



CAPABILITY STATEMENT

TAFE NSW – South Western Sydney Institute, Horticulture

The South Western Sydney Institute has been recognised by the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence as one of Australia's premier providers, and has been awarded **Three Gold Stars** under the Institute's Star Rating Scheme for its Horticulture program situated at their Padstow campus.

A summary of South Western Sydney Institute Horticulture's strengths against the evaluation criteria are:

Training and assessment which focuses on enterprise and learner needs

South Western Sydney Institute's Horticulture Section has demonstrated a high level of flexibility to ensure their programs support enterprises and their learners. Staff members, working with employers and industry groups actively develop and modify existing national training packages to ensure they meet the specific needs of clients. Recognition of Prior Learning is also utilised to support learners and their enterprises, and this is supported by the implementation and current use of an online information management system for record keeping.

Students clearly were highly positive about the learning flexibility provided and many having graduated, keep the contact and send their own apprentices. The strong industry networking by the Horticulture Section is also maintained via their strong representation on a range of industry bodies and associated organisations. These mechanisms help ensure the currency and relevance of their programs and leads to the continual addition of material to programs to support their relevance.

Excellent trainers and assessors, and contemporary equipment

South Western Sydney Institute has utilised a range of strategies to ensure excellence of training and equipment. New purpose-built buildings, with contemporary training equipment, provide a more comfortable and practically oriented learning environment. This has been supported by partnerships with sponsors and equipment providers, to ensure that the equipment is continually updated and simulates what is currently being used in the workplace. Staff members are of high calibre, based on their educational qualifications and industry knowledge and experience. They are clearly highly committed and passionate about their field and actively support their students' participation in industry activities, shows and competitions.

Support to enable enterprises and learners get the most out of the apprenticeship/ traineeship

South Western Sydney Institute utilises a range of processes to support their learners. This is demonstrated by the extremely high level of student satisfaction across all areas of study and their recognition that they are developing high level skills to work in the horticulture industry. A range of support services are provided to those students with learning difficulties or problems in maintaining attendance. Expertise from other sections, via partnerships, is utilised to support students in their

learning. Graduated apprentices return for additional training of their own accord, demonstrating their satisfaction with previous training and their enjoyment of the Horticulture programs.

For more information about South Western Sydney Institute's Horticulture programs **visit their website at** <http://www.swsi.tafensw.edu.au/>

The **Institute for Trade Skills Excellence** is an initiative of Australian industry and Government established to promote the trades and recognise those registered training organisations (RTOs) truly focused on industry's needs and achieving excellent results.

How does it work? ... Under the **Star Rating Scheme**, individual faculties or schools within RTOs are evaluated by the Institute using industry experts and industry designed criteria. Those considered excellent are awarded one gold star, two gold stars or three gold stars by the Institute. The Institute issues a **Capability Statement** for each RTO which it publishes to explain the school or faculty's strengths and the level of service an employer can expect to receive.

Quite simply, where RTOs are doing great things, the Institute wants to ensure industry knows about it, and so an employer looking to select an RTO for their apprentice or trainee, can make an informed choice.