



# Shooting for the Stars

**IT COMES AT A TIME** of major change for the global automotive industry.

It is a simple fact that vehicles now are highly complex platforms of electronics and computer management systems. And now, more than ever, the industry recognises the importance of access to high quality certified training for its apprentices and employees.

Given the retail automotive industry in Australia has an annual turnover of \$120 billion and employs 285,850 people, the importance of quality training cannot be underestimated.

Recognising the need for all industries to advance their education standards, in 2004, the then Federal Government announced it would establish an Institute to deliver industry endorsement of public and private training providers and identify those of a high quality.

Following this announcement, the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence was created and has since worked with two main goals in mind.

- Provide industry endorsement of the trade training provided by private and public registered training organizations; and
- Develop further strategies to improve the profile of the trades.

To meet these challenges, ITSE established a 'Star Rating Scheme' to distinguish excellence in trade training. Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) can now have their capabilities recognised by receiving a one, two or three Gold Star Rating.

ITSE carries out its star rating evaluation using three broad criteria. These criteria include assessing the educational institute's education focus on the needs of enterprises and learners; the quality of the trainers and assessors, the currency of resources; and empowered enterprise and learners.

Another key tool that ITSE provides is its website, [www.tradeskills.com.au](http://www.tradeskills.com.au), which provides information about the training provider, including a capability statement and the ratings which have been allocated. This is designed so employers and apprentices can

make an informed decision when choosing the best place to train.

There are currently four Institutes that are rated with the highly recommended "Three Gold Stars". These are TAFE NSW's Western Sydney Institute Blacktown College, and Sydney Institute St George College, Queensland's MTA Training and, the most recent recipient, Victoria's Automotive Centre of Excellence (ACE).

Queensland's MTA Training Chief Executive Officer, Brett Dale said ITSE's Star Rating scheme is a valuable opportunity to raise the bar for training and education in Australia.

"As an RTO genuinely committed to continuous improvement, we welcomed the opportunity to gain external recommendations which may further improve our training delivery through validation by industry representatives in regards to our reputation as a learner and enterprise centric RTO," Mr Dale said.

It is a sentiment that is echoed by *Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE's General Manager - Industry Liaison*, Phillip Murphy, who said the *Star Rating Scheme has provided the TAFE with the opportunity to measure its current training delivery and relate it back to national industry standards.*

"Great delivery by our committed and dedicated staff is a key ingredient for a healthy industry," Mr Murphy said. "The ACE is a great site but in a people-industry, such as education and training, it is important we deliver skills and knowledge that meet or exceed the expectations of all stakeholders."

ITSE is led by industry; the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Industry Group and the National Farmers Federation being the major shareholders.

## About the Star Rating Scheme

Evaluations are carried out against three broad criteria:

1. A focus on the needs of enterprises and learners
2. Excellent trainers and assessors and contemporary resources
3. Empowered enterprise and learners



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Employers are able to check on the Institute's website ([www.tradeskills.com.au](http://www.tradeskills.com.au)) for information about the training provider, [including a capability statement] and the star rating allocated.

The Automotive Industry Reference Group (AIRG) which VACC hosts, is made up of employer and industry representatives from the Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA), Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), Australian Trucking Association (ATA) and Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC).

Mr Russell Stuckey, the Chairman of the Automotive Industry Reference Group, is responsible for chairing AIRG meetings and reporting back to the Institute Board.

The role of the Automotive Industry Reference Group is to oversee and participate in the Star Rating Scheme in order to recognise high performing RTOs with preferred provider status, to publish and promote the outcomes, and to administer and judge the nominations submitted for the automotive trade teaching excellence award. ■

