

CASE STUDY:

THE BENEFITS OF HIRING EX-OFFENDERS INTO ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS

COMPANY: Corrective Services NSW and Still Engineering

HOTSPOT REGION: All of NSW

TARGET: Apprenticeships –supporting NSW Government reduce the re-offending rate

Corrective Services NSW is a division of the Department of Communities and Justice. On the community side there are almost 60 offices around the state, supervising offenders in the community who are serving court orders ranging from parole to a Community Service Order. Corrective Services provides inmates with education, vocational training, and employment experience, all to support their successful reintegration into society.

The team at Corrective Services rely heavily on community partnerships to support this strategy, and businesses like Still Engineering are seeing the positive impact of this.


Still Engineering are an SME with 25 employees and were established in 2004.

Owner Matt Still explored the option when he found it difficult to fill his job vacancies. Despite offering a job opportunity in an area where jobs are hard to come by, it was difficult to find young people with the right attitude. "The skills shortage prompted a fresh approach to employing apprentices. A friend suggested the offenders program, giving a chance of reducing reoffending by providing a steady and supportive future through employment. I started with one offender who graduated through the program with a Certificate 3 in Metal Fabrication. That person moved back to Sydney. I currently employ three ex-offenders as Apprentices. One is due to complete soon and will be offered a permanent skilled position."

Matt said his business has benefited greatly from this program and encourages other employers to consider engaging these under-utilised jobseekers.

- Workers have a positive attitude and willingness to work. They "fit in and get down to work"
- They are highly motivated to prove themselves to make the most of their opportunity. They are guaranteed to attend, they get hooked into work and work "bloody hard"
- Workers are eager to learn a trade to improve their long term employability
- By hiring those with a trade background, such as ex-mechanics and ex-electricians, they bring a valuable skillset to the business

Matt commented that it's the responsibility of the business to support this social challenge. The business has created the opportunity for ex-offenders to complete a Certificate 1 in Welding, graduate to a Certificate 2 in Engineering and ultimately complete their trade. "Government funding is minimal and there is no additional funding for the program.



Overall, I have people who regularly attend with good attitudes and work ethics, that can also bring surprise additional skills. Ultimately you're giving someone a second chance and you are helping reduce reoffending rates. We create a supportive environment and none of our guys have re-offended, so we know it works"

To find out more about this program, contact Wayne Humphrey at Skillsroad on 0419 897 775