

Sustainable workforce development: the skill ecosystem approach

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NEW SOUTH WALES
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OF EDUCATION
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Skill ecosystem - the concept

A system that:

- sustains itself when 'healthy'
- supports high level performance

Aspects of the system that:

- need to be considered as a whole
- ideally reinforce each other

Skill ecosystem

Environment

Funding requirements
Trade Environment
Labour Market Conditions
Industry Plans
Industrial relations

Business Plan

Business Strategy
Product/Service Specifications
Inter-firm relationships
Value chain
Image
Investment

Operational Plans & Policies

Employee Relations
Work Organisation
Job Design
Workforce Capacity Building/Training
Performance Management

Why do it?

1. Align skill development better with industry goals
2. Achieve sustainable workforce solutions in tight labour markets
3. Make the most of available skills to improve performance
4. Better return from public funds

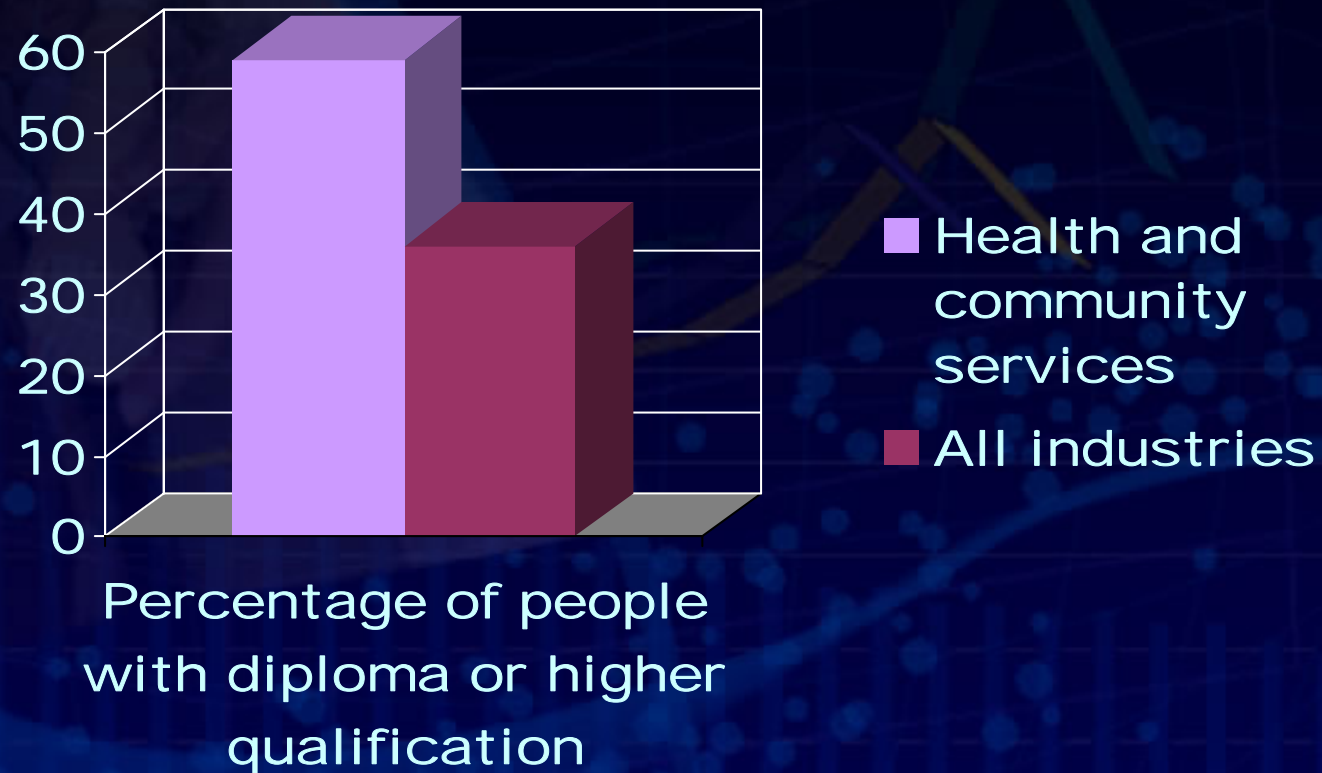
Skill intensity of the industry

Industry (1-5)*	Skill Level
Education	1.8
Government Administration and Defence	2.4
Finance and Insurance	2.5
Health and Community Services	2.7
All industry average	3.1

