



Women on Track: addressing skills shortages in the transport and construction industries

2008-2009 Women's Leadership and Development Program Grants – Office for Women

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Women in Adult and Vocational Education - WAVE

A national network of women involved in VET, ACE and the broad field of work-related education and training.

Provides seminars and workshops, research, policy advocacy and advice. Networks on a national and state basis.

www.wave.org.au



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Why these industries?

Transport/Logistics

- ✳ Transport and storage industry production in Australia (volume) more than doubled between 87/88 and 05/06 (ABS 2008 6291.0.55.003).
- ✳ Road transport, is predicted to have the highest employment growth leading up to 2011/12 with overall increase of 8.3% from 2003/04 (ANTA 2005:15).
- ✳ (ANTA 2005:19-21) reasons for skills shortage; industry consolidation, difficulty in attracting and retaining young workers, ageing workforce, security, fatigue management, gender imbalance and public perception.
- ✳ It is estimated that during the period 2003-2013, 10% of the trucking workforce will retire (ATA 2003:7).

= Employment Opportunities for women



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Why these industries?

Construction

- ✳ Construction sector 'strongly influenced by economic cycles and therefore corresponding shortages or oversupplies in industry skills and qualified workers' (DEST 2006:6).
- ✳ Pressure on the construction industry comes from consumer and customer service demands, market expansion, competition and productivity, and globalisation (DEST 2007: 8-9). Up until recently this has meant an undersupply of skills in the industry.
- ✳ 32% of workers in the construction industry are aged 45 or over (DETYA 2001:18).

= Employment Opportunities for women

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Structure of the project

Literature Review

Invitation for involvement in the Project to raise awareness

Undertake surveys amongst a cross-section of women (still in process).

-NSW, VIC and WA chosen as the focus for this research due to their acute skills shortages in most trade areas of the Transport/Logistics and Construction Industries.

Steering Committee inc Project Management/ State Convenors and representatives from the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC); Transport Women and a Consultant from the University of Melbourne.

Survey Groups :women working in these industries; women in training; women who have left the industries; Organisations; women from the general public; TVET girls and Careers Advisors.



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- ✳ Small samples due to time, staffing and financial restrictions as well as the project just providing a current 'snapshot' as a platform for future work. The lack of women participating in these industries made sourcing difficult.
- ✳ Mostly sourced utilising TAFE and VET networks.
- ✳ Organisations sourced via cold calling.
- ✳ The surveys were disseminated electronically or conducted over the phone. The questionnaire covered 6 sections;
 - Background data;
 - Education and training;
 - Employment;
 - Working conditions;
 - Industry promotion and
 - Lifestyle.

WORK IN PROGRESS!



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Findings (to date)

- ⊗ *Education and Background* Most women had completed post-school training & were still training or expecting to train in the future and did not feel their pay rate had or would increase from this training, in line with literature.
- ⊗ Only 13% of all the women interviewed had completed a Traineeship or Apprenticeship.
- ⊗ Reasons for choosing course & employment: 'personal interest' rather than knowledge of benefits of the industry before commencement.
- ⊗ Of those directly involved with industries, 44% had family who worked in their industry, common in the general industry population.
- ⊗ No woman interviewed had been recommended these industries by a Careers Advisor.
- ⊗ About half have at some time had a female mentor and nearly all thought it would have positive benefits. Most were willing to be involved, as literature recommends.



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Findings (to date)

- ⊗ *Working Conditions* Only 11% had or felt they would have access to child care facilities during training or work in these industries. There was significant increase in the number of women who would be interested in working these jobs with access to child care, also suggested in literature.
- ⊗ ¼ were not concerned there were fewer women than men in these industries.
- ⊗ Only 18% of women reported they knew about the rate of pay in these industries. Interestingly, women would consider working in these industries at pay rates over \$41 per hour. Employers may need to consider this when encouraging women into the workforce.
- ⊗ 72% felt women could obtain a promotion in these industries, 75% thought women could move across areas within the industry, but only 31% felt women could progress to top management.

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- ⊗ *Lifestyle* 81% felt workers would need to do overtime in these industries. In line with statistics; two highest overtime working industries in Australia.
- ⊗ 66% thought a worker in this industry would have an adequate work/life balance, and 56% thought there would be flexibility of hours.
- ⊗ Descriptions of a 'typical' person from these industries were generally negative as was the general lifestyle of a person working in these industries.
- ⊗ *Industry promotion* Felt the public viewed the industries as 'acceptable'.
- ⊗ Women well aware of the different employment areas of the industries.
- ⊗ Suggestions for improving: advertising the opportunities, positives and correct information about industry, especially to new target groups such as women and young people, improving flexibility of hours, child care and safety.
- ⊗ Advertising recommended must be eye catching, family friendly and include women in pictures, (also recommendation of Government and Industry Body literature).



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The 'Credit Crunch': Where to from here?



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