



MASONIC HOMES

Residential Care | Retirement Living | Community Care



Figure 1: Masonic Homes Staff undertaking computer training

ABOUT MASONIC HOMES

Masonic Homes is a leading and growing provider of aged care and lifestyle options for Senior Australians in SA & NT. Masonic Homes actively promotes that ageing can be positive, dignified, rewarding as well as fun, and that working in aged care is a worthwhile career. Having originated in the late 1890s, they now care for 450 people in residential care, 230 in community care places, many hundreds more through in-home care and lifestyle options and 550 retirement living villa/unit options.

THE CONCEPT: Creating a Learning Culture

“Our continual improvements in HR practices, recruitment and retention strategies, employer branding, flexible remuneration packages and developing an attractive career structure, all within a healthy and safe work environment, are essential for attracting and retaining quality skilled staff, maintaining organisational knowledge and capacity for growth”

HOW IT WAS DONE

- Vision - “To enable a capable workforce and capable leadership”.
- Development of a Masonic Homes Position Skills Matrix.
- Training Needs Analysis with key stakeholders focusing on the performance gaps.
- Development of “Career Road Maps” relevant to divisional needs and reflective of job-related competencies underpinned by safe work practice and external requirements.
- Development of the “Masonic Way Forward” leadership program to managers and supervisors (and those with potential).
- An effective partnership with the RTO to ensure the design and delivery of accredited and contextualized training programs.
- Promotion of the Masonic Homes Study Assistance policy providing reimbursement of course fees and flexible leave arrangements.
- Free computer training on-site during work hours.
- Installation of employee (computer) kiosks and user-friendly training manuals at each site.
- Opportunities for staff to undertake Cert III, IV and Diploma courses in aged care/nursing.
- Flexibility and more flexibility!

IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Demonstrated employee up-skilling, improved self confidence, increased work performance and increased regard for Masonic Homes as an employer.
- Improved consistency in work performance standards and learning outcomes.
- 9 students achieved the Diploma of Enrolled Nursing, a critical skill set for the organisation.
- 16 students completed their Certificate III Aged Care, with 6 more in progress.
- 3 staff undertaking Certificate IV Service Coordination, specific to Community Care.
- 8 staff with Certificate IV Assessment & Workplace Training, enabling them to deliver competency based training to small groups on the job and during induction programs.
- Access to ICT training had immediate impact on improved internal systems usage, including electronic care planning and care management.
- Contextualisation of training materials delivered direct and immediate application of knowledge and skills in the workplace, and demonstrated sustaining of that learning.
- There was an element of “self-checking” of our systems and procedures.
- Better implementation of our “care teams” model within residential care, leading to improved quality of care services to customers.
- Enhanced employer reputation.



Figure 2: Chris Harrison, Director, Workforce Development Directorate, Dept of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, presenting the “Creating a Learning Culture” award to Patricia Harris of Masonic Homes at the Human Services at Work Awards for Excellence in Workforce Development, held by the SA Health & Community Services Skills Board

LESSONS LEARNED

- Not to underestimate the amount of time, persistence, effort and negotiation necessary to get a corporatised approach to training happening.
- The need to be super flexible.
- To be prepared for lower (than may be expected) literacy as a potential barrier to skill development.
- The value of taking the time to contextualize training material; it captured the learner’s attention, allowed for faster learning and improved knowledge retention.
- The need to be clear about the reasons for any training initiative.
- Explore all avenues for funding to stretch your training dollars further.
- Provide additional incentives if necessary.
- If any training identifies a gap in a workplace system, fix it – fast !

LOOKING AHEAD

“Creating a Learning Culture” is of course just the beginning. Maintaining the momentum is where the journey gets more challenging. Training and Development Programs at Masonic Homes must deliver improvements in: -

- *Efficiency* : We must continue to improve our systems of work.
- *Effectiveness* : We must continue to improve the capability of our workforce, ensuring we deliver the right skills to the right people at the right time.
- *Economy* : We must show a return on our investment.

These improvements have to be achieved along with other HR initiatives aimed at improving staff retention whilst there’s increasing competition for them. We need to continue to promote a learning culture and encourage employees to seek development opportunities. And not least, we must (and are) continuing to develop a culture of leadership - at all levels.

For further information please contact:

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