

# Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Engineering and Automotive Training Council Inc

2011-2013



ENGINEERING & AUTOMOTIVE  
TRAINING COUNCIL INC.







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## Executive Summary

The Engineering and Automotive Training Council Inc (EATC) has developed this Aboriginal Employment Strategy to provide guidance and advice to those vocational training, employment and labour market service providers working to secure employment for Aboriginal people in the engineering and automotive industries.

As part of its current strategic direction, the EATC is encouraging small and medium enterprises to identify opportunities to increase Aboriginal employment participation in the two sectors it represents.

The most important factor for increasing the number of Aboriginal people in the two sectors is the provision of relevant, structured and locally focused preparation for employment programs.

The vast majority of employers in the engineering and automotive industries are unable to establish and maintain the pre-employment preparatory services and the ongoing employment based services required to support Aboriginal people during the transition to permanent, sustainable employment.

The majority of entry level employment positions in the engineering and automotive industries utilise employment based training pathways such as apprenticeships and traineeships.

It is unlikely that the entry to employment arrangements in the two sectors will change in any significant way in the short to medium term and as such it is important that Aboriginal people have the pre-requisite knowledge and skills to compete directly for apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

The most important factor for increasing the number of Aboriginal people in the two sectors is the provision of relevant, structured and locally focused preparation for employment programs.

The small and medium enterprises that constitute the majority of employers in the two sectors need access to the combined assistance of vocational training, employment and labour market service providers to develop and deliver preparation for employment programs.

The EATC is the peak vocational training and workforce development advisory and policy organisation for the engineering and automotive industries in Western Australia.

The EATC cannot independently establish the preparation for employment programs required for the two sectors it represents, nor can it force service organisations to develop and deliver these programs.

However, the EATC is able to provide advice based on the information and feedback it receives from the thousands of individual enterprises it represents on the key issues that need to be addressed when establishing work preparation programs.

The EATC can encourage, promote and suggest approaches and methods that will provide the services the engineering and automotive industries require and the arrangements that are likely to improve employment opportunity for Aboriginal people in the two sectors.

The EATC believes that local level partnerships involving Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Group Training Organisations (GTOs), Job Service Australia (JSA) employment service providers and other local community groups and agencies offer the best solution for increasing Aboriginal employment participation.

The EATC will facilitate the development of these local level partnerships and will encourage the establishment of formal preparation for employment programs that lead directly into apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

Employers in the engineering and automotive industries have a clear expectation that applicants for apprenticeship and traineeship positions have the necessary entry level skills and behaviours and the capacity to develop the broader technical knowledge and skills required to operate effectively in the workplace.

A significant increase in employment participation for Aboriginal people in the engineering and automotive industries will only occur if more Aboriginal people secure apprenticeships and traineeships. To do this, they need to have the pre-requisite skills and behaviours and the support to develop a broader knowledge and skills base.

Without an unwavering focus on preparation for employment programs and support, the effort expended on other areas such as workplace interventions, additional incentives for employers, special mentoring programs and learning strategies may be wasted.

To secure long-term, sustainable employment in the engineering and automotive industries there is a requirement to clear the first hurdle – to get an employer to offer an apprenticeship or traineeship position.

Most employers in the engineering and automotive industries in Western Australia are small and medium enterprises without the internal capacity to develop and sustain specific Aboriginal employment arrangements.

Employers need the support and assistance of local RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers.

The EATC will encourage RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers to work collaborative to establish local level arrangements that reflect the skill requirements of local engineering and automotive enterprises.

To achieve the systemic changes required to significantly increase Aboriginal employment will require the combined efforts of training, employment and labour market organisations working with local employers.

The EATC will support RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers that want to work together on preparation for employment programs for Aboriginal people.

A key aspect of the Aboriginal employment process for the engineering and automotive industries is the relevance and accuracy of the information and advice provided to potential employees.

The EATC has worked hard to ensure that the right message about the work of the sectors it represents is presented.

The engineering and automotive sectors do not provide jobs of 'last resort'.

Employment in the two sectors is not low skilled, easy to obtain and the option to choose when other avenues are closed.

Work in the engineering and automotive sectors is highly skilled, complex and multi-faceted. The employment-based training pathways used by the two sectors are well developed, formal and highly structured.

Potential employees need to have the capacity to learn the skills required in the two sectors, the discipline to commit to a formal employment-based training program and the ability to develop, adapt and adjust to satisfy a changing technological environment.

Preparation for employment programs developed for Aboriginal people seeking future employment in the engineering and automotive industries should follow the formal requirements of the two sectors, prepare the participants for the workplace and lead directly into apprenticeship and traineeship pathways.

Potential employees need to have the capacity to learn the skills required in the two sectors, the discipline to commit to a formal employment-based training program and the ability to develop, adapt and adjust to satisfy a changing technological environment.

There is enough evidence collected over three decades of work readiness training and preparation for work programs to show that RTOs need to deliver practical, project based programs for the engineering and automotive industries.

A strong focus on practical, project based delivery is an important factor for all pre-vocational and pre-employment training for the two sectors, but it is particularly important for preparation for employment programs for Aboriginal people.

The evidence shows that Aboriginal people achieve positive outcomes from vocational training programs when there is interactive and participatory learning activity, the use of innovative and integrated assessment strategies, embedded literacy and numeracy support, additional mentoring support is provided as a formal part of the program and RTO teachers and trainers are receptive to Aboriginality and Aboriginal ways of learning.

It is the context and nature of the vocational training experience that determines how successful the experience will be for an Aboriginal student.

The EATC encourages all RTOs involved in preparing Aboriginal people for work in the engineering and automotive industries to ensure participants develop a full appreciation of the engineering and automotive workplace and how the combination of skills, knowledge, safe working practices, personal attributes and appropriate workplace behaviours develop a competent employee.

The State Training Board's Training Together, Working Together initiative identified mentoring as a critical Aboriginal employment success factor and the EATC endorses this requirement for engineering and automotive employment.

The key issue for the broader use of mentoring across small and medium engineering and automotive enterprises is cost. Most of the small and medium companies that are able to offer employment based training positions to Aboriginal people do not have the capacity or resources to fund internal mentors.

However, the use of formal employment based training arrangements in the two sectors means that there is already a broad understanding of on-the-job coaching, supervision and mentoring.

The EATC believes that the structured on-the-job training, supervision and coaching that is already a feature of all apprenticeship and traineeship programs in the engineering and automotive sectors provides a foundation for additional and specific mentoring processes for Aboriginal people.

The processes that lead to an individual learning from others, modelling behaviours and attitudes, absorbing the culture of the workplace and the values of the organisation that occurs through the day-to-day interaction between an apprentice and a tradesperson mirror mentoring processes.

While the ideal situation in a mentoring program designed to support Aboriginal employees is to have an Aboriginal mentor, it is possible to achieve successful mentoring outcomes with non-Indigenous mentors providing these mentors have been trained, have respect for and an understanding of Aboriginal culture and recognise issues that are likely to influence the success of the individual receiving the mentoring support.

