

Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

A DeakinPrime Case Study

The TAC is a Victorian Government-owned organisation set up in 1986. Its role is to pay for treatment and benefits for people injured in transport accidents. It is also involved in promoting road safety in Victoria and in improving Victoria's trauma system.

The TAC's mission is to reduce road trauma and its impact on the lives of accident survivors in a caring, efficient and financially responsible manner.

The TAC are inspired by their vision – to provide Victorians with the most equitable personal injury compensation scheme in the world and set international standards in its delivery. To ensure this vision is realised, it requires talented and committed people to work as a team at the TAC. The TAC make certain they place value in their people – good work is recognised and rewarded and staff development is a key focus with all staff encouraged to explore their full potential.

It was announced by the Victorian Government in December 2005 that the TAC would move from its headquarters in Melbourne to Geelong by 2009. This was the largest relocation project ever to be undertaken by a Victorian Government organisation. As the Minister for TAC stated at the time, "The move is part of the Government's ongoing commitment to create job and investment opportunities in provincial Victoria."

The TAC's relocation required the implementation of a major change program. With initial research indicating that only 23% of current staff would relocate to Geelong, the development of new high volume recruitment and learning and development strategies became a number one priority for the TAC's HR department. To move a workforce in excess of 700 staff to Geelong required proactive recruitment and training to ensure the TAC's operations ran effortlessly from January 2009.

As TAC's Senior Manager of Recruitment and Capability Michelle Macaulay highlighted "The TAC had a strong focus on professional development, however with historically low attrition rates, training of new staff had only been required on an ad hoc basis. We needed a new approach for recruitment, induction and technical training that suited the high volume of new recruits and internal transfers."

By April 2007, there was significant restructuring within the HR department to manage the relocation. This involved assembling a distinct project team from the operational side of TAC who had minimal experience in training or instructional design. As a key player in establishing the project team Michelle highlighted, "It was important to have people who understood the business as a first priority and who could then develop their training expertise."

Previous learning and development in the TAC was from a highly experienced team who worked within an organisation with a very stable workforce with low staff turnover. The historical approach to learning and development was more reactive and segmented, rather than holistic and systemic. There were no systems, no best practice methodologies and no work practices in place to deal with high volume training. Michelle observed "We needed to develop a longer term approach towards learning and development in the organisation ... the move to Geelong was the catalyst for change."

In July 2008, the TAC also saw a major change with the implementation of a new claims management system which combined nineteen previous business systems into one. This required major organisation-wide training, at a time when the first high volume wave of new staff was expected to commence with the TAC. It also involved the re-integration of new system training material with induction training program content that had already been developed.

DeakinPrime was contracted to provide resources to develop the potential of the capability and development team to create and implement the necessary strategies and plans for meeting the TAC's immediate, transition and long-term needs.

To achieve this, DeakinPrime provided an experienced Deakin staff member in principal consultant Penny Goldfinch to advise and guide TAC staff in the creation of these plans, and to provide opportunities for skill development through coaching, workshops and role-modelling activities.

As the TAC's previous learning culture was reactive and very much a 'bits and pieces' approach, DeakinPrime provided the necessary guidance, using the nine dimensions of learning and development analysis to ensure that a holistic and strategic style was applied. The process of integrating the new learning and development processes through needs analysis of the trends and themes of each division ensured the coherence and up-skilling of the TAC workforce and the transition from a reactive to a proactive environment.

Developing a vision statement was really important in providing direction for the team and organisation in L&D – 'Maximise the performance and capability of our people through the delivery of holistic, integrated and effective learning and development solutions.' Michelle reiterated "this was really important in providing context and a reference point for the team in all aspects of their work."

With DeakinPrime's assistance, the TAC developed comprehensive induction programs with systematic and transition training that ensured the efficient transition of all TAC staff into the new building by the January 2009 deadline. The capability and development team implemented a strategy and tactical plan for meeting immediate learning and development and transition needs of the organisation. In the 6-month period leading up to the January 2009 deadline, the capability and development team trained 197 new employees across all areas of the business which is unprecedented.

There were robust evaluation processes established for induction training programs that were integrated with the recruitment evaluation process. This gave the TAC the ability to instil confidence in the business because hard data was available about the satisfaction of participants and line managers, as well as time to competency. Michelle observed "The team knew the challenge wasn't just about the transition - we knew we had to be able to continue to build the capability of TAC staff – addressing the immediate need as a foundation to build on as we proceeded, embedding best practice along the way."

They were also able to produce a strategy for providing a legacy for the future – a tactical plan for implementing a HR capability and development structure that will serve the TAC in the future.

This preparation ensured the TAC was ready when the major changes within the organisation occurred and allowed for the cultural shift in the organisation. "We needed to change the conversation we were having with the organisation and relate learning and development to what they do – achieving business objectives and outcomes."

There was increased activity and new cultural cooperatives to build the capability for staff with embedded best practice and a plan to benchmark and measure over time. A 2009 Training Calendar was evidence of a proactive rather than reactive method and a systematic approach versus the previous reactive training-saturated situation. TAC has also implemented a capability framework which outlines four dimensions of capability and provides a consistent reference point in determining integrated and effective learning and development solutions.

As Michelle noted, "Evaluating outcomes is really important, but the first step is about putting enough rigour and the right focus behind the design and delivery."

Michelle is proud to say that "confidence from the business in the capability and development team is very high and the organisation is now ready to engage with, and have the team consult with them on their future professional development needs. This shows the team's capability beyond the training and program delivery space."

The TAC have now established strategic learning and development frameworks for key operational areas, a partnership with business areas to ensure they have ownership and accountability for managing L&D. The shift from an operational to a strategic/systematic approach to learning and development has now been actively embraced by the TAC.