*1= managers, professionals

5= labourers, elementary sales and clerical

Educational qualifications of the workforce

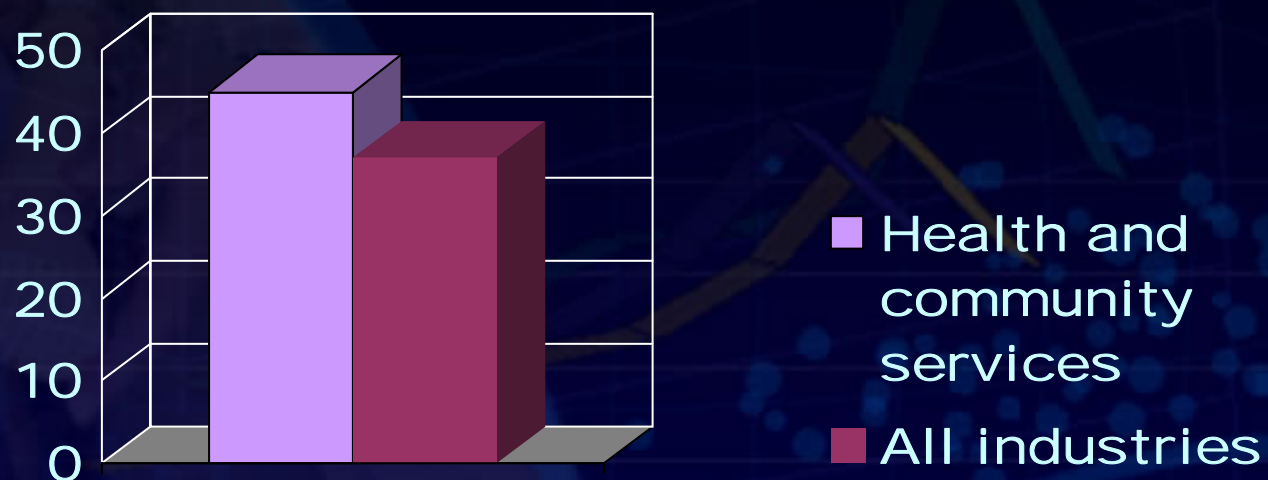


Source: ABS, *Education and Training Experience*, 2005, NSW employed people

The problems of skill wastage

- Nearly half (44%) of Australians work in low skill jobs (ABS 2005)
 - 16% of workers with a bachelor degree
 - 32% of workers with an advanced diploma or diploma
- In NSW in 2005, 32% associate professionals entered a lower level job after study

Employers' views on skills of staff



Employers who say
employee skill
levels are above
what's needed %

Source: NCVET, *Survey of employers use and views of the VET system, 2005*, all organisations surveyed.

Skills and learning in Australian workplaces

- 'I use many of my skills and abilities in my current job'

Health and
community
services

9.0% low
use of skills

All industries

9.5% low
use of skills

- 'My job often requires me to learn new skills'

Health and
community
services

20.2% little
learning

All industries

20.7% little
learning

Source: HILDA, Wave E, fulltime persons employed in 2005

Skills and learning in Australian workplaces

• **‘My job is complex and difficult’**

Health and community services

36.4% job not complex

All industries

31.7% job not complex

• **‘I have a lot of freedom to decide how I do my work’**

Health and community services

26.4% little job autonomy

All industries

20.9% little job autonomy

Source: Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Wave E, fulltime persons employed in 2005

Health

Productivity Commission 2005:

The skills of many health workers are not being used to full advantage. To a large extent this is because of various systemic impediments that prevent their competencies being fully developed, assessed, recognised and utilised. ... (p. xvii)

Putting it into practice

- Starting point: an issue or opportunity across industry
- Network: consolidate; breadth of stakeholders
- Investigate and diagnose: consultation; information intensive
- Strategies: skill development and what else will make the difference?
- Implement and check: a learning network; industry outcomes
- Embed changes: replicate/sustain; refer policy issues.

Example 1: NSW racing industry

- Shortage of trackwork riders a key problem
- Project team diagnoses poor quality, 'freelance' jobs as barrier to alleviating skill and labour shortages
- Training alone seen as ineffective (and money wasting) without changed employment arrangements
- Race club creates more regular, longer hours job servicing many trainers
- Attracts experienced rider back to industry; more horses to the club; builds skill development



Allied health services in aged care

- Shortage of allied health pros; pressures for quality; insurance requirements; problems with allied health care aide job
- **Project trial** to adjust boundary between para-professional and allied health aide work
- **Seek agreement** on skill mix changes, new work roles, career paths, pay and skill development required

Mental health supply network project

Aims:

- To adopt collaborative approach – health and community providers
- Increase support for services with MH clients
- Reduce duplication and improve referral
- Achieve integrated care

dual diagnosis; walk a mile; mental health first aid; Community Council.

Conclusion

The skill ecosystem approach is relevant where:

- barriers to the optimum utilisation of skill
- training solutions have not worked, or are unlikely to be enough
- there is a chronic 'wastage' of training resources
- persistent skill shortages mean new pools of labour need to be brought into the workforce

Sustainable workforce development: the skill ecosystem approach

www.skillecosystem.net

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