The National Workforce Development Fund

About NWDF
The National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) is an innovative model of funding, enabling enterprises, industry sectors and regions to access training specific to their organisational needs. A key element of the fund is to encourage more organisations to undertake workforce planning in order to develop training solutions that align with their business goals.

Administered nationally through Service Skills Australia for the service industries, applications are subject to a competitive process and require a co-contribution from the employer. Our role is to help organisations identify their workforce needs and potential solutions, facilitate the selection of a Registered Training Organisation and monitor the implementation of successful proposals.

Key outcomes
- NWDF applications through Service Skills Australia have supported 158 sport, fitness and recreation enterprises and 465 learners.
- Of the 158 businesses, 27% employ fewer than 20 staff, while 86% employ fewer than 100 people.
- Over $941,000 of government funding has been provided for training in the sport, fitness and recreation industries, with employer contributions totalling over $519,000.
- 40% of the 465 sport, fitness and recreation candidates attained their first post-school qualification.
- 25% of candidates undertook training at a higher AQF level than previously held.
- 79% of all qualifications were at a Certificate IV or Diploma level.
- 22% of the participating sport, fitness and recreation businesses are regionally based.
- A key component has been the collaboration between the 158 sport, fitness and recreation organisations and their 21 training partners.
Planning for success
Service Skills Australia’s brokerage of the NWDF asks businesses to focus on three key questions:
• What is the identified enterprise/sector need?
• How will the proposed training response address the identified need?
• How will the enterprise measure the effectiveness/impact in their business?

Through considering these questions, businesses were able to identify what they needed and how they were going to build the capacity of their staff and business practices to address their goals. This clarity of workforce planning was crucial to the success of projects funded through the program. Enterprises in each service industry segment identified a broad range of needs and responses. Identified needs ranged from training in frontline customer service skills to the development of supervisory, management and leadership skills. At an enterprise level, workforce planning and vocational training is proven to have a positive impact upon workplace productivity, financial turnover and staff retention. In some cases, a group of enterprises worked collaboratively to address a broad skills need and, in doing so, they were able to raise the skills base of an entire business community. Through this dedicated enterprise approach, these businesses have helped to lift not only their own performance, but that of the sport, fitness and recreation industries as a whole.

NWDF in action
Following the expansion of Life Personal Trainers (Life PT) from one to three gyms in Adelaide, the need for a more established leadership structure was identified. Life PT realised that having staff able to manage and lead their team was not just a need, it was essential to the success of the business.

With guidance from Service Skills Australia and the support of the NWDF, Life PT decided to build the knowledge of its existing staff through a leadership development program that is underpinned by a Diploma of Management.

Undertaking this development program has equipped managers with essential skills, but also fostered a culture of leadership, encouraged higher standards and provided a career path for their talented staff.

“We recognise that our team is our most important asset and the key to maintaining our reputation as an industry leader.”
Founder, Life Personal Trainers.
“Investing in the development of staff to support our move from fitness to wellness has improved our business beyond belief.”
Gym Supervisor, Genesis Jindalee Fitness Centre.

NWDF in action

After losing their entire facility to the Queensland floods in 2010, Genesis Jindalee managed to rebuild in just 79 days, and to their credit, retained 95 per cent of their members. Through engaging with the community over this time, Genesis Jindalee also recognised a need to offer a broader range of services that focus on wellness and wellbeing. To provide this they identified the need to up-skill and train staff in all aspects of health.

Through the assistance of the NWDF, Genesis Jindalee was able to implement a staff training program, Be-Able Wellness to support their business transferring to a wellbeing centre. The training program drew on the Diploma of Fitness to provide the skills and knowledge to work with clients who have chronic illnesses or injuries and have been referred by allied health professionals. Undertaking formal qualifications at Diploma level also sets a higher standard for the fitness industry and provides opportunities for their staff to pursue the ‘specialised exercise trainer’ career path.

NWDF in action

The NSW Sports Federation identified through Service Skills Australia’s Pathways to Participation Program that the sport sector was suffering from skill gaps and retention issues. It was clear administrators had some valuable sports-specific skills and knowledge, but not always the necessary skills to run a development office or manage a club well. Many sports were also concerned by the levels of staff turnover.

In identifying these challenges, the NSW Sports Federation recognised that not only could targeted training benefit sporting organisations, but individuals would also start feeling more valued and better equipped to do their job well—and be more likely to stay.

Working with Service Skills Australia and the NWDF, the NSW Sports Federation recruited 12 staff across four sports to complete the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. This training was sought to help coaches and administrators improve communication skills to manage their clubs better and to help them train other coaches, administrators and volunteers in the sector.
About Service Skills Australia

Service Skills Australia is the Industry Skills Council for the service industries, one of 11 not-for-profit, independent organisations funded by the Australian Government Department of Industry to support skills and workforce development.

The service industries encompass the following sectors:

- Sport, Fitness and Recreation (sport, fitness, community recreation and outdoor recreation).
- Wholesale, Retail and Personal Services (wholesale, retail, hairdressing, beauty, floristry, community pharmacy and funeral services)
- Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (travel, tourism, meeting and events, accommodation, restaurants and catering, holiday parks and resorts)

Service Skills Australia’s role and responsibilities are to:

1. Provide integrated industry intelligence and advice to government, the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA), industry and enterprises on workforce development and skills needs for the service industries.
2. Actively support the development, implementation and continuous improvement of high quality training products for the service industries, including training packages.
3. Engage in workforce development activities and services for the service industries.

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