The EATC believes that there is an opportunity to build upon the formal mechanisms already in place for apprenticeships and traineeships in the development of specific Aboriginal mentoring processes.

The EATC encourages RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers to consider how mentoring may be built upon the strong foundation of employment based training.

The key issue for the broader use of mentoring across small and medium engineering and automotive enterprises is cost. Most of the small and medium companies that are able to offer employment based training positions to Aboriginal people do not have the capacity or resources to fund internal mentors.



The advice to the EATC from engineering and automotive enterprises is that there is a lack of suitable Aboriginal applicants for apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

A stronger focus on work readiness training and preparation for employment programs will assist in improving the quality of applicants for engineering and automotive employment based training positions.

There is also a requirement for RTOs and other organisations involved in preparation for employment programs to adopt a formal screening, recruitment and selection process.

The application of rigorous screening, key recruitment and selection practices at the work readiness stage is critical to the ability of the participant to secure ongoing sustainable employment.

Participants in engineering and automotive preparation for employment and pre-vocational programs must have the capability and capacity to secure and complete a formal apprenticeship or traineeship.

The EATC encourages RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers to be honest and transparent when selecting Aboriginal people for pre-employment programs that lead onto apprenticeships and traineeships.

Engineering and automotive work is complex and technical and the work requires appropriate workplace literacy and numeracy levels.

RTOs do a disservice to the participants if they do not consider the capacity of the participant to progress into an apprenticeship or traineeship program.

The EATC has developed this Aboriginal Employment Strategy to provide a clear public statement on what is required by vocational training, employment and labour market service providers if they are to assist the engineering and automotive sectors with the employment of more Aboriginal people.

The EATC has been advised by many engineering and automotive enterprises that there are apprenticeships and traineeships available for Aboriginal people who have the interest, enthusiasm and motivation to take up an employment based training place.

The EATC will work with RTOs, GTOs, JSA providers, employers, local community groups and agencies to ensure that Aboriginal people are provided with the pre-employment training and the ongoing employment support that will allow them to make the most of these opportunities.

Participants in engineering and automotive preparation for employment and pre-vocational programs must have the capability and capacity to secure and complete a formal apprenticeship or traineeship.



## Engineering and Automotive Training Council Aboriginal Employment Strategy

The Engineering and Automotive Training Council has developed this Aboriginal Employment Strategy as part of a broader workforce development process designed to ensure a supply of skilled workers for the Western Australian engineering and automotive industries.

Aboriginal people need access to support services and training to equip them with the knowledge and skills to compete for apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

Providing appropriate skills training and preparing Aboriginal people for work in the engineering and automotive industries will lead to improved workforce participation.

The widespread use of employment based training arrangements such as apprenticeships and traineeships for entry level positions in the engineering and automotive industries requires a strong focus on pre-employment processes.

A significant increase in the number of Aboriginal people employed in the engineering and automotive industries will only be achieved by preparing Aboriginal people to take up apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.

This document includes the EATC's strategic direction in relation to Aboriginal employment and training and provides information, guidance, advice and recommended actions for organisations involved in employment and training activities.

It should be noted that the key element of the EATC strategy is the need for improved preparation for work arrangements.

Aboriginal people need access to support services and training to equip them with the knowledge and skills to compete for apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

The actions associated with the four strategic directions that follow will allow the EATC to work in a structured and formal way to improve Aboriginal employment outcomes in the engineering and automotive industries.

The EATC will undertake the work associated with the four strategic directions during the period covered by the Council's current Strategic Plan 2011-2013.





## Strategic Direction One

### Promote Aboriginal Employment in the Engineering and Automotive Industries

#### Actions

The EATC will:

Promote and market the engineering and automotive industries as a career destination for Aboriginal people.

Encourage engineering and automotive enterprises, particularly in the small and medium enterprise sector, to employ Aboriginal people.

Work with employment and training service providers such as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Group Training Organisations (GTOs) and Job Services Australia (JSA) employment service providers, to improve workforce participation for Aboriginal people in the engineering and automotive industries.

Identify and highlight industry best practice examples of Aboriginal employment in the engineering and automotive industries, particularly in the small and medium enterprise sector.

A significant increase in the number of Aboriginal people employed in the engineering and automotive industries will only be achieved by preparing Aboriginal people to take up apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.

## Strategic Direction Two

### Improve Preparation for Work Arrangements for Aboriginal People Seeking Employment in the Engineering and Automotive Industries

#### Actions

The EATC will:

Facilitate the establishment of local level partnerships between RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers for the development of preparation for work programs.

Endorse the efforts of local level partnerships, promote partnership activities and support funding applications.

Support local level partnerships in the development of innovative training delivery and relevant assessment practices for preparation for work programs.

Encourage the use of a career pathway approach that establishes preparation for work programs as the first step in the development of a career in the engineering and automotive industries.

### Strategic Direction Three

Increase the Number of Aboriginal People Employed as Apprentices and Trainees in the Engineering and Automotive Industries

#### Actions

The EATC will:

Encourage small and medium enterprises in the engineering and automotive industries to offer apprenticeship and traineeship positions for Aboriginal people.

Work with GTOs servicing the engineering and automotive industries to improve apprenticeship and traineeship outcomes for Aboriginal people in the engineering and automotive industries.

Support local level partnerships in the development of innovative pre-vocational pathways that lead to engineering and automotive apprenticeships and traineeships.

Identify best practice examples and Aboriginal apprenticeship and traineeship success stories to encourage greater take up of employment based training places.

The EATC wants to see improved employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in Western Australia in the engineering and automotive sectors, particularly in small and medium enterprises.

### Strategic Direction Four

Improve the Workplace Support Available for Engineering and Automotive Enterprises Employing Aboriginal People

#### Actions

The EATC will:

Work with local level partnerships to develop cost-effective workplace mentoring programs.

Encourage small and medium enterprises in the engineering and automotive industries to train existing employees in coaching and mentoring skills.

Encourage small and medium enterprises in the engineering and automotive industries to train employees in cross-cultural awareness.



## Introduction

The Engineering and Automotive Training Council Inc (EATC) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation providing strategic advice, information, direction and leadership on the skills and workforce development requirements of the engineering and automotive industries in Western Australia.

A key element of EATC activity is to promote the engineering and automotive industries as a career destination and to ensure that education and training providers understand the entry level employment requirements and criteria of the sectors.

As part of its workforce development activity, the EATC encourages improved employment outcomes for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

The EATC wants to see improved employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in Western Australia in the engineering and automotive sectors, particularly in small and medium enterprises.

Given the formal employment-based training structures that are the foundation of most of the skills and workforce development activity in the two sectors, an improvement in employment outcomes for Aboriginal people will require an increased uptake of apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

This Aboriginal Employment Strategy defines the position of the EATC and provides information and advice to schools, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), employment service providers, employers and others involved in the support, training and employment of Aboriginal people in the engineering and automotive sectors.

