Best in the West

Challenger Institute named winner - WA Large Training Provider of the Year
A message from Chief Executive Officer, Liz Harris

Welcome to the September edition of Waves.

The past few weeks have been an exceptionally busy and exciting period for Challenger Institute in which there have been a number of significant achievements and milestones.

I am very proud to announce that Challenger has been named winner of the 2012 WA Large Training Provider of the Year Award. This coveted honour, presented at the annual WA Training Awards in September, is testament to the passion and commitment of Challenger’s 1,000 strong workforce – both lecturing staff and support staff – to build an organisation of excellence.

In August, work began at our Rockingham campus on what will become the largest training facility of its kind in Western Australia. The construction of a state-of-the-art building and construction training centre got underway when newly appointed Training and Workforce Development Minister Murray Cowper performed the turning of the sod.

The $28 million facility will provide training to more than 700 students and will be an outstanding addition to our existing training services, generating skilled workers for one of WA’s largest employment industry sectors.

Also in August, Challenger Institute celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Kadadjiny Mia Centre for Aboriginal Learning. The centre has helped provide thousands of Aboriginal people with a pathway to higher education and employment.

In a boost to our health care training, Challenger has achieved a national first with the delivery of remote real-time nursing training via the National Broadband Network.

The technology offers students at our Peel campus the opportunity to participate in learning at our new nursing facility in Murdoch, and facilitates two-way communication between Peel students and nursing lecturers at Murdoch.

This edition also highlights the achievements of a number of Challenger Institute students. Among them are hospitality, floristry, construction and automotive students who represented WA at the National World Skills Institute students. Among them are hospitality, floristry, construction and automotive students who represented WA at the National World Skills Competition.

Finally, Challenger Institute can be very proud of the results of the latest AQTF Learner Survey in which students overwhelmingly rated very highly their training experience. Challenger scored more than 90 per cent in most questions relating to the quality and relevance of training programs offered at the Institute.

Warm regards,

Liz Harris
Chief Executive Officer
Challenger Institute of Technology

Aboriginal learning hub celebrates decade of success

Challenger Institute’s Kadadjiny Mia Centre for Aboriginal Learning has reached its milestone 10-year anniversary.

The celebration at the Rockingham campus reflected on the centre's significant achievements of the past decade.

Challenger Institute CEO Liz Harris said the anniversary marked an important landmark for Challenger Institute and its commitment to Aboriginal learning.

"The name Kadadjiny Mia means ‘a place of learning’ and I’m proud that this centre represents exactly that – a supportive community-based environment where Aboriginal people can come to strengthen their knowledge and skills,” she said.

"In the past decade Kadadjiny Mia has helped 4,500 Aboriginal people pursue their dreams of a better life and a rewarding career.

"Through Kadadjiny Mia, 200 Aboriginal students have completed apprenticeships and 143 have undertaken advanced diplomas.

"More than 500 students have graduated with a Certificate III qualification and 143 Aboriginal students have gained a diploma or advanced diploma.

"These students have gained knowledge and skills across diverse training areas – from childcare, education, art and leadership to health, cultural tourism and horticulture.”

Ms Harris said Kadadjiny Mia had produced many success stories, with some students becoming notable authors and artists and others winning state and national training awards.

"However, the success of Kadadjiny Mia is not only about inspirational students; it is also about good community partnerships and effective agency collaboration,” she said.

"Relationships with organisations including the Health Department, Education Department, Wijean Aboriginal Corporation, City of Mandurah, Transfield Worley and Chevron Australia have enabled Kadadjiny Mia students to participate in industry relevant training programs.

"These partnerships continue to grow and support new programs, which offer our students opportunities for higher studies and employment.”

Examples of collaborative programs that had achieved excellent outcomes included:

• Pathways to Better Health – training Aboriginal people for work in the health sector.
• One Sky, Many Paths – empowering Aboriginal youth to become leaders.
• Making Families Stronger – tackling family violence and child abuse.

Ms Harris said Kadadjiny Mia could be proud of its achievements over the past 10 years.

"Kadadjiny Mia has raised the profile of Aboriginal learning and created pathways towards a better future for many Aboriginal people,” she said.
Healthy boost for Peel targets skills shortage

A groundbreaking health care course is helping Aboriginal people in the Peel region get trained in a critical skills shortage area.

Challenger Institute foundation and cultural studies director Mardi Dwyer said the inaugural Pathways to Better Health program aimed to boost the employability of Aboriginal people in a key job growth industry while improving access to health care for local residents.

“This important program will give Aboriginal people the opportunity to develop skills in an industry that has excellent career opportunities,” Ms Dwyer said.

“At the same time, people living in the Mandurah area will benefit from a greater number of local health workers who can provide access to health services and health information.”

The first nine students to undertake the 12-week course at Challenger’s Peel campus graduated in July.

Three were selected to further their studies in a business traineeship offered by Challenger and the City of Mandurah and overseen by the Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Board.

City of Mandurah people and communities director Lesley Wilkinson said the course had been embraced by the City because it was addressing gaps in employment and health care availability in the Peel region.

“There are significant health and employment issues for young Aboriginal people in Peel and this course will play an important role in addressing both of these issues,” she said.

“It is anticipated the course will increase the number of Aboriginal people in allied health roles by providing them with the skills and information to help families and Aboriginal communities identify health issues and seek treatment for them.”

Ms Dwyer said the graduating students would complete study in accredited leadership and community development, health industry competence and numeracy and literacy development.

Experienced industry professionals shared their knowledge with the students during the course and training took place in a number of health settings, including Challenger’s new state of the art nursing facility in Murdoch.

