



ESITO

**Industry Steering Groups Summary Report
and Recommendations**

2007



Prepared by Lynlee Wilson

Summary Report

In April 2006 ESITO commissioned the University of Waikato to research key industry skills issues within the Electricity Industry. The skills gap was reaching a critical point and a strategic way forward needed to be established. After extensive industry consultation, ESITO published a report entitled "*An Industry Skills Strategy for the New Zealand Electricity Supply Industry- Final Report December 2006*". The report highlighted the need to further investigate three "major issues" identified by the research. These were:

1. The future of skilled Contract and Project Managers positions
2. The shortage of skilled Supervisors particularly in the field
3. A lack of Industry pride

ESITO determined that Industry Steering Groups should consider the Issues in a series of facilitated regional workshops. However in April 2007, prior to the formation of the Steering Groups, twelve industry representatives were selected to provide guidance on the Terms of Reference, objectives and structure for these steering groups. Interview feedback provided confirmation that the three major issues identified were still current and valid and should form the basis of each workshop. Participants also confirmed that it was appropriate to conduct three regional steering groups, where each group should address the three major issues, rather than any other workshop configuration.

The facilitated regional workshops were held during July 2007 in Auckland, Palmerston North and Christchurch. Participants discussed, debated and identified actions around the three main issues. In addition, during the process leading up to the Steering Groups, a number of additional issues were identified including the impact of young people joining the Industry and conversely, the implications of an ageing workforce. Although not central to the issues discussed in the final report, they were briefly discussed at each Steering Group in order to provide further valuable information to ESITO to compliment strategic action planning.

Each steering group followed a similar format, however, as the Auckland Steering Group were the first group to discuss the major issues, the subsequent steering groups held in Palmerston North and Christchurch were facilitated in a slightly different manner as the facilitator then had the benefit of considering the workshop content generated by the Auckland Steering Group and was able to expand on this.

The Auckland Steering Group followed the following format; they began with a discussion of each major issue and came up with a list of actions and associated detail which would enable the various solutions to occur. As highlighted, the Palmerston North and Christchurch workshop formats were slightly different however; each Steering Group developed separate actions, which were unique to each session. The actions put forward were outcomes which the Industry as a whole and individual companies believe will address the three major issues identified.

The final report detailed all the verbatim comments and action plans gathered from each regional workshop. The information was collated and analysed and a final report was written with recommendations for ESITO suggesting a way forward to address the three Issues. The report was initially written in draft form and all workshop participants were given the opportunity to provide further input and comments. The final report, with recommendations on the way forward was sent to ESITO management for consideration.

The recommendations made in the final report are re-produced below in this Summary Report.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated by taking into account the regional Steering Group feedback and the author's industry experience an analysis of all information gathered.

The future of skilled Contract and Project Managers positions

1. Create a High performance profile for both the Contract and Project Manager roles. In the first instance this would be at an Industry level with the potential to add company specific customisations to reflect the company differences of location and size. This would encompass both skills; abilities and attitudes.
2. Create an Industry wide defined career pathway and position descriptions for Project Manager and Contract Manager roles.
3. Provide recognised Project Management training and qualifications and provide an approved list of providers.
4. ESITO to facilitate the provision of Leadership and People Management training initiatives by approved providers across the Industry as part of the career pathway, in order to develop and retain talent. (the programmes would be standardised to Industry at not necessarily aligned to the NZQA framework)
5. Create succession planning tools to enable succession planning to occur in a consistent manner. This is particularly the case for the smaller companies who do not have internal HR professionals.

The shortage of skilled Supervisors

1. Create a High performance profile for the Supervisor role. In the first instance this would be at an Industry level with the potential to add company specific customisations to reflect the company differences of location and size. This would encompass both skills; abilities and attitudes.
2. Create an Industry wide defined career pathway and a position description for the Supervisor role.
3. ESITO to facilitate the provision of recognised Supervisory training standards and recognised training providers, ideally at NZQA level.
4. Identify specific support, rewards and development tools for Supervisors including; mentoring, a revised reward package and a higher profile of the role within the industry.
5. Create succession planning tools to enable succession planning to occur in a consistent manner. This is particularly the case for the smaller companies with no internal HR professionals.

Increasing Industry Pride

1. Commission an Industry wide marketing campaign (similar to the current Army or Police initiatives) to attract people to the Electricity Industry.
2. Build a campaign to illustrate the benefits of being a tradesperson e.g. earlier entry to the workforce and the absence of student loans and earlier full time salaries. A certain percentage could then move onto further education as they progressed through the appropriate pathway.
3. Promote the lifestyle of the Industry; working outdoors, a variety of tasks and roles within a variety of locations and companies.
4. Create a branded website that provides; information, job boards; student information links etc to act as a 'one stop shop' for the Electricity Industry and other interested parties.