## Background

In late 2010, the EATC conducted a comprehensive strategic planning process and as part of this process identified the need to develop a formal policy and direction on employment participation for under-represented groups in the engineering and automotive sectors.

The relevant details under the 'Equity' provisions of the EATC Strategic Plan 2011-2013 are as outlined on page 10.

As a consequence of the planning process, the EATC decided to develop a range of initiatives designed to lead to increased employment participation for under-represented groups.

One of these initiatives was the establishment of a strategic direction for Aboriginal employment.

In the development of its Aboriginal Employment Strategy, the EATC has conducted extensive research, consulted with the industries it represents and identified the key issues and barriers that currently restrict employment access. The EATC has also identified those practices currently used by employers in the engineering and automotive sectors that support improved employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.

There is significant employer support for Aboriginal employment activity in the engineering and automotive sectors. With the appropriate pre-employment processes and mechanisms and the provision of on-going services during employment, there is no reason why employment participation levels for Aboriginal people should not improve.

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The expectation of employers in the two sectors is that new entrants to the workforce are well prepared, capable, enthusiastic and motivated to achieve.

Strategic Objective	Target	Performance Measures
Engineering and automotive skills and career development programs and processes are equitable and transparent	Developing a process to encourage the recruitment and retention of apprentices	The retention rate for engineering and automotive apprentices improves  Apprentice recruitment and attraction processes are improved
	Ensuring the appropriate allocation of public funds for vocational training and skills recognition	The allocation of funding is based on needs and outcomes  Skills recognition processes are appropriately funded
	Improving the career development arrangements for the engineering and automotive sectors	Engineering and automotive career and skills pathways are properly defined  Funding for skills development for existing workers is available
	Conducting activities to improve the participation of under-represented groups in the engineering and automotive sectors	An Aboriginal Employment Strategy is developed and implemented  A strategic intervention to increase the participation of women in the engineering and automotive sectors is developed and implemented



## Industry Expectations

The range, scope and complexity of the work conducted in the engineering and automotive sectors may be gauged from the list below:

- Manufacturing – metal and non-metal
- Aeroskills - aircraft maintenance
- Engineering - fabrication, transportation and equipment manufacture
- Engineering construction
- Refrigeration and air-conditioning
- Shipbuilding and boatbuilding
- Foundry
- Mineral processing
- Metal machining
- Surface preparation and surface coating
- Automotive manufacturing
- Automotive retail service and repair
- Automotive vehicle body repair
- Recreational vehicles
- Outdoor power equipment
- Vehicle body building
- Leisure marine
- Motorcycles
- Bicycles

There is a clear industry expectation that new entrants to the workforce possess the necessary entry level pre-requisite skills and behaviours and have the capacity to develop the technical knowledge and skills required to operate effectively in the two sectors.

Nearly all of the work activity in the two sectors is under-pinned by formal, structured pre-employment and employment based training.

The use of formal apprenticeship and traineeship programs as the entry level employment requirement for the two sectors is well established.

There is a clear industry expectation that new entrants to the workforce possess the necessary entry level pre-requisite skills and behaviours and have the capacity to develop the technical knowledge and skills required to operate effectively in the two sectors.

The EATC has conducted a significant amount of work to raise the level of understanding in the education and training community about the knowledge, skills and competency requirements of the engineering and automotive industries.

Unfortunately, there is still a view, particularly in the schools sector, that a traineeship or apprenticeship in the engineering and automotive industries is a 'position of last resort'. When all else has failed a job in engineering or automotive will do.

The reality is different and the expectation of employers in the two sectors is that new entrants to the workforce are well prepared, capable, enthusiastic and motivated to achieve.

Strategies to increase the participation of under-represented groups must recognise and accept the technical and complex nature of the two sectors and ensure that potential new entrants to the sectors understand the industry expectations.

All jobs in the engineering and automotive industries require the ability to read and understand complex instructions, the capacity to apply numeracy skills and to undertake measurement and computations, the ability to learn concepts and principles and to apply this knowledge in a practical way, and the capacity to engage in the formal and structured training that is an integral part of the two sectors.

The reality of the knowledge, skills and competency requirements and the industry expectations present a challenge for the development of relevant and meaningful employment participation initiatives.

Strategies to increase the participation of under-represented groups must recognise and accept the technical and complex nature of the two sectors and ensure that potential new entrants to the sectors understand the industry expectations.

Employers in the engineering and automotive industries accept that an improvement in employment participation levels for Aboriginal people will require additional resources and access to specialist support.

Schools, RTOs, employment service providers and others involved in preparing Aboriginal people for employment in the engineering and automotive industries will need to accept that there is an expected performance for entry level positions that requires specific knowledge, skills and competency measures.

If these measures are not given the appropriate consideration, it is unlikely that Aboriginal employment participation in the engineering and automotive industries will improve.

Aboriginal employment levels will only improve in the two sectors if there is an increase in the number of Aboriginal people accepted into formal apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

## Training Together, Working Together

During 2009 and 2010 the State Training Board of Western Australia on behalf of the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, the Hon Peter Collier MLC, conducted public consultations and developed a formal state-wide strategy document on Aboriginal employment and training.

The Training Together, Working Together Committee identified six key findings. These were:

- There is a lack of connection and coordination between employers, job seekers and service providers, between State agencies and between State and Australian Governments that creates inefficiency and ineffectiveness.
- There are job opportunities for Aboriginal people but employers do not know how to successfully engage with them. There is an opportunity to increase employer involvement and commitment to employing Aboriginal people.
- One size does not fit all – locally responsive solutions are needed to address unique local issues.
- Support for Aboriginal people transitioning from school to training, from training into jobs, from unemployment to employment is essential and relationship-based mentoring is the critical ingredient in helping individuals to make successful transitions into sustainable employment.
- There are major individual and institutional barriers to Aboriginal participation in the workforce – a strategic, systematic response is needed to remove these fundamental barriers.
- There is a need to raise awareness of Aboriginal employment opportunities and promote new Aboriginal role models.



The Training Together, Working Together Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy provides details on five key strategic themes and 21 supporting strategies designed to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy also contains the following graphic that identifies the critical success factors that underpin Aboriginal employment.

The strategy suggests that all elements of the model need to be addressed in some way to ensure successful employment outcomes.

The EATC is fully supportive of the Training Together, Working Together initiative and from an engineering and automotive perspective endorses the key findings.

The work undertaken by the EATC clearly shows that the six key findings of the Training Together, Working Together Committee apply to the two sectors it represents.

The strategy suggests that all elements of the model need to be addressed in some way to ensure successful employment outcomes.



Although all the elements of the model apply to the two sectors, given the formal employment based training arrangements used by the sectors and the industry expectation for properly prepared and capable new workforce entrants, the Work Readiness and Merit Based Employment elements of the model are of particular interest to the engineering and automotive industries.

