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SUCCESS STORY NUMBER PE05: SPOTLIGHT ON THE TOP END – *Exciting developments for training and qualification in Australia's Northern Territory*

NT construction industry

At the recent WTIA Annual Conference held in Darwin, Northern Territory (NT), Jon Baker from the Territory Construction Association (TCA) and David Ross of the Northern Land Council (NLC) described the NT construction industry in detail, the current skills shortage and a very successful project to draw indigenous people into the workforce, and maintain them there with on-going mentoring and support.



From left: Jon Baker (TCA), Steve Tiley (Universal Engineering), Peter Smith (WTIA), Barry King and David

NT has been experiencing unprecedented economical growth with projects such as the Conoco Phillips Darwin LNG Plant, the Alcan Gove G3 expansion as well as the building of the Darwin Convention and Exhibition Centre. While a significant amount of the work will be produced in modular form by either overseas or interstate fabricators and shipped to site, local fabricators have concentrated on securing as much of the smaller work and erection packages as possible.

Charles Darwin University (CDU) Faculty of Technical Industrial Education, Metal Fabrication and Welding Department (MFWD) has become an International Institute of Welding (IIW) Approved Training Body through the WTIA which is the IIW Member Society and the Authorised National Body (ANB) for Australia.

Skills shortage

The NT, however, is suffering significant skills shortages and local business is experiencing low availability of fabrication and welding personnel in particular. There are concerns on how they will promote growth and be able to produce any products won from these projects, and also service the existing multi million dollar manufacturing and service industry.

Working with the WTIA Technology Manager based in Darwin, Peter Smith, CDU assisted by Advanced Training International (ATI) has run a number of courses for the industry sector, including training for indigenous people.

Taking action

WTIA has been working with a local Fabrication and Welding Steering Committee made up of representatives from 8 industry, indigenous employment and government bodies, training providers and a pro-active Northern Territory Government to plan the way forward for up-skilling existing tradespeople, boosting the numbers of apprentice intakes particularly amongst indigenous people, increasing Vocational Education Training (VET) and encouraging trade training in schools. The NT Department of Business, Economic & Regional Development is a strong supporter of the WTIA's NDNP.

Various AS 2980 *Qualification of welders for fusion welding of steels* and ASME IX courses were held during 2005, with specific up-skilling courses to AS 1796 *Certification of welders and welding supervisors* (54 students trained), International welding Practitioner (IWP) (14 students trained) and International Welding Specialist (IWS) (8 students trained) incorporating the AS 2214 Structural Supervisor and AS 1796 Certificate 10 Supervisor qualifications.

CDU was in fact the first training facility in Australia to present the IWP Diploma course and aboriginal student, Mervyn Brennan, was amongst the first group to successfully complete the course. Monique Kamsma, a female welder, became the first person in the country to achieve IWP through course work and examination.

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