

Future managers off to a flying start

Macmahon Holdings has hired its 500th trainee through Apprenticeship Support Australia, a program powered by CCI



TIM TREVENEN

Macmahon Training Coordinator Claudia Carsten-Stronach said ASA was an enormous benefit to the mining service providers apprenticeship program, which was creating its next generation of leaders.

The majority of apprentices trained by Macmahon are mobile plant, HD fitters and mechanics, fabricators and electricians and, to a smaller degree, auto electricians.

"We have a dedicated ASA training contract advisor who comes on site, which has been awesome," Carsten-Stronach said. "We have also been benefiting enormously from the mentoring the ASA provides."

"The biggest benefit has been the commitment from ASA to come on site to facilitate contract training sign up. I've done that on numerous occasions. We have sites throughout WA including the Pilbara and Goldfields. And they can come into our Perth office to sign up for the training contract.

"We used to have different providers for both apprentices and trainees but we were struggling because one provider had a cap on the training teams."

Carsten-Stronach said a dedicated ASA mentor also visits sites to provide support to apprentices and trainees in the workshop through face-to-face meetings.

"It provides an opportunity for our apprentices to speak with someone other than their fellow tradesmen," she said.

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"As an employer, it is important they have a huge network to support them throughout their apprenticeship — they also have their supervisors and they can speak to someone from HR.

"We have an employee assistance program in place, which is more available via telephone. So we really work on the face-to-face opportunities offered by Paul Gannon (ASA mentor support officer).

"This service is really important — times are scheduled for everyone — because



Apprenticeship Support Australia mentor support officer Paul Gannon with some apprentices from Macmahon Holdings.

anything that is discussed stays in the room. But sometimes we'll get a pointer from Paul about working hours and some things that need to be investigated a bit further."

Macmahon's dynamic approach to apprenticeships is also reflected in its accelerated apprenticeship program, developed to meeting a major skills shortage driven by increased activity in gold mining.

"We are now offering an opportunity to skilled trades assistants with many years of experience to gain a trade certificate in 24 months," Carsten-Stronach said.

"We used this approach in 2015 to fill the skills shortage driven by major LNG projects in Wheatstone and Gorgon. We are now facing something similar. Many workers who came from the eastern states and New Zealand during the

the Philippines to interview candidates. They were amazed and impressed by the skills available. So, we have 20 candidates out of 50 — which is positive.

"Unfortunately, that's how it works because we are mining contractors. Mining owner-operators are able to plan a bit better". ★

FREE SERVICE

ASA services, which are funded by the Commonwealth Government, provide benefits to both apprentices and employers. They include:

- advice on accredited training packages and appropriate pathways
- targeted job matching to connect apprentices and employers
- workplace visits to sign up apprentices/trainees and administer the training contract
- support for the duration of the apprenticeship or traineeship, including tailored mentoring for those in need of extra guidance
- administration of incentives for employers and personal benefits for apprentices.

Over the past 20 years, CCIWA has successfully partnered with more than 30,000 businesses across Western Australia and signed up more than 160,000 apprentices and trainees through the scheme.

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last boom lost their jobs and went back home. We are now facing the challenge of filling all these spots that we have available."

However, the accelerated apprenticeship program will take another 24 months to have people ready, so the company has looked overseas to fill immediate vacancies.

"We need people to come in now. We have looked overseas, which is not a popular pathway here. But we don't know how else to fix it," she said.

"A team of recruitment advisors went to