In its efforts to implement the details of this Aboriginal Employment Strategy, the EATC will continue to work with the State Training Board and the Department of Training and Workforce Development and will give appropriate consideration to the Training Together, Working Together themes and strategies.

## Preparation for Employment

There are some good examples of Aboriginal employment initiatives in Western Australia in companies that utilise the skilled occupations covered by the EATC.

In the mining and resources sector, a number of large companies have established Aboriginal employment programs that have improved employment outcomes and increased the number of Aboriginal people involved in formal apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

Similarly, a number of industry and employer associations working together with Group Training Organisations (GTOs) have initiated programs to encourage greater Aboriginal participation in the two sectors.

Although there are examples that are producing successful Aboriginal employment outcomes, there is no broader, industry-wide strategy that is increasing the number of Aboriginal people employed in the two sectors.

There is a need for a strategic intervention that focuses on the small and medium enterprises in the engineering and automotive industries.

The successes of the large company and GTO initiatives are built in the main on the planning and preparation processes that proceed the decision to employ.

A process to broaden Aboriginal employment activity to include the hundreds of small and medium enterprises throughout Western Australia involved in engineering and automotive work will only succeed if there is a significant focus on preparation for employment procedures.

Ensuring that Aboriginal people are ready for the technical requirements of the two sectors and have the necessary pre-employment support, advice, information and training, will provide the best mechanism for maintaining sustainable employment.

This preparation for work activity must focus on what is required to get Aboriginal people into apprenticeships and traineeships.

There is limited capacity for small and medium enterprises in the engineering and automotive industries to provide the comprehensive pre-employment support services and work readiness training for Aboriginal people that is provided by large mining and resource sector companies in Western Australia. However, without this level of pre-employment intervention it is unlikely that additional employment opportunities will be created in small and medium enterprises.

The EATC wants to see closer cooperation between local employment service providers, RTOs and GTOs and better use made of the available public funding in support of Aboriginal pre-employment initiatives.

Through the Australian Government's national employment services system, Job Services Australia (JSA), there is an opportunity to develop local interventions that will provide the pre-employment training and support required to prepare Aboriginal people for work in the engineering and automotive industries.

The Employment Pathway funding available to JSA providers should be used to support the development and delivery of local Aboriginal pre-employment programs that engage appropriately with those RTOs and GTOs that service the local engineering and automotive enterprises.

A process to broaden Aboriginal employment activity to include the hundreds of small and medium enterprises throughout Western Australia involved in engineering and automotive work will only succeed if there is a significant focus on preparation for employment procedures.

The EATC encourages the development of local level partnerships that focus on collaborative models with the following features:

- A defined approach using the expertise and resources of the JSA providers, RTOs and GTOs to identify local engineering and automotive employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.
- A process to clearly align pre-employment program outcomes with the skill and capability expectations of the local engineering and automotive enterprises.
- An agreed mechanism to fund engineering and automotive pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people using government funding and private sector contributions.
- A service to support Aboriginal people in their transition into the engineering and automotive workforce.
- A complementary service to support small and medium engineering and automotive enterprises in the development of employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

One of the key findings of the *Training Together, Working Together* initiative was that 'one size does not fit all' and that locally responsive solutions are needed to address 'unique local issues'..

How local area collaborative models for the engineering and automotive industries will be established and how they will work will be dependent on what best suits the local environment.

The EATC cannot define the details of the collaborative arrangements, but it encourages the development of local level partnerships that consider the five key features listed above.

The EATC will provide strategic advice, support and industry endorsement for any local Aboriginal employment initiative for the engineering and automotive sectors that focus on the five key features.

The role of the local RTO in the collaborative process is crucial to the success of a pre-employment program for Aboriginal people looking for entry level positions in the engineering and automotive sectors.

There is a compelling body of evidence collected during the past two decades that shows the need for targeted and specific activity when designing and delivering vocational training programs for Aboriginal people. The evidence shows that Aboriginal learners succeed in a training program when the following elements are in place:

- The program has been specifically established for Aboriginal people or there are a number of Aboriginal people in the program who can study together
- A major part of the program is devoted to talking and communicating with others
- Participants know before they start the program exactly what is expected from them – they are advised about the content and the assessment processes
- There is maximum flexibility in how the program content is delivered
- The teachers and trainers involved in the program have an understanding of Aboriginal cultural issues

When designing, delivering and assessing training programs for Aboriginal learners, RTOs need to recognise that acceptance of different learning styles or learning preferences is crucial.

One of the key findings of the Training Together, Working Together initiative was that 'one size does not fit all' and that locally responsive solutions are needed to address 'unique local issues'.



In the delivery of pre-employment programs for the engineering and automotive industries, RTOs must accept that Aboriginal learners prefer to learn through practical, visual, oral and aural experiences.

Successful vocational training programs for Aboriginal people provide for interactive and participatory learning activities, allow for innovative and integrated assessment strategies, use embedded literacy and numeracy support, include mentoring as a formal part of the program and are receptive to Aboriginality and aboriginal ways of learning.

The National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) has identified seven (7) critical factors that lead to positive outcomes for Aboriginal people when they are involved in vocational education and training programs.

The EATC encourages all RTOs providing engineering and automotive pre-employment training for Aboriginal people to consider the following critical factors:

- **Ensure community involvement and ownership.**  
Where it is appropriate, RTOs should involve local Aboriginal community representatives in the development and coordination of pre-employment training programs.
- **Accept Aboriginal identities, cultures, knowledge and values.**  
The EATC encourages RTOs to provide appropriate cross-cultural training for all teachers and trainers involved in the development and delivery of pre-employment training programs.
- **Work in true partnerships with Aboriginal communities.**  
Particularly in regional areas of the state, the EATC encourages RTOs to work in partnership with other service providers such as GTOs and employment services agencies to engage with local Aboriginal people when designing and developing engineering and automotive pre-employment training programs.
- **Provide flexibility in course design, content and delivery.**  
The EATC supports flexibility and responsiveness in the delivery of all engineering and automotive courses. The learning styles of Aboriginal people require an increased commitment from RTOs to maximise the flexible delivery of programs.
- **Employ quality staff who are committed to the programs.**  
All engineering and automotive training programs require access to highly skilled and competent teachers and trainers who possess both the technical and educational knowledge and skills required to deliver the programs. The EATC encourages RTOs to allocate skilled, motivated and committed teachers and trainers to engineering and automotive pre-employment training programs for Aboriginal people.
- **Provide extensive student support services.**  
Pre-employment training programs for Aboriginal people will fail to deliver successful outcomes if an RTO does not allocate appropriate levels of student support services such as literacy and numeracy support, mentoring, work placement and ongoing community and employer engagement. The EATC encourages RTOs to work with GTOs, employment service providers and local Aboriginal community representatives to ensure appropriate student support services are provided under local collaborative arrangements.
- **Access appropriate funding that allows for sustainability of programs.**  
The EATC will support all RTOs to ensure that funding for engineering and automotive pre-employment training programs for Aboriginal people is provided as an ongoing allocation.

