



Scoping the Potential of Skills Recognition in Rail

A scoping study by the CRC for Rail Innovation investigates the potential of skills recognition in select rail companies, and examines how skills recognition practices – including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC) – are employed in these companies. Research findings shows a broader understanding of skills recognition offers potential for improving workforce planning and assessment during restructuring and workplace change, and for supporting a more sustainable rail industry.

Along with the benefits of skills recognition in rail, the report identifies key difficulties associated with current skills recognition processes. A number of current and emerging issues were identified from this research. While skills recognition is more widely practised than many rail companies realise, there is no nationally recognised framework for skills recognition in rail. There are gaps between the understanding, practices, processes, outcomes and transferability of skills recognition across companies and locations, and between states. Skills recognition is integral to many aspects of workforce development, and it shares an important relationship with training.

Importantly, the study identifies areas for further research:

- **Mapping skills recognition within and outside the rail industry**
Examine lead 'leading practice and map skills recognition processes in areas such as: skills audits, competence assurance, talent management and change management; an analysis of the role of skills recognition in assisting productivity and career pathways; and recommendations on how to enhance these skills recognition processes.
- **Compiling a rail-specific handbook on 'leading practice' skills recognition strategies**
Review and analyse relevant policies and procedures impacting on quality and the management of risk associated with the use of skills recognition as a basis for training and development assessment decisions; research how skills recognition might assist in positioning the culture of rail for the future; examine the role of skills recognition in promoting workforce renewal; and investigate the role of technology and the value of e-portfolios for improving and expanding skills recognition (complementing P4.108).
- **Developing a national skills recognition framework**
A national skills recognition framework is clearly required to support more consistent, cohesive and suitable skills recognition practices, and the process could be supported by research of national frameworks and qualifications pathways for the recognition of skills that have been developed in other industries. The inquiry would examine: how state/location differences should be accounted for, what generic, elective and customised competencies might be included, and how training might be adapted to support a national model. This would lead to the development of a skills recognition framework inclusive of customised tools that could be used to enhance and standardise skills recognition practices across rail companies.

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