The past year has seen the vocational education and training landscape change dramatically across Australia. Building a higher skilled workforce is both a national and state priority, and Challenger Institute of Technology responded in 2009 with the direct involvement of industry and enterprise in planning and program development.

The year was marked at a state level by the formation of a new West Australian training department and the launch of a State Government training blueprint for the future – Training WA. Integral to this was the call for public training organisations to become more autonomous, with the government giving TAFE colleges greater scope for flexibility and innovation in an increasingly competitive training market.

This year Challenger Institute positioned itself well to move forward into the new era of training in WA with the launch of a refreshed corporate identity – an identity that will bring an even greater focus on industry-responsive training and collaborative education pathways.

Challenger adapted well to the demands of the 2009 economic environment and aligned with the State Government’s training reform initiatives to develop a skilled workforce. This was evidenced by the Institute’s 62 per cent increase in the number of students obtaining Recognition of Prior Learning.

We collaborated closely with more than 400 industry and community partners to ensure our training was responsive to local, regional, national and global labour force requirements, and through the Institute’s Governing Council and 23 industry advisory boards we continued to seek strategic industry advice.

In 2009, driven by a tighter job market, Challenger experienced a greater demand for training places, with our student numbers increasing to more than 23,000 and the Institute experiencing a 10 per cent growth in publicly-funded training delivery and a 25 per cent increase in revenue from commercially-funded training.

This growth was particularly strong in the service industries where employment outcomes remained strong, notably hospitality and human services, which experienced a 27 per cent increase in publicly funded training delivery. A 16 per cent increase in the delivery of horticulture and environmental science programs reflected the increasing value of sustainability skills to industry and the community.

In collaboration with industry and the Institute’s Governing Council, Challenger reviewed its strategic plan to establish priorities for the Institute for the next three years. The plan sets out the Institute’s strategic outcomes, including: ensuring at least 65 per cent of all programs are industry-based to meet workforce needs; building a strong and enterprising workforce; and maintaining our gold status as an outstanding training organisation when measured against the Australian Quality Training Framework excellence criteria.

There were considerable highlights this year and we invite readers to view our key achievements in the following pages. Among the highlights was Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training graduate Adam Selby’s rise to become runner-up Trainee of the Year at the Australian Training Awards after winning the WA Trainee of the Year award. Also, Challenger’s WA Maritime Training Centre achieved the top tourism training award at the WA Tourism Awards for the third consecutive year.

The year ahead will see a recovery of the West Australian economy, with skills gap implications resulting from the state’s resource and construction projects. Challenger will continue to build on the existing strong industry partnerships and relationships it has in place and will work cooperatively and collaboratively with industry, community and government to implement workforce development initiatives to meet the needs of the growing economy. We will continue to focus on providing a demand-driven, customer focused and flexible training enterprise. This approach has already resulted in Challenger’s four consecutive years of significant service delivery growth.
Our strategic objectives during the year were to:

- provide industry-driven training and related services to meet workforce needs
- expand the community’s access to relevant vocational education and training and appropriate support services
- build a strong enterprising culture within our workforce to generate commercial and international business and to access alternative revenue sources
- be an employer of choice, and
- satisfy all statutory and compliance measures and continuously improve our business internally and externally.

A Snapshot

- In 2009 Challenger Institute of Technology experienced significant service delivery growth for the fourth consecutive year, increasing the number of hours of publicly funded training services by 10.6 per cent on 2008, enrolling more than 23,000 students and increasing the revenue from commercially delivered training by 25 per cent.
- The Institute engaged over 350 public-private training partnerships, particularly with the resources sector.
- The Institute achieved an increase of 62 per cent in students obtaining recognition of prior learning, making Challenger the second largest provider of skills recognition in the state. Against the state and national priorities for increasing the number of students undertaking higher level qualifications at diploma and advanced diploma levels, Challenger increased delivery in this area by 28 per cent, with 2,050 students enrolled at these levels in 2009.
- Five hundred and fifteen Aboriginal students were enrolled in 2009, with 163 studying a certificate three or higher level qualification. There was a 94 per cent increase in school-based participation levels among Aboriginal students.
- Challenger increased its international service delivery and reputation through the provision of off-shore commercial training and workforce development services to organisations in eight countries: Mauritius, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, India, China, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

- The number of on-shore international students attending Challenger also increased by 18 per cent on 2008, with the Institute now having well over 1,000 international learners.
- An overwhelming number of Challenger students surveyed for the Australian Quality Training Framework Learner Survey indicated their training promoted high quality skills outcomes, with 93 per cent agreeing their training focused on industry skills and more than 90 per cent confirming their training was flexible enough to meet their needs. Ninety per cent and 91 per cent respectively said they were satisfied with their training and would recommend Challenger Institute to others.
- Challenger employed 800 staff and grew the capability of its workforce by providing more than 8,600 hours of internal and external professional development, an increase of nine per cent on 2008. More than four per cent of the expenditure of the salaries budget was directed towards building a culture of learning and innovation within the organisation.
- Against the Section 40 estimates, Challenger achieved 116 per cent of its delivery performance agreement target and 128 per cent of its estimate for revenue from other activities.
Key Achievements

ACEPT Student Shines
Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training (ACEPT) process plant operations student Adam Selby was announced runner up Trainee of the Year at the 2009 Australian Training Awards in Canberra. Adam was also named 2009 Trainee of the Year at the WA Training Awards after taking out the dual titles of Challenger’s 2008 Student of the Year and Trainee of the Year.