In the delivery of pre-employment programs for the engineering and automotive industries, RTOs must accept that Aboriginal learners prefer to learn through practical, visual, oral and aural experiences.

There is no doubt that the most important factor in securing additional entry level employment places for Aboriginal people in the engineering and automotive industries is the relevance, responsiveness and quality of the preparation for employment programs.

The apprenticeship and traineeship models used as the employment entry pathway to the engineering and automotive industries require a sophisticated and sustained effort from all service providers to ensure Aboriginal people can meet the entry requirements.

Allocating places in a standard pre-vocational program to Aboriginal people or establishing a specific Aboriginal pre-employment program without the additional support measures will not work.

The EATC accepts that the additional resources and efforts required to deliver improved pre-employment programs to underpin increased employment participation for Aboriginal people in the engineering and automotive industries, is beyond the capacity of most individual RTOs.

The establishment and sustainability of preparation for employment programs required for the engineering and automotive industries will need local collaborative efforts involving a range of service providers.

The EATC will work with public and private RTOs and will facilitate connections to GTOs, JSA providers, local employers and local community representatives in the development of pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people.

The EATC will provide support and endorsement for RTOs seeking access to additional public funding to establish and deliver innovative pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people.

The apprenticeship and traineeship models used as the employment entry pathway to the engineering and automotive industries require a sophisticated and sustained effort from all service providers to ensure Aboriginal people can meet the entry requirements.

## Vocational Education and Training (VET) Practices

Although Aboriginal people comprise only around 3% of the Australian population, they have faced unemployment rates varying from two and a half to four and a half times greater than for other Australians over the past 40 years. These significantly higher unemployment rates have occurred despite a far lower workforce participation rate.

Involvement in appropriate vocational training programs has proved to be the most effective way of providing the support needed to maintain Aboriginal people in sustainable employment.

Although increased participation in the VET system has provided overall improvements in Aboriginal employment outcomes, the results across industry sectors have been mixed.

The typical approach to pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people in the VET system has resulted in:

- the accumulation of multiple low level vocational qualifications,
- the duplication of program content because of a lack of appropriate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures,
- the progression to higher level vocational qualifications is hindered because there is limited access to employment based training pathways, and
- limited access to higher skilled jobs.

To achieve an increase in Aboriginal employment participation in the engineering and automotive industries there will be a need to change current VET practices.

All pre-employment and pre-vocational programs for Aboriginal people should be clearly aligned with the formal training and career pathways that already exist in the engineering and automotive industries.

The expected outcomes of pre-employment and pre-vocational programs should be demonstration of competence and a seamless transition to an employment based training pathway.

In establishing engineering and automotive pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people, the key objective for an RTO should be to transfer all participants to an apprenticeship or traineeship program on the completion of the pre-employment component.

The EATC encourages RTOs to consider pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people as the first step in a formal Career Pathway that will provide a formal and structured approach to the development of skills to support sustainable employment outcomes.

A focus on a pathway model rather than on a single pre-employment intervention will create a direct link to apprenticeship and traineeship programs and will allow an RTO to:

- offer pre-employment and pre-vocational programs that cover a broad range of engineering and automotive occupational areas aligned to local industry needs,
- ensure that each step in the pathway links the formal vocational training outcomes with current and available local employment opportunities,
- allow participants to choose a direction along the pathway and a pace of movement that suits their individual needs,
- build the pathway upon the existing nationally recognised engineering and automotive VET qualifications and select units of competence that suit local enterprise needs,
- provide maximum recognition for the skills of individuals regardless of where those skills are acquired,
- recognise the specific learning styles of Aboriginal people, and
- partner with other organisations such as GTOs and JSA providers to develop an integrated local training and employment model

The use of a pathway approach will ensure that pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people are established as part of the mainstream VET engineering and automotive provision. However, the key to the success of these programs is to make the delivery and assessment activities relevant and meaningful for the learner.

Vocational training programs for Aboriginal people that do not address local needs and do not accept local conditions often result in lower achievement rates, higher program withdrawals and lower levels of skills recognition.

It is the context and nature of the vocational training experience that determines how successful the experience will be for an Aboriginal student.

In utilising a pathway approach, the EATC wants to see RTOs applying the following principles to the design, delivery and assessment of engineering and automotive pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people:

Vocational training programs for Aboriginal people that do not address local needs and do not accept local conditions often result in lower achievement rates, higher program withdrawals and lower levels of skills recognition.



- **Participation**

There is a requirement for all participants to be actively and fully involved in all aspects of a pre-employment program. RTOs need to ensure that procedures are in place to identify instances of non-participation, exclusion or limited involvement in practical projects. RTOs need to establish appropriate methods to record participant involvement in all the required program activities and tasks. To be ready for sustainable, long-term employment in the engineering and automotive industries, the participants must be able to demonstrate competence in all aspects of the program.

- **Interactivity**

All the learning activities associated with a pre-employment program should be designed to ensure the maximum amount of interaction between participants and between the participants and the teachers and trainers. Wherever possible, formal classroom-based, lecture style delivery should be avoided in favour of participative and interactive conversation and discussion during the completion of practical projects. RTOs need to develop appropriate methods of delivering underpinning knowledge, concepts and principles during the completion of practical projects using verbal explanations, demonstrations, verbal questioning and active listening.

- **Flexibility**

RTOs will need to be innovative and flexible in the design and delivery of practical projects. Resource and equipment availability, local conditions and the needs of program participants will need to be considered when designing and developing practical projects. Practical projects should introduce participants to a range of skills and activities that they are likely to encounter when they make the transition to an apprenticeship or traineeship with a local employer.

- **Responsiveness**

RTOs need to be flexible and adaptable so that programs may be changed and adjusted to suit any changes in local industry requirements or employment opportunities. Elective units in various certificate level programs may be changed to satisfy local industry needs. RTOs will need to be responsive to the requirements of local engineering and automotive enterprises and adjust the content, delivery and timing of pre-employment programs as required.

- **Support**

In most cases, pre-employment program participants will be making the transition from unemployment or under-employment to sustainable, long-term employment. The successful completion of an engineering or automotive pre-employment program will be the first step in this transition. RTOs will need to have in place appropriate support mechanisms to assist participants with learning difficulties, literacy and numeracy support and other issues that may impact on their capacity to successfully complete the program.

- **Practical Application**

The focus of engineering and automotive pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people should be on the practical application of skills, behaviours and attributes that will allow participants to secure sustainable, long-term employment. The primary goal of pre-employment initiatives should be the progression of participants into formal apprenticeship and traineeship positions. RTOs need to ensure that participants are exposed to as broad a range as possible of practical projects, tasks, activities and 'workplace like' situations. The concept of 'learning by doing' should underpin all engineering and automotive pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people.

RTOs will need to be innovative and flexible in the design and delivery of practical projects. Resource and equipment availability, local conditions and the needs of program participants will need to be considered when designing and developing practical projects.

