

Victorian Skills Pledge

Recognising the commitment of your business to skills development

Laerdal: a 'model' business

Features of the Victorian TAFE and training system are helping this medical training company improve staff skills across all areas of its business.

In the early 1950's Laerdal made soft plastic children's dolls. Today their products include Choking Charlie, Crash Kelly and Mr Hurt Head. They sound macabre, but these lifelike manikins are lifesavers. They are used in hospitals and other organisations to train staff in first aid and emergency medicine procedures, from life support to the Heimlich manoeuvre.

As well as supplying the manikins, Laerdal provides customers with training in their use as teaching aids. Not surprisingly for a business that helps other organisations train their staff, Laerdal understands the importance of its own staff training. This international company recently decided to set a minimum training time of 24 hours per staff-member per year, worldwide, for professional development.

Laerdal's products are manufactured overseas so, for its Victorian division, that staff training is focused on improving performance in sales, education and technical support, customer service and warehouse and logistics.

"It can seem like there's never a good time for working out your staff training needs, but it has to be done," says Andrew Smith, General Manager of Laerdal's Australia and New Zealand division. "It's a vital part of any organisational strategy and it pays off."



Smith recently signed Laerdal up to the *Victorian Skills Pledge*. The *Victorian Skills Pledge* is a public declaration by businesses of their commitment to skills development. Smith saw it as a logical step to formalise the value the company places on staff training.

Signing up also gives the Victorian Government the opportunity to recognise your commitment to skills and workforce development. Pledge businesses are linked with the relevant Industry Training Advisory Body, which can help them understand and use the skills system. The *Victorian Skills Pledge* is open to businesses of all sizes in the private, public and community sectors.

And if your business is small to medium-sized (up to 200 full-time equivalent staff), when you sign up



Securing jobs for your future

to the *Victorian Skills Pledge* the Government can help you achieve your staff training goals through *Skills for Growth: the Workforce Development Program*. To be eligible for *Skills for Growth*, your business must also have been in operation for at least 12 months and be financially viable.

When Smith heard about *Skills for Growth* he signed up enthusiastically. *Skills for Growth* provides eligible businesses with independent specialists to work with them – at no cost – to identify their strategic business aims and objectives, assess staff skills, and place staff into accredited training.

The program helped Smith develop a blueprint for all Laerdal's training needs. "I found *Skills for Growth* to be an ideal way of mapping individual competencies," he says.

After consulting with management and staff, the business specialist tailored a comprehensive Workforce Training Plan for Laerdal. This recommended a range of training, from short courses to full Certificates, for 17 of Laerdal's 32 Victorian staff, across all areas of its operations.

"The consultant did a terrific job," Smith says. "She really got to know the business."

“ We felt training was worth paying for anyway, but when it was subsidised it was good to know. ”

The business specialist was also able to explain which training would be subsidised under the *Victorian Training Guarantee*. The *Victorian Training Guarantee* entitles eligible students to government subsidised training if a business is looking to up-skill its employees through an approved provider.

"We felt training was worth paying for anyway, but when it was subsidised it was good to know," Smith says.

For more information about changes to the TAFE and training system, including *Skills for Growth*, the *Victorian Training Guarantee* and the *Victorian Skills Pledge*, visit skills.vic.gov.au or contact your Industry Training Advisory Body.

Industry Training Advisory Body

Service Skills Victoria
(03) 9329 4777

Securing Jobs for Your Future – Skills Victoria

The *Victorian Skills Pledge* is a key initiative under the Government's *Securing Jobs for Your Future – Skills for Victoria* policy, the most far-reaching reform of the skills system in Victoria's history. For more information visit skills.vic.gov.au