

Extra Workplace English Language and Literacy places for employers

As part of the \$28.2 million Building the Basics package the Australian Government is investing in more language, literacy and numeracy training places for vulnerable workers.

The Australian Government is investing \$2.2 million for employers to improve language, literacy and numeracy skills of their employees.

An additional 1500 training places will be made available to employers to improve the language literacy and numeracy skills of staff aged 25 and over with low literacy levels through the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program.

The Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program provides vocationally oriented intensive language, literacy and numeracy training. Candidates for Workplace English Language and Literacy places tend to be in low-skill, low-income jobs and are among the most vulnerable to retrenchment at times of economic downturn.

By supporting workers with low literacy levels the Government is making a strong contribution to lifting the skill base of individuals vulnerable in an economic downturn. Investing in a skilled workforce will also benefit employers and industry as the economy recovers.

What is the Workplace English Language and Literacy program (WELL) and how will these extra training places help?

The WELL program is training delivered in the workplace and includes vocational training integrated with language, literacy and numeracy training. Training is flexible, tailored to the needs of the workplace and based on an industry specific, nationally endorsed training package.

Participants in the WELL program will:

- improve their workplace communication skills;
- increase the likelihood that they will maintain their employment;
- be better prepared if needing to change their employment.

Employers can expect benefits to their business such as:

- improved communication and teamwork;
- better relationships between workers and management;
- a more flexible workforce;
- increased productivity;
- improved ability to respond to regulation/legislative requirements; and
- enhanced computer literacy.

How will the extra 1500 WELL places be delivered and where?

The additional training places will be facilitated by brokers in Industry Skills Councils who will liaise with employers, registered training organisations and Indigenous organisations in order to establish WELL projects (courses). The 1500 places will be allocated nationally, across all states and territories and covering metropolitan, regional and remote areas.

WELL Projects will be established in a wide range of industry settings, including health services, manufacturing, hospitality, construction and local government administration.

The location of the brokers will be determined after consultation between the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and Industry Skills Councils (ISCs). Allocation will be based on the needs of industry and regions.

Who is eligible to take part in these extra training places?

The extra training places will be available to employers of workers vulnerable to retrenchment in local areas most affected by the Global Financial Crisis.

Training will target employees who have low levels of language, literacy and numeracy which impact on their capacity to perform workplace tasks and/or undertake work-related training. These are the workers who are likely to be most at risk of retrenchment in an economic downturn.

When will the additional 1500 places be available?

The additional 1500 WELL training places will be available from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 though training may be completed in the following financial year.

How will the extra training places be promoted to employers?

The additional training places will be promoted by the Industry Skills Council (ISC) brokers who will liaise with employers and Registered Training Organisations. Brokers will be located according to industry and regional requirements and will work closely with DEEWR state/territory officers.

How do employers interested in training staff through the WELL program find out more information?

Further information on the WELL program can be found at www.deewr.gov.au/well