

BUILDING ESSENTIAL SKILLS

for modern grid transformation

By Endeavour Energy

In a world where we are 'electrifying everything' and enabling new technology, services, markets and products, new skills will be required to develop, operate, and maintain electrically significant infrastructure, both within traditional roles in the electricity supply industry as well as in electrical contractors working alongside the industry and on other major infrastructure projects.



The changes currently reshaping the national electricity supply industry are unprecedented, reflecting a fundamental shift in how electricity is produced, distributed, and consumed in Australia. As the race to create zero carbon economies heats up, other countries throughout the world are also experiencing similar changes to secure, not only a safe climate, but prosperity in the 21st century's global economy.

The Australian Energy Market Operator's 2022 Electricity Statement of Opportunities signals the urgent need to progress 3.4GW of new generation, storage, and transmission developments to maintain a secure, reliable, and affordable supply in the National Electricity Market when large thermal generators exit later this decade.

Add to this the New South Wales Government's significant pipeline of new energy infrastructure in the New South Wales Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) as well as transmission lines, rail networks and the growing pipeline of infrastructure required for the Western Sydney Aerotropolis.

Meeting a shifting workforce profile and its training and skills requirements will play a key role in the transformation of the existing power system, while continuing to deliver a reliable and secure system that ensures the safety of its employees as well as the public.

But who is up to the challenge of educating and upskilling the workers needed in the energy and infrastructure sectors to build the new energy system and keep up with rapidly evolving technologies?

PROVEN TRAINING FOR SAFETY, SKILLS AND COMPLIANCE IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

As an operating distribution network with more than 130 years of powering communities and businesses in New South Wales, Endeavour Energy has a strong reputation for training professionals in working safely around utility assets; with training focused on four guiding principles: skilling of workforce, safety of all personnel, safety of equipment; and continuity of supply.

More than 2,200 workers complete training each year at the company's state-of-the-art training facility at Hoxton Park, which is purpose built to enable development of practical powerline, substation, and cable jointing skills in controlled environments.



Now, in a new initiative, Endeavour Energy is partnering with leading RTO Thomson Bridge to enable ready access to essential training for safety, skills, and compliance to workforces across the energy and infrastructure sectors in New South Wales.

This collaboration now means workers and contractors involved in developing, operating, and maintaining electrically significant infrastructure can access short courses and training at Hoxton Park to gain the qualifications essential for their work.

Seeing the opportunity to contribute to the development of a skilled workforce ready for the future by providing access to this purpose-built facility, Endeavour Energy wanted to enable quality training experiences for new entrants as well as experienced workers transitioning career paths. This training is provided by the people who have constructed, maintained, and operated an electricity network for more than 130 years.

Underlying all this is a commitment to the safety of both workers and customers, which remains a non-negotiable expectation in all aspects of its training and operations.

Under this initiative, contractors who are developing, operating, and maintaining electrically significant infrastructure will have access to short courses and qualifications essential for their work.

ADDRESSING INDUSTRY SKILLS SHORTAGES

Andrew Pitman, General Manager Business Services at Endeavour

Energy, said the partnership seeks to address anticipated workforce skills shortages and aims to deliver a highly skilled and adaptable workforce ready for the future to maintain a safe, resilient, and affordable electricity supply essential for modern lifestyles and business success.

"Endeavour Energy is thrilled to partner with Thomson Bridge to lead the way in training the workforce of the future," Mr Pitman said.

"As the electricity network that builds, maintains, and supplies power to over 2.6 million people living and working in some of the fastest growing regions of New South Wales, we are committed to supporting the future workforce required to deliver a renewable and more sustainable energy future.

"Critical to the success of these transformational projects is teaching workers and contractors to safely build, operate and maintain electrically significant infrastructure.

"We see this as an opportunity to contribute to the development of a skilled workforce for New South Wales by providing access to this purpose-built training facility for the development of practical powerline, substation and cable jointing skills for the workforce of the future."

Thomson Bridge's Managing Director, Lisa Parkinson, said the training will cater for new contractors entering the industry as well as experienced workers transitioning their career paths.

"Our collaboration with Endeavour Energy will create best in breed skills and thinking and will be agile and

responsive to industry needs with programs introduced based on the demand for new and essential skills," Ms Parkinson said.

"The first courses available will include high voltage operations, cable jointing and basic safety training for wind farm access. We also see a need to offer full qualification pathways for new and experienced workers in overhead powerline qualifications for electricity and rail networks."

"There is also a growing demand from project managers and engineers for practical supervisory level technical training such as best practice in cable jointing and installation, and for engineering services that support safe high voltage operations such as arc flash calculations and drafting or reviewing electrical safety rules."

UPSKILLING CRITICAL TO DELIVER TWENTY FIRST CENTURY CUSTOMER SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Key sectors to benefit from this initiative include distribution and transmission networks, renewable energy assets, light and heavy rail networks, together with heavy industry and utilities that operate high voltage plants to perform their business, such as airports, data centres, and water utilities.

In a world where we are 'electrifying everything', customers are depending on us to support their daily life – for commuting, working remotely, for education and entertainment – with a modern grid that can support the sustainability aspirations of every customer from large scale commercial solar farms to resident battery storage and an electric vehicle charging network.

Given the long lead times and highly skilled nature of the electricity workforce, combined with the importance of a reliable power supply to the national economy, understanding these skill needs is of even higher significance for the electricity industry, its customers, and stakeholders. **U**

To find out more about Endeavour Energy and Thomson Bridge's training programs, please visit www.thomsonbridge.com/training-courses/courses-at-hoxton-park.