Floristry at WorldSkills
Former floristry student Stacey Pitman was awarded a medallion of excellence at the 40th International WorldSkills Competition. Stacey, a member of the Australian Skillaroos team, represented the best of her peers from regional and national skills competitions. She was one of more than 1,000 of the world’s top young professionals in trades, service and technical programs who showcased their talents in Canada.

Maritime Enters Tourism Hall of Fame
The WA Maritime Training Centre was inducted into the WA Tourism Hall of Fame after winning top honours for the third consecutive year at the WA Tourism Awards. Challenger was recognised for the creative, sustainable and professional delivery of its unique marine tourism program. The accolade confirmed the centre’s well-established reputation as a centre of excellence in maritime training.

Fisheries Minister Visits Aquaculture
WA Fisheries Minister Norman Moore visited the Aquaculture Development Unit to see first-hand the restocking activities that have made the unit a national leader. Mr Moore welcomed the opportunity to learn more about the ADU’s research and technology projects. The ADU is at the forefront of growing fish species appropriate for restocking and is renowned for its success in restocking black bream in the Blackwood River.

International Aquaculture Partnerships
The Aquaculture Development Unit developed collaborative projects with a number of organisations in 2009, including international agencies such as: Wageningen IMARES University in Holland and New Zealand Hatchery and New Zealand Fish Farm for yellowtail kingfish culture; Gondol Research Institute for Mariculture, Indonesia; University of Miami, USA, for yellowfin tuna culture; Tokyo University of Marine Science, Japan, for marine fish surrogacy research; as well as Fish Pac for the international transport of live fish and Aldwich Holdings for the supply of commercial quantities of juvenile silver perch.

Cooking Collaboration with Local Schools
Challenger opened its commercial training kitchen in Beaconsfield to local primary schools involved in the Australia-wide Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Project that encourages schools to teach children about growing, harvesting and eating fresh food. Challenger offered to help the schools take the kitchen garden project a step further by giving students the opportunity to turn their school-grown produce into tasty meals under the supervision of apprentice chefs.

Emirates Contract Extended
Managing director Liz Harris extended the existing training contract with the Vocational Education Development Centre in Abu Dhabi for a further three years. Challenger’s partnership with the VEDC is having a significant impact on industry in the United Arab Emirates by equipping young disengaged men with technical skills.

MD Named Top Business Woman
Managing director Liz Harris won the Telstra WA Business Women Award (White Pages Community and Government). Liz won the award for the extensive business development, community engagement and organisational growth and development of Challenger Institute of Technology over the period of her leadership.
TAFE Response Unit

Challenger launched a rapid response unit to provide immediate training and career advice for employees and industries affected by workplace redundancies. The TAFE Response Unit is a central point of contact where employers and workers can receive direct assistance via a free 1800 helpline. TRU was established in response to the global financial crisis and is a coordinated effort by all TAFE colleges.

Australia-First Nursing Partnership

Challenger and St John of God Hospital Murdoch successfully completed a 12-month pilot program for a Diploma of Enrolled Nursing. The Australia-first training course, which has been endorsed by the Nurses and Midwives Board of WA, immerses students in fast-tracked learning in the workplace. The program is based entirely within the hospital itself.

New Challenger Brand

Challenger welcomed the beginning of a new era of training in Western Australia with the unveiling of its new corporate identity. WA’s most diverse training provider was renamed Challenger Institute of Technology in response to the State Government’s move to provide colleges with greater autonomy, giving them the opportunity to become more flexible, innovative and effective in a competitive training market.

Boosting Local Employment

In partnership with the Peel Development Commission, Challenger continued its role in the Pinjarra Brunswick Sustainability Strategy – Local Jobs for Local People.

Diploma-Degree Pathway

A regional campuses project was established with Murdoch University for four new jointly developed and delivered applied degree qualifications. The partnership, which will allow Challenger students completing selected diplomas to transfer straight into the second year of a related degree at Murdoch, was launched by Peter Collier, Minister for Training and Workforce Development.

BHP Contract

Challenger signed a $4.2 million partnership with BHP Nickel West to provide training services to more than 1,020 employees in process operations and engineering maintenance.

Regional Collaboration Extended

Partnerships were developed with local governments and industry in regional development projects, such as the South West Corridor Workforce Development Plan. Collaboration with the City of Cockburn saw 30 employees graduate from Challenger with management qualifications under a new partnership to deliver workplace training and assessment.

Challenger Makes an Impact

Challenger’s innovative model for providing enhanced benefits in workplace-based training was showcased at the Big Skills Conference in Sydney. The Challenger Impact Model is a series of case studies of partnerships between Challenger and a variety of organisations and was prepared in conjunction with noted vocational education and training strategist Dr John Mitchell.