



## Hunter Business Review

August 2011

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### Landmark Hunter TAFE - University of Newcastle agreement

A landmark agreement between Hunter TAFE and the University of Newcastle will see education and training options for the community streamlined and improved, resulting in greater economic growth and capacity building opportunities for the local region.

In January of this year, The Partnership Statement between the University, Hunter TAFE and North Coast TAFE was signed, forging the way for further collaborative efforts to improve and increase access to training in the region.

The Partnership Statement seeks to provide a framework which will further streamline tertiary course options and allow for the sharing of resources where appropriate. It will also look to incorporating TAFE qualifications as part of the degree programs offered by the University as well as TAFE offering their own degrees.

The institutions already share strong links with one another, and this agreement seeks to further enhance the close alliance the University has with both TAFE and the wider community.

Hunter TAFE Institute Director, Phil Cox, sees this collaborative model as crucial to enabling the three organisations to make greater contributions to the future economic and social development of the region.

"The provision of skilled, talented and knowledgeable employees for the business and industry of our regions is a key driver for all three of us," Mr Cox said.

One of the most important objectives of the partnership is for the University and TAFE to work together with schools, local Council and other stakeholders to improve access to post-secondary education for those in the region. High quality, articulated ter-

tiary education such as this will build the skills and capabilities of the local workforce.

The University of Newcastle is excited by the alliance with TAFE and what this means for the future of tertiary education for local business and the wider community. Vice-Chancellor, Nicholas Saunders, said, "We need to develop together the educational programs and infrastructure required, and ensure we have decision-making mechanisms in place to do that in a fully collaborative and transparent way."

Education, training and skills acquisition are essential elements for capacity building and economic and social growth. This visionary agreement paves the way for Newcastle and the North Coast to capitalise on the wide-ranging benefits conferred by the enhanced provision of superior educational and training opportunities.

### Online safety training

Young people are 1.5 times more likely to be injured at work than the average worker and the statistics show that more than 70% of these cases occur within the first year of employment.

In a first for OH&S in Australia, PaQS (People and Quality Solutions) a registered training organisation has launched a new online safety course for Australian apprentices. The course has evolved from the original, nationally recognised, competency based course in Advanced Safety Awareness (ASA). The new apprentice ASA course is different from the original, in that it is available online and has been designed and developed to fit into safety induction programs for trainees and apprentices.

The course is designed to develop young workers' attitudes towards safety as well as their confidence and self-esteem through building self-awareness. It also provides them with tips about communication skills that enable them to deal with issues such as conflict and bullying. This emphasis on empowering the individual is fundamental to all of PaQS safety training.

According to PaQS Senior Psychologist and Founder, Carl Reams, the PaQS ethos is new for personal safety

management in Australia, as it targets human error by developing and enhancing individual safety thinking and responsibility. Most experts agree that more than 90% of workplace incidents, injuries and fatalities have some human error element.

"Traditionally, safety training has focused on visible workplace hazard awareness and training job skills, but what we deal with, Psychological Safety Awareness (PSA) evolves safety to a new level by focussing on the individual's abilities and motivations - the safety thinking that drives behaviour," added Mr Reams.

"Excellent work had been done in Australia over recent decades to improve safety systems and procedures and identify management responsibilities, but there hasn't been much other than skills or systems-based training for the managers and employees. What PaQS is doing is developing rational judgement, perception and personal motivation to follow safety systems and that's what makes our style of safety training so different and so relevant for apprentices entering the workforce."

The benefit to employers is obvious when looking at the modules of the

new apprentice safety training course - workplace culture concepts designed to develop apprentice's workplace values; supervision attitudes; safety thinking; perception and judgement; and advanced safety awareness.

Apprentices can complete the course at their own pace, usually in less than two hours. A login and logout feature is available 24/7 providing flexibility and convenience for both the apprentice and their supervisor. Feedback from participants has been incredibly positive, with many finding the psychological approach to safety more comprehensive and the structure of the online course to be user friendly and efficient.

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**BUSINESS REVIEW**

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