

GUIDANCE NOTE:

Critical Electrical Roles & Succession in the
Traction Industry

Disclaimer

This Guidance Note has been provisioned in accordance with an Enforceable Undertaking pursuant to Section 16 of the OHS Act 2004. This Guidance Note is aimed at supporting Traction Industry Operators to address the risk that continuity of critical electrical roles has on the safety of the networks they operate. The material provided in this Guidance Note is made available on the understanding that it is guidance only and should not be taken as professional advice and Traction Industry Operators should consider that different solutions and outcomes may apply within their own operating circumstance.

Executive Summary

We are aware of the issues facing Australia's workforce overall, with further inquiry into the different industries and sectors providing insight into the challenges being faced. However, as a sub-sector of both the electricity industry, along with the rail industry, there is little available research on the current challenges being faced by traction industry.

What has been explored are the implications that the wider industry issues have on the traction industry., Also there remains a focus on the specific issues we are all aware we are facing within the current climate that our key Traction Operators are operating.

In a period of high investment in both electricity and rail industries, along with higher obligations on our operators to become environmentally sustainable and reduce our environmental impact; we are facing an unprecedented demand for a large skilled workforce.

Within the Rail Industry, the main workforce challenges facing our industry are:

- Increased service demand;
- Recruitment and retention of skilled workers;
- Ageing workforce;
- Skills shortages; and
- Poor Industry Image.¹

One of the key contributors to sustaining the workforce level and capability we require is our industry apprenticeship base. Unfortunately, we are currently seeing a decrease in the intake and completion rates of our apprenticeships.

Although our turnover and natural attrition rates are generally low, we are seeing a turnover rate of 25% for employees who are up to 25 years old²; which is the segment of our workforce that make up a significant portion of our Apprentice base.

It is imperative that our industry Operators focus their efforts on strategies and activities for attracting, developing and sustaining a sufficient workforce by:

1. Assessing which roles are critical to the operation of our networks³;
2. Planning for the ongoing availability of that workforce; and
3. Ensuring that the workforce holds the required competencies, qualifications, skills and experience that are all essential to assure the safe and efficient running of our networks.

In light of our understanding of the challenges and constraints placed on our Operators under the current industry climate; this Guidance Note provides the current research on the issues we are facing, along with a guide focussing critical roles and succeeding our talent into them. The essential steps of identification, assessment and planning to assure the continuity of these roles and the important part they play in the safety and efficiency of our networks.

¹ Australasian Rail Association, *Rail Workforce Development: Our People Are Our Future*, accessed: <https://ara.net.au/sites/default/files/u1/Workforce-fact-sheet-web.pdf> on: 01/06/2019, p1.

² Australasian Railway Association, No Date Provided, *The Changing Face of Rail: A journey to the employer of choice. Attraction and Retention of Employees in the Australasian Rail Industry*, accessed <https://ara.net.au/sites/default/files/TheChangingFaceRale%20Final.pdf> on 16/02/2019, p34.

³ Education and Training Committee, 2010, *Inquiry into Skills Shortages in the Rail Industry*, accessed https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/etc/full_report.pdf on 15/02/2019, p70.

Page | ii The process that has been established for the assessment and planning for critical roles within the Traction Industry are provided through the below five key stages:

1. Critical Role & Succession Assessment: identifying critical roles and potential successors
2. Calibration: moderating the Critical Role & Succession Assessment across teams
3. Training Needs Assessment: compiling all data and performing a gap analysis between Successor capability and Critical Role requirements
4. Talent Planning: working with Successors and Critical Role Incumbents to plan succession
5. Monitor & Evaluate: ongoing monitoring of progress and evaluation of effectiveness of the talent plan to enable succession and transition of the Successor into the critical role

The key tools provided to support this process are:

- Appendix II – Critical Roles & Succession Identification Tool
- Appendix III – Criticality Matrix
- Appendix IV – Training & Development Matrix
- Appendix V – Training & Development Plans
- Appendix VI – Training Needs Assessment
- Appendix VII – Talent Plan

The process, methodology and tools provided in this Guidance Note can be easily tailored and leveraged to deploy a system of Critical Roles & Succession that suits your organisation. Prior to deploying these tools, the following items should already be well established in your organisation:

- Matured people management system that will enable this process to be embedded in a pre-existing process
- Strong understanding of the licenses, training, competencies and qualifications required by the roles being assessed for criticality.
- Consistent performance assessment process consisting of annual performance review as well as more regular progress meetings enables a sustainable process for succeeding your talent pool through to those critical electrical roles that pose the risk.
- Organisational position descriptions and any respective internal job specific systems, policies, procedures, documents, records and forms. Standard role induction should be undertaken for the new incumbent (Successor) into the role.

With these systems and processes already in place, the incorporation of critical roles and succession should leverage the work your People Managers are already doing with your Critical Role Incumbents and Potential Successors.

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