The exact nature and composition of engineering and automotive pre-employment programs will need to be determined by RTOs and other service providers at the local level.

RTOs should utilise Certificate I and Certificate II qualifications from the Metal and Engineering (MEM05) training package and the Automotive Industry Retail Service and Repair (AUR05) training package.

Within the packaging guidelines, RTOs should collaborate with local industry to select elective units of competence that suit local conditions and requirements.

RTOs should also consider the inclusion of supplementary program content covering areas such as literacy and numeracy, personal financial management, work and life skills such as personal appearance, time management, punctuality and attendance.

The EATC encourages RTOs to apply an integrated, project based learning model to the delivery of pre-employment programs.

RTOs should look for innovative and imaginative ways of providing the engineering and automotive skills required by local enterprise.

The EATC wants to see RTOs develop preparation for work programs for Aboriginal people that allow for maximum practical application with the required knowledge components integrated into the practical activity.

It is possible, particularly at the Certificate I and Certificate II levels to deliver all of the competency requirements away from the formal classroom environment. This is not to suggest that the required knowledge should not be covered in an appropriate and rigorous way, just that there are techniques for both delivery and assessment that do not require extensive classroom based contact.

It should be noted that the EATC strongly encourages the use of practical work placements in all of the preparation for work programs delivered by RTOs.

The diverse and complex skills required in the engineering and automotive industries need to be developed with a full appreciation of the workplace and an understanding of how skills, knowledge, safe working practices, personal attributes and appropriate workplace behaviours should be developed as part of an integrated learning model.

The EATC encourages RTOs to consider the use of practical, project based delivery and assessment models when developing engineering and automotive preparation for work programs for Aboriginal people.

The following example suggests an approach for a Certificate I in Engineering program that combines the content and assessment requirements from across a number of units. This approach identifies a number of key activities associated with the total program content and develops practical projects that cover these key activities and group assessment requirements from across units.

The practical project descriptor is a simple example of how an RTO may approach a combined activity. Using this approach, an RTO may develop a range of these descriptors that together cover all the requirements of a complete qualification.

The EATC encourages RTOs to consider the use of practical, project based delivery and assessment models when developing engineering and automotive preparation for work programs for Aboriginal people.

## Certificate I in Engineering

The Metals and Engineering training package specifies that the Certificate I in Engineering requires the completion of four (4) mandatory units and a number of specialisation units to the value of twenty-four (24) points. The specialisation units are chosen as electives.

The mandatory units are:

- Work With Others in a Manufacturing, Engineering or Related Environment
- Apply Principles of OH&S in Work Environment
- Apply Quality Procedures
- Plan to Undertake a Routine Task

The specialisation units chosen as electives for this example are:

- Perform Engineering Measurements
- Perform Computations
- Carry Out Mechanical Cutting
- Perform Routine Manual Arc Welding
- Perform Manual Heating and Thermal Cutting
- Use Workshop Machines for Basic Operations
- Use Hand Tools
- Use Power Tools/Hand Held Operations
- Undertake Manual Handling
- Perform Emergency First Aid
- Undertake OH&S Activities in the Workplace

The fifteen (15) units of competence that constitute the Certificate I in Engineering should be delivered as a series of integrated practical projects. In completing these projects, program participants will demonstrate their competence against the elements in each unit and are assessed against the stated performance criteria.

Elements of competence from across the fifteen units and the associated performance criteria may be grouped into five (5) key activities. These activities allow the program participants to develop relevant knowledge and skills and to demonstrate their competence in a learning environment designed to replicate the workplace.

The Five (5) Key Activities are:

- Plan and prepare for a task
- Assemble, use and disassemble tools, plant and equipment to complete a task
- Clean and maintain tools, plant and equipment
- Apply safety, quality and environmental measures in the workplace
- Communicate with others

When grouping units and determining the required practical activity, the RTO should ask what is required to ensure the coverage of the content and satisfaction of the performance criteria.

For the key activity of 'Assemble, use and disassemble tools, plant and equipment to complete a task', the questions may be:

- What is it that needs to be done?
- Who will be involved in the task?
- What tools and equipment do we need?
- What setting up is required?
- Where will the work be carried out?
- How much time do we have to complete the work?
- What is expected in terms of quality and finished product?
- What safety requirements are there?
- What work instructions need to be followed?
- What environmental considerations need to be understood?

These questions allow the RTO to determine how units, elements and performance criteria will be grouped and also provide a framework for participants in the Work Ready program.

For the routine task of preparing, cutting and cleaning steel, the RTO may decide to group units as per the table that follows:

Unit	Title	Element
MEM16007A	Work With Others in a Manufacturing, Engineering or Related Environment	Plan activities Work with others
MEM13014A	Apply Principles of OH&S in Work Environment	Follow safe working practices
MEM05007C	Perform Manual Heating and Thermal Cutting	Assemble and disassemble plant and equipment  Operate equipment
MEM18001C	Use Hand Tools	Use hand tools
MEM18002B	Use Power Tools/Hand Held Operations	Use power tools/hand held operations



The grouping of units and elements from within these units allows an RTO to create a coherent learning activity through the use of a practical project. As part of this Certificate I in Engineering example shown, the RTO may ask participants to cut, clean and stack scrap metal into nominated sizes to be used as welding coupons for future learning activities.

The RTO should provide program participants with a short descriptor such as:

**Prepare, cut, clean and stack mild steel welding coupons in designated sizes**

Students will be provided with suitable mild steel off-cuts, or shown where off-cuts are available and told that this material will be used for welding coupons for future learning activity.

Students will be provided with the range of designated sizes for the welding coupons and advised how many of each size are required.

Students will prepare and mark the mild steel and will use hand tools, thermal cutting equipment and hand held power tools to undertake the work.

Students will discuss how the work will be allocated amongst the group and will ensure that all group members are exposed to the range of skills covered by the activity.

Students will find out from the teacher or trainer what the expectations of the task are in relation to timing, quantity and quality.

Students will discuss the safety requirements of the job and determine what safety equipment or precautions are required to carry out the job.

Students will assemble, use and disassemble any equipment required to perform the task.

A similar approach may be applied by an RTO for a Certificate I in Automotive pre-employment program.

## Certificate I in Automotive

### (Vehicle Servicing-Light Automotive)

The Automotive Retail Service and Repair(AUR05) training package specifies that the Certificate I in Automotive Pre apprenticeship requires the completion of two (2) mandatory units and a number of specialisation units. The specialisation units are chosen as electives.

The mandatory units are:

- Identify environmental regulations and best practice in a workplace or business
- Apply safe working practices

The specialisation units chosen as electives for this example are:

- Use and maintain workplace tools and equipment
- Prepare for work
- Complete daily work activities
- Use and maintain basic measuring devices
- Remove and tag engine system components
- Carry out workshop practice activities
- Carry out servicing operations
- Use and maintain workplace tools and equipment

The units of competence that constitute the Certificate I in Automotive should be delivered as a series of integrated practical projects. In completing these projects, program participants will demonstrate their competence against the elements in each unit and are assessed against the stated performance criteria.

