



Image supplied by Julian Wearne

Case Study /

Bring Your People With You / Skills For Growth.

The Workforce Development Program.

Skills for Growth (SFG) is a Victorian Government initiative focused on helping small and medium-sized businesses to plan their business future and to develop the skills of their staff through training and education opportunities.

The background /

The aim of the program is to help organisations develop their business objectives and priorities; to assess the skill needs of both the business and staff members; to establish a customised workforce training and development plan in line with strategic business goals; and to place staff into accredited training programs.

SkillsHub – Creative and Leisure Industries (formerly Verve – Knowledge and Skills) was appointed as a Service Provider by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development to provide businesses in the cultural and recreation sectors – including motion pictures, internet publishing, libraries, and sport and recreation – with SFG advice and assistance.

The audience /

SFG assists financially viable Victorian-based business which have been operating for at least 12 months and which have between one and 200 employees.

Project parameters /

Once a business has registered online for the SFG program, an independent workforce planning and training 'specialist' from an appointed Service Provider contacts the business to arrange an onsite visit to explore the strategic direction of the business and assess the training and skill needs of its employees. Additional specialist visits will develop a workforce training and action plan, which includes the identification of business and individual needs.

The services delivered by the appointed service providers is funded by the Victorian Government; the costs associated with accredited training is the responsibility of the business. Staff may be eligible for the Victorian Training Guarantee which entitles eligible participants to a government-subsidised place in a recognised course.

The results /

Since its appointment as an SFG Service Provider for businesses from the creative and leisure industries, SkillsHub has assisted over 35 businesses to develop workforce development plans and access government-funded training opportunities.

Specific examples of the way in which SkillsHub has been able to assist include work undertaken with Westside Circus and outdoor recreation provider, Bindaree to address skills needs at a management level.

Westside Circus is a flourishing not-for profit organisation that teaches circus skills to some 400 children a year in classes and another 8000 in community outreach programs. Around 10 Westside graduates have become trainers themselves, and are now in high demand. CEO Debbie Maziarz had to learn the necessary skills to manage the organisation as she went along, and she is keen to help her trainers upgrade their skills and qualifications.

Westside Circus was eligible for assistance from Skills for Growth, which Debbie Maziarz discovered when a representative from Apprenticeships Australia visited the company to talk about the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. "We were interested in taking on traineeships in Arts Management and Arts Administration for some younger people who have grown up through the organisation and he suggested we call SkillsHub," Debbie explained.

As a result, a training specialist conducted a skills audit of the entire organisation. Training plans were developed for 17 circus trainers, based on the organisation's future plans to ensure that Westside Circus can meet its long-term strategy to attract new clients and manage OH&S requirements. The entire process took about three months.

Westside Circus has taken the Victorian Skills Pledge, a public declaration by businesses of their commitment to skills development. Taking the pledge gives businesses a range of marketing opportunities to show potential customers they are dedicated to up-skilling their staff to best-practice standards. "It's a way of formalising our commitment to something we believe and support," Debbie Maziarz says. "The training program has been an optimistic process because it has been about making people better and part of the future. It's great to be able to support people's dreams in this way."

At Bindaree, the skills of 4 staff members have been upgraded to address the need for management skills within the business. A number of staff had been with Bindaree for some time and had the necessary 'hard skills' to work outdoors. However, due to promotion to more senior roles, management and leadership skills were required. Under the SFG program, Bindaree's Skills for Growth specialist, Dan Clarke, was able to assist with the development of a Workforce Action Plan for the business and identify government-funded training opportunities for staff. This has meant that 4 of Bindaree's existing staff could gain formal qualifications in management (Diploma of Management) while continuing to work for Bindaree, resulting in a greatly improved work structure and better outcomes across the whole team.

For more information + How To Register /

To register for the Skills for Growth program and select SkillsHub as your service provider, visit the Skills for Growth website http://www.business.vic.gov.au/BUSVIC/LANDING/PC_62573.html and select 'Arts and Recreation Services' from the drop down box as your industry type. Then select SkillsHub from the drop down box as your service provider. Alternatively you may wish to call SkillsHub on (03) 9614 5566 for more information about the program and how it may be of benefit to your business.

About changes to the TAFE and training system, including Skills for Growth, the Victorian Training Guarantee and the Victorian Skills Pledge, visit www.skills.vic.gov.au or contact SkillsHub on 9614 5566.