



Australian Government

AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS

REAL STORIES. REAL ACHIEVEMENTS.

AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS



SANDRA VAN DER GAAG

2015 AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICE (TRAINEE) OF THE YEAR

QUALIFICATION:
CERTIFICATE III IN PROCESS PLANT OPERATIONS

REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION:
APPRENTICESHIPS AUSTRALIA

The Australian Apprentice (Trainee) of the Year Award is presented to an individual who is undertaking a traineeship and has been outstanding in all aspects of their training.

While Sandra Van Der Gaag was working as an Australian Fisheries Officer in the Northern Territory (and completing her degree in engineering) she saw firsthand the work of the oil and gas industry and decided that would be her next career move. It was a big challenge to start over again in a new career, in a new location, and Sandra admits that she had to muster her courage.

Not only did the move pay off career-wise, Sandra's achievements earned her the Australian Apprentice (Trainee) of the Year Award at the 2015 Australian Training Awards.

"I stepped outside my comfort zone to make this move and you need to have self-belief when you do that. For me the award is an affirmation of that self-belief and it's great that my efforts have been recognised."

Sandra chose a qualification in process plant operations as a stepping stone into the type of work she wanted to do, so she undertook a two year traineeship with Apprenticeships Australia.

"The traineeship was great – I received extensive practical experience along with support when I needed it."

She now has a permanent position at Woodside as a process plant operator and plays a daily, vital role in ensuring the safety and efficient operation of the plant.

"My experience shows that VET can often offer the best pathway to the career you're after. I'm working in a very responsible, professional capacity in a job I love."

Sandra says she loves talking to other people about her experience.

"I love opening people's eyes to the number of pathways that are possible if you look for them. It's great when you think you've inspired someone else to step outside their comfort zone and have a go."

Sandra thinks that the Australian Training Awards is inspirational as a celebration of the dynamic people in the VET system who are making important contributions to society.

ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS

Each year, the Australian Training Awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of Australian Apprentices, vocational students, training practitioners, businesses, secondary schools, industry and registered training organisations for their contribution to skilling Australia.

The majority of the awards are the culmination of the state and territory awards programs with winners from each state and territory eligible to compete at the national level in aligned categories.

There are also seven award categories available by entering directly to the Australian Training Awards.

Individual

- Lifetime Achievement Award (**direct entry**)
- National Achievement Award (**direct entry**)
- Excellence in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Practice Award (**direct entry**)
- Australian School-based Apprentice of the Year Award
- Vocational Student of the Year Award
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Award
- Australian Apprentice (Trainee) of the Year Award
- Australian Apprentice of the Year Award
- VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year Award

Business

- Australian Apprenticeships – Employer Award (**direct entry**)
- Small Employer of the Year Award** (**direct entry**)
- Medium Employer of the Year Award
- Large Employer of the Year Award
- Industry Collaboration Award

Registered Training Organisation

- School Pathways to VET Award (**direct entry**)
- International Training Provider of the Year Award* (**direct entry**)
- Small Training Provider of the Year Award
- Large Training Provider of the Year Award

* Applications for this award are made directly to the Australian Training Awards in all states and territories except Western Australia where applications must be made direct to the WA Training Awards.

** Businesses registered in Queensland, Tasmania and the ACT must apply for the Small Employer of the Year Award through the relevant 2016 state or territory training awards. Businesses registered in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory must apply directly to the Australian Training Awards.

DISCOVER MORE OF THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF APPLYING FOR AN AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARD BY DOWNLOADING THE WHY APPLY FACT SHEET OR VISIT THE WHY AND HOW TO ENTER PAGE OF THE AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS WEBSITE.

WHY APPLY?

The awards offer participants Australia-wide recognition for exceptional training outcomes and an opportunity to become known as the best-of-the-best, nationally.

For individuals, the awards can open up networks and career opportunities within the business sector and provide you with the opportunity to become a national ambassador for skills to promote the vocational education and training sector at a national level.

For businesses and registered training organisations, the awards can propel you into the national spotlight, positioning you as a front runner in skills and workforce development and leader in best practice. This will set you apart from the competition and make you an employer or registered training organisation of choice.