Elements of competence from across the ten units and the associated performance criteria may be grouped into five (5) key activities. These activities allow the program participants to develop relevant knowledge and skills and to demonstrate their competence in a learning environment designed to replicate the workplace.

The Five (5) Key Activities are:

- Plan and prepare for a task
- Assemble, use and disassemble tools, plant and equipment to complete a task
- Clean and maintain tools, plant and equipment
- Apply safety, quality and environmental measures in the workplace
- Communicate with others

When grouping units and determining the required practical activity, the RTO should ask what is required to ensure the coverage of the content and satisfaction of the performance criteria.

For the key activity of 'Assemble, use and disassemble tools, plant and equipment to complete a task', the questions may be:

- What is it that needs to be done?
- Who will be involved in the task?
- What tools and equipment do we need?
- What setting up is required?
- Where will the work be carried out?
- How much time do we have to complete the work?
- What is expected in terms of work outcome?
- What safety requirements are there?
- What work instructions need to be followed?
- What environmental considerations need to be understood?

These questions allow the RTO to determine how units, elements and performance criteria will be grouped and also provide a framework for participants in the Work Ready program.

For the routine task of Carry out workshop practice activities, the RTO may decide to group units as per the table that follows:

Unit	Title	Element
AURC172003A	Identify environmental regulations and best practice in a workplace or business	Monitor environmental regulations
AURC271781A	Apply safe working practices	Follow safe working practices
AURT100308A	Carry out workshop practice activities	Assemble and disassemble plant and equipment Operate Equipment
AURT270278A	Use and maintain workplace tools and equipment	Use hand tools Plan activities work with others

The grouping of units and elements from within these units allows an RTO to create a coherent learning activity through the use of a practical project. As part of the Certificate I in Automotive example shown here, the RTO may ask participants to prepare the workshop.

The RTO should provide program participants with a short descriptor such as:

### **Identify workshop tools and clean and identify working parts**

Students will be provided with suitable workshop tools that require identification and maintenance.

Students will be provided with the range of workshop tools and equipment.

Students will discuss how the work will be allocated amongst the group and will ensure that all group members are exposed to the range of skills covered by the activity.

Students will find out from the teacher or trainer what the expectations of the task are in relation to timing, and quality.

Students will discuss the safety requirements of the job and determine what safety equipment or precautions are required to carry out the job.

Students will assemble, use and disassemble any equipment required to perform the task.

In the development and delivery of engineering and automotive pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people, RTOs should use flexible and culturally appropriate assessment methods.

The EATC encourages RTOs to develop and use flexible assessment procedures that allow for the collection of evidence of student performance – for both skills and knowledge – in a practical setting.

Both the MEM05 and AUR05 training packages allow for the use of flexible assessment arrangements.

#### **Typical assessment guidance for MEM05 states:**

Assessors should gather a range of evidence that is valid, sufficient, current and authentic. Evidence can be gathered through a variety of ways including direct observation, supervisor's reports, project work, samples and questioning.

Questioning techniques should not require language, literacy and numeracy skills beyond those required in this unit of competency. The candidate must have access to all tools, equipment, materials and documentation required. The candidate must be permitted to refer to any relevant workplace procedures, product and manufacturing specifications, codes, standards, manuals and reference materials.

#### **Typical assessment guidance for AUR05 states:**

Assessment must be by direct observation of tasks, with questioning on underpinning knowledge and it must also reinforce the integration of key competencies.

Assessment may be applied under project related conditions and require evidence of process.

Assessment must confirm a reasonable inference that competence is able to be under the particular circumstance, and is able to be transferred to other circumstances.

In the development and delivery of engineering and automotive pre-employment programs for Aboriginal people, RTOs should use flexible and culturally appropriate assessment methods.



## Employment Support - Mentoring

The EATC has identified preparation for work as the most critical element to achieve an increase in the number of Aboriginal people completing engineering and automotive apprenticeships and traineeships.

Engineering and automotive employers will offer employment under formal employment based training arrangements to Aboriginal people if they satisfy the industry entry level requirements.

Local level pre-employment initiatives involving RTOs, GTOs, JSA providers, local employers and the local community will prepare Aboriginal people for engineering and automotive apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

During the pre-employment phase and once the transition to the workplace has occurred there will be a requirement for structured, regular and targeted employment support.

The Training Together, Working Together initiative identified mentoring as a critical success factor and the EATC endorses this requirement for engineering and automotive employment.

There is a need for formal mentoring support during pre-employment training and during the early stages of an apprenticeship or traineeship program.

The Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre (AWDC) has been established by the Department of Training and Workforce Development as a consequence of a Training Together, Working Together recommendation.

The AWDC provides advice and information on mentoring and strongly advises the use of mentors to support Aboriginal people as they transition to sustainable employment.

The EATC agrees that mentoring is a critical success factor. Most of the large resource sector Aboriginal employment programs involving engineering and automotive apprentices and trainees include formal mentoring arrangements.

Similarly, apprenticeship and traineeship programs for Aboriginal people provided by GTOs have as a key part of the program formal mentoring support.

The key issue for the broader use of mentoring across small and medium engineering and automotive enterprises is cost. Most of the small and medium companies that are able to offer employment based training positions to Aboriginal people do not have the capacity or resources to fund internal mentors.

The AWDC suggests that funding for mentors may be available from JSA providers or through GTOs when a company is using the services of these organisations.

Alternatively, the AWDC suggests that individual employers may be able to fund mentors for Aboriginal employees.

The EATC believes that the structured on-the-job training, supervision and coaching that is already a feature of all apprenticeship and traineeship programs in the engineering and automotive sectors, may offer at least part of the solution for mentoring in small and medium enterprises.

It is important to understand the mentoring role and to define how this role may align with existing apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements already in place in the engineering and automotive industries.

The EATC believes that the structured on-the-job training, supervision and coaching that is already a feature of all apprenticeship and traineeship programs in the engineering and automotive sectors, may offer at least part of the solution for mentoring in small and medium enterprises.

Often mentoring occurs in an informal or unconscious way when individuals learn from others, adopt modelled behaviours and attitudes, absorb the culture of the workplace and the values of the organisation through day-to-day interaction with co-workers.

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Mentoring is most often defined as a working relationship in which a more experienced person provides support, encouragement and advice to another. This support, encouragement and advice is based on their knowledge, expertise and experience relative to the mentoring theme.

This definition could also be applied to the working relationship between a tradesperson and an apprentice or a skilled worker supervising a trainee.

Mentoring provides a two-way learning experience for both the mentor and the person receiving the mentoring support which can often encourage deep satisfaction and numerous benefits in many personal, career, organisational and developmental areas. The mentor provides assistance and support to develop specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less experienced person's work and personal growth.

