for the Assessor and Participant where a specific element of the assessment primarily relates to a mining or civil context. Where appropriate group and clearly label them.

This work is now underway and will be completed by 25 December 2008. Task 1, combining the Grader and OHS Unit Assessment components has already been completed and is included the Assessment Toolkit provided as Attachment 1.

Feedback from all parties involved in the process has indicated that there is an urgent need to prepare material in a range of formats that is better able to communicate to all stakeholders the core concepts and supporting process that underpin the recognition process, particularly across industry sectors.

This work will be vital in the next stage of the project which will require much broader engagement from all stakeholder groups.



**Figure 1 - Matt Galvin (Hardy Brothers), Paula Casey (Pegasus Training), Nathan Piercy (Hardy Brothers), and Chris Rose (Pegasus Training), on Graduation Day**

## 5.0 Completing the Journey

### 5.1 Phase 4 Schedule

Updating of the Assessment Toolkit in accordance with feedback from the assessor is now underway and included in the finalisation of Phase 3 of the project.

Regional stakeholders remain committed to pushing ahead with the project although funding will need to be accessed to enable the next body of work to be completed.

The table below maps the work required to complete the journey now underway and establish a sustainable, practical methodology for cross sector recognition of mobile plant operations competencies.

The timing forecast is based on having a full time resource to work on the project.

| No                        | Task  | Description   | Time     |
|---------------------------|---|---|----------|
| <b>Phase 3 Completion</b> |   |   |          |
| 1                         | Update the Assessment Toolkit                                     | Complete the adjustments identified in the trial to the Assessment Toolkit.   | 2 Weeks  |
| <b>Phase 4</b>            |   |   |          |
| 2                         | Conduct a Follow Up Trial using the updated Toolkit               | Use the toolkit in the field again and test the impact of the adjustments made following the initial trial.   | 4 Weeks  |
| 3                         | Update the Assessment Toolkit                                     | Make any appropriate adjustments to the Assessment Toolkit identified in the second trial.  | 1 Week   |
| 4                         | Prepare Plain English Information Kit                             | Review all available literature on the concepts underpinning this project and prepare a Plain English Information Kit suitable for Employers, Employees and RTO's. Whilst there is a significant body of material available, much of it still requires a reasonable body of training knowledge to understand or a significant investment in time to grasp effectively. The proposed Kit would comprise multimedia components with industry representatives presenting the concepts in down to earth, operational language, through practical stories that employers and employees will relate to. | 8 Weeks  |
| 5                         | Conduct a Forum for Employers and RTO's                           | Hold a Forum to regional employers and RTO's of the project outcomes and engage them in expanding the set of toolkits to include an agreed suite of mobile plant such dozer, water cart, excavator.   | 2 Weeks  |
| 6                         | Establish a Steering Committee                                    | Establish a Steering Committee for the next phase of the project comprised of employers and RTO's willing to drive the project forward and set benchmarks for its operation.  | 2 Weeks  |
| 7                         | Establish the Suite of Mobile Plant to be Included                | Steering Committee to establish the appropriate suite of mobile plant that Assessment Toolkits could be developed for.  | 4 Weeks  |
| 8                         | Update all Relevant Industry Associations and Government Agencies | Provide an update to each of the relevant Industry Skills Councils and Associations and Government Agencies   | 2 Weeks  |
| 9                         | Establish a Mobile Plant Operator Skills Set                      | Investigate the Opportunity to have the suite of mobile plant competencies incorporated into a Skills Set   | 12 Weeks |
| 9                         | Funding   | Seek funding for the preparation and trialling of the Assessment Toolkits   |          |
| 10                        | Implementation  | When funding is available prepare work plan and prepare Toolkits and Skills Set recognition.  | 12 Weeks |

## 5.2 Equipment to be Considered for the Phase 4

The following items of mobile plant are in common use in the region across multiple industry sectors and are being considered for inclusion in a Mobile Plant Operators Skills Set.



Figure 2 - Mobile Plant for Next Phase - Water Cart



Figure 3 - Mobile Plant for Next Phase - Dozer



Figure 4 - Mobile Plant for Next Phase - Excavator



Figure 5 - Mobile Plant for Next Phase - Grader

**6.0 Attachment 1 – Updated Assessment Toolkit for Grader Units BCCP3006B and BCCM1001C**