



## LIFTING SKILLS IN A TOURISM HOTSPOT

**Full course name:** Certificate IV in Tourism and Travel

**Project lead:** South West TAFE

**Stakeholders:** Lady Bay Resort

**Delivery location:** Workplace delivery

### MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR POTENTIAL – THE CONTEXT

The south-west of Victoria attracts 2.6 million visitors a year, fuelling the region's renowned tourism industry.

This number is expected to grow and the state government is investing \$14.8 million to upgrade infrastructure on the Shipwreck Coast and the visitor experience along the Great Ocean Road.

It is estimated this will create 120 jobs and help boost the region's economy by \$12 million a year over the next 20 years.

Industry consultation undertaken by South West TAFE revealed an urgent need for training if tourism businesses hope to capitalise on this potential.

*"We found that much of the current workforce in the region consisted of under-skilled and under-qualified staff,"* says Marcia McCarthy, teaching manager for business design and personal services at South West TAFE.

### 'STUDY WHILE YOU WORK' – THE SOLUTION

Most tourism businesses can't afford to release staff to attend classroom-based training. This project aims to solve that problem by delivering a Certificate IV in Tourism and Travel in the workplace, via a model that includes workshops and online learning.

To make this possible, South West TAFE successfully applied for up to \$595,000 from the Regional and Specialist Training Fund.



This included \$236,000 in grant funding, which paid for the design and development of the course, guest speakers and a class set of iPads. The rest of the funding comes via a higher subsidy that supports additional staffing, including two dedicated tourism teachers to enable workplace delivery.

Ms McCarthy said the course focused on social and digital marketing skills and cultural awareness. For example, one workshop taught students basic Chinese language skills, and another covered how small tourism businesses can build their social media presence.

### THE FIRST COHORT – OUTCOMES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- Forty students enrolled for the first course late last year, and are due to complete it this December. *"It has been a great success and the feedback we have received from both students and their employers has been fabulous,"* Ms McCarthy says.
- The workshops have been popular with students, who say they find them motivating. Some have formed study groups with other students who live and work close to them. Because of this, South West TAFE will consider adding more workshops to the delivery model in future.

- South West TAFE has taken the lessons from this project and used them to develop a similar model for the Certificate III in Tourism, which offers a pathway into higher qualifications.
- Marcia McCarthy says the project has proved there is a strong appetite for workplace-based training and this means this model of the Certificate IV course is *"definitely sustainable into the future"* as the tourism industry in the region continues to grow.

## **"IT'S AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY TO UPSKILL AND RETAIN STAFF"**

### **Employer case study: Shannon Collyer**

Shannon Collyer is the chief executive of the Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Cooperative, an all-inclusive social enterprise.

Mr Collyer and his team welcome more than 250,000 visitors a year to the volcanic crater at Tower Hill State Game Reserve, located between Warrnambool and Port Fairy.

He is enthused that the project led by South West TAFE is teaching fresh skills to tourism workers in the region.

*"Many people enter the tourism industry lacking some of the skills required," he says. "The challenge lies in releasing staff to attend classroom-based training without a direct impact on business performance."*

*"(This project) is an exciting opportunity to upskill and retain staff, increase productivity and job satisfaction, attract new talent and contribute further to the visitor economy."*

*"We hope that this project serves as a platform to address the ongoing issues of increasing the talent pool."*

## **"HAVING ONE-ON-ONE TIME WAS ALWAYS AN OPTION"**

### **Student case study: Ellen Troitzsch**



Born in Germany, Ellen Troitzsch has worked all over the world as a relocation specialist and became an Australian citizen in 2006.

She has given tours in Sydney, Chicago and Melbourne but has never held a formal tourism qualification.

Mrs Troitzsch now lives in Warrnambool and jumped at the chance to study with South West TAFE.

*"I was working at Flagstaff Hill and the Visitor Information Centre and they approached me about doing the course," she says. "It was such a wonderful opportunity."*

She studied the Certificate IV and is now completing her Diploma of Tourism.

She says it has deepened her understanding of the industry and said the teachers were quick to respond when she needed assistance with the online units.

*"Classes and study groups also helped to keep you focused and having one-on-one time with the teachers was always an option for support," she says.*

The Regional and Specialist Training Fund is a targeted *Skills First* funding stream that supports training for specific skills in regional and specialist areas that are not being met by the current training market. Training providers who hold a current *Skills First* VET funding contract are eligible to apply for higher subsidies and one-off grant payments for selected courses in specific regions to meet local industry demand or specialised occupations. Funding will be considered where there is a strong connection between industry, training and job outcomes.

To find out more visit: [www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/funding/Pages/rst.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/funding/Pages/rst.aspx) or email the RSTF team at: [rstf@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:rstf@edumail.vic.gov.au)