Again, there are parallels between this description and the workplace guidance and supervision arrangements that apply to apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

Often mentoring occurs in an informal or unconscious way when individuals learn from others, adopt modelled behaviours and attitudes, absorb the culture of the workplace and the values of the organisation through day-to-day interaction with co-workers.

This process is also a key element of the employment based training arrangements used extensively in the engineering and automotive industries.

Under formal mentoring arrangements, when individuals in a workplace are provided with appropriate training and take on the formal role of a mentor they perform a number of different functions including:

- teaching about a specific issue,
- coaching on a particular skill,
- facilitating the growth of the inexperienced person by providing access to resources and information,
- challenging the inexperienced person to move beyond his or her comfort zone,
- creating a safe learning environment and encouraging calculated risks, and
- focusing on the total development of the inexperienced person.

The basic principle of mentorship is that one's accomplishments and failures are the life lessons for others.

Although this list of functions extends beyond the normal working relationship between a tradesperson or a skilled worker and an apprentice or a trainee, there is enough similarity to suggest that there is a significant alignment between mentoring and the typical on-the-job training and supervision process.

Mentoring and coaching are often confused and though related, they are two different processes. Both processes create a partnership between two people whereby direction is clarified and support is provided to achieve goals. Mentoring may involve coaching but a coach is not necessarily a mentor.

In the Australian context, coaching is often associated with on-the-job training where a supervisor, senior or experienced employee reinforces concepts, principles and practices learned in a formal training environment. This is certainly the situation when a tradesperson or skilled worker is supervising or coaching apprentices or trainees.

The key elements of a coaching relationship are as follows:

- Coaching occurs when managers and supervisors coach their staff, usually to complete specific and set tasks, as a required part of the job.
- Coaching usually takes place within the confines of a formal line manager-employee relationship.
- Coaching focuses on developing an individual within his or her current job.
- When coaching the interest is functional, it arises out of the need to ensure that an individual can perform the tasks associated with the job to the best of his or her ability.
- In coaching the relationship is usually initiated and driven by a manager or supervisor.
- In coaching the relationship is finite, it ends when competence in a task is achieved or the individual transfers to another job.

Mentoring goes beyond the functional relationship associated with coaching and provides a longer term arrangement focused on a broader development of the individual designed to produce more sustainable productive workplace behaviours.

The role of the tradesperson or skilled worker in providing support and advice to apprentices or trainees requires an on-the-job coaching role that may be aligned with the list of functions above and elements of the mentoring role.

The EATC accepts that Aboriginal people are often faced with greater personal, social and cultural pressures than their non-Indigenous workmates. These pressures place the Aboriginal employee at a higher risk of dropping out of the workforce, not achieving their full potential or of accessing the same development opportunities.

Early intervention through a structured mentoring relationship may give the Aboriginal employee the tools and support needed to deal effectively with these pressures and to increase the likeliness of remaining in employment.

In addition, mentoring may contribute to the breaking down of barriers between Aboriginal employees, their employers and work colleagues and addressing cross-cultural communication issues.

Mentoring Aboriginal employees presents special challenges, particularly around cross-cultural sensitivities.

Research suggests that there are a number of issues specific to Aboriginal mentoring programs, including adequate consultation and promotion of the initiative in Aboriginal communities, the need for flexibility in remote and isolated areas and sensitivity to cultural requirements in matching Aboriginal mentors with inexperienced Aboriginal people that require the additional support and assistance.

While the ideal situation in a mentoring program designed to support Aboriginal employees is to have an Aboriginal mentor, it is possible to achieve successful mentoring outcomes with non-Indigenous mentors providing these mentors have been trained, have respect for and an understanding of Aboriginal culture and recognise issues that are likely to influence the success of the individual receiving the mentoring support.

All of the above said, there is an opportunity to develop the mentoring support provided to Aboriginal employees within the engineering and automotive industries as an integral part of the normal apprentice and trainee on-the-job training and supervision arrangements.

Early intervention through a structured mentoring relationship may give the Aboriginal employee the tools and support needed to deal effectively with these pressures and to increase the likeliness of remaining in employment.

The EATC encourages local partnerships of RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers to support small and medium engineering and automotive enterprises with mentoring support. This support may include:

- Provision of specific mentoring training for engineering and automotive enterprise employees through the completion of a unit of competency such as 'Provide coaching/mentoring in the workplace'.
- Provision of cross-cultural training for engineering and automotive enterprise employees involved in the on-the-job supervision of Aboriginal apprentices and trainees.
- Access to funding to support the development of workplace mentoring and coaching skills.

The preparation for employment strategies provided in this document will assist in improving the breadth and depth of applicants for engineering and automotive employment based training positions.

## Recruitment and Selection

The consultations conducted by the EATC during the development of this strategy document have identified the lack of suitable applicants as the most important factor in the low level of Aboriginal employment in the engineering and automotive sectors.

The preparation for employment strategies provided in this document will assist in improving the breadth and depth of applicants for engineering and automotive employment based training positions.

The establishment of local level partnerships will assist engineering and automotive enterprises to find the right workers by providing linkages to Aboriginal employment services, RTOs that offer contextualised training and assessment and labour market intermediaries such as GTOs who have knowledge and experience in recruiting Aboriginal people.

The EATC encourages local level partnerships of RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers to:

- Establish a clear understanding of the local engineering and automotive employment market.
- Define local employer expectations, relevant jobs and the timing of local recruitment cycles.
- Identify the attitudes and aptitudes that are critical to success in engineering and automotive entry-level positions.
- Assess potential Aboriginal job seekers against essential engineering and automotive entry-level criteria when establishing preparation for employment groups.
- Properly inform potential employees of the nature and requirements of the work to be undertaken within local engineering and automotive enterprises and the expectations of employers.
- Develop, with the involvement of local employers, a structured support program to maximise retention rates when preparation for employment participants transition into the engineering and automotive workforce.

Local level partnerships should develop and implement culturally informed recruitment, screening and selection practices suited to local enterprise needs.

These practices should ensure each Aboriginal participant proceeds through a defined process that identifies aptitude to the industry, attitude to work, recognition of prior learning relevant to the industry and a formal skills gap analysis relevant to each participant's industry entry point.



Work undertaken with engineering and automotive occupations as part of work readiness initiatives in the resources sector, has shown that the application of key recruitment and selection practices is critical to ongoing employment.

The EATC encourages RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers to deal appropriately with recruitment and selection issues.

Participants in engineering and automotive preparation for employment and pre-vocational programs must have the capability and capacity to secure and complete a formal apprenticeship or traineeship.

There is a requirement for RTOs, GTOs and JSA providers to be open, honest and transparent in the placement of Aboriginal people on programs that lead onto apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

A failure to recognise the complex, technical and structured entry level employment requirements of the engineering and automotive industries when selecting participants for a preparation for employment program, is a disservice to the participants and to the enterprises in which they will eventually seek employment.

Participants in engineering and automotive preparation for employment and pre-vocational programs must have the capability and capacity to secure and complete a formal apprenticeship or traineeship.