Nidjalla Waangan Mia Health and Wellbeing Centre and the Peel Aboriginal Health Community Centre worked with Challenger to ensure the course was culturally appropriate.

Nidjalla Waangan Mia project manager project manager George Walley said he was excited that local Aboriginal people were being given the chance to embark on a training pathway to a meaningful career.

“This will create feelings of fulfillment and wellbeing, as well as serving as an inspiration to family, peers and the community on what can be achieved,” he said.

Student and traineeship winner Shazanna Collard, 25, said the course had been a life-changing experience.

“Who would’ve thought that I would open the local paper, local Aboriginal women (L-R) Kristy Freeman, Marie Watkin and Shazanna Collard are on their way to careers in the health care industry.

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Challenger builds a workforce for the future

Challenger Institute’s new state-of-the-art building and construction training centre in Rockingham will help meet the demand from Western Australia’s resources industry for qualified tradespeople when it opens in 2014.

The $28.6million training centre at Challenger’s Rockingham campus will be the largest training facility of its kind in the state, providing pre-apprentice and apprentice training for more than 700 students in the southern metropolitan region.

Challenger Institute CEO Liz Harris said with the construction sector one of the three largest employing industries in WA, the centre would produce qualified tradespeople to fill existing skills shortages and to address the predicted construction shortages in the Peel region.

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Remote nursing training links regions

Challenger Institute of Technology is using high-speed broadband technology to deliver remote real-time nursing training to Peel students.

High resolution digital cameras are being used to stream training sessions at Challenger’s state-of-the-art nursing facility at Murdoch to its Mandurah campus and throughout the Peel region.

Challenger hospitality and human services director Greg Guppy said the unique live training project allowed Peel students, who were based 70km away from Murdoch, to experience learning inside Challenger’s nursing ward.

*Cameras capture skill demonstrations at our Murdoch campus and web-conferencing technology streams these sessions live to students at our Peel campus and at learning centres in Boddington, Waroona and Mundijong,* she said.

*These demonstrations include training using three high-tech clinical patient simulators at the Murdoch campus that might otherwise not be available to regional students.*

*The use of this technology not only offers students in Peel the opportunity to experience our nursing ward and its sophisticated equipment, it also facilitates two-way communication so that the students are able to interact with Murdoch trainers, ask questions and contribute to discussions.*

Ms Donovan said the initiative was part of Challenger’s commitment to offering flexible training delivery in the Peel region, where there was a growing demand for courses in the skills shortage areas of nursing, community services, aged care, education and hospitality.

*Challenger has a focus on keeping people learning and working in the Peel region and broadband learning has huge potential benefits for both our students and the local community,* she said.

*“We are the only training organisation in Western Australia with both metropolitan and regional training delivery, which makes e-learning technology very valuable for us.*

*While this project was piloted with nursing and aged care students, this model of streaming live learning will be applicable to other campuses and courses across the Institute.”*

Peel campus nursing and aged care course coordinator Jenni Hull said the e-learning technology had been embraced by students.

*“The students involved are very satisfied with being able to engage live with the base trainer at the time of the broadcast,”* she said.

*“The advantages of using this technology in the future to improve training opportunities for aged care qualifications and nursing courses are numerous.”*

*“The technology introduces students to highly sophisticated training material which they don’t have access to at their home campus. And the ability to capture lessons on video for future reference is also very useful.”*

Challenger’s Limitless eLearning: Beyond the classroom project has been supported with funding from the National VET E-Learning Strategy.

The strategy demonstrates the power of broadband to enhance outcomes for learners, and to promote growth in broadband-based training as the National Broadband Network rolls out.

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Engineering scholarships advance women’s career paths

A highly successful program to bolster the number of women entering the resources industry with rewarding careers has been expanded to embrace diploma and advanced diploma scholarships.

Women in Engineering student Jessica Ingham (3R) has progressed to the diploma course.

The Women in Engineering program is delivered by Challenger Institute in partnership with industry sponsor Chevron Australia. The students receive scholarships that enable them to conduct their studies at Challenger’s Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training (ACCEPT).

A third cohort of students has now embarked upon the scholarship program designed to encourage more women to enter careers in the largely male-dominated field of engineering.

A significant majority of the program’s original students have embraced the course’s pathway to higher-level engineering qualifications, progressing to diploma and advanced level diploma studies at Challenger.

A key focus of the course is to provide the women with an insight into engineering from a female perspective and to address barriers that might discourage women from entering an engineering career.

Course participants enjoy the assistance of industry mentors, women who have forged successful engineering careers with global energy company Chevron.

The entry-level Certificate III in Engineering (Technical) is a six month course.

The purpose of the tour held in July, was to further promote Challenger’s capability in oil and gas training and to increase the opportunity for commercial business with Brunei.

Challenger international relations manager Alex Ellbank-Murray said the visit was timely given the strong drive currently in Brunei for building local capability in the resources sector.

*“Brunei’s gross domestic product is set to increase from the current $16 billion per annum to $35 billion, with the contribution of the energy sector to rise from $3.5 billion to $14.5 billion by 2035,”* Ms Ellbank-Murray explained.

*“The result of this investment has seen the Brunei government focus on the development and expansion of skills in the oil and gas sector, including the need for an additional 30,000 new jobs to be created, with 5,000 of these to be filled by local professionals.”*

Further enhancing the timeliness of the visit, Challenger recently submitted a comprehensive proposal outlining the Institute’s capabilities in the development of the Energy Industry Competency Framework in Brunei Darussalam. The outcome of this proposal is expected to be announced later this year.

Challenger Institute has a strong interest and growing relationship with Brunei, boosted earlier this year when ACCEPT director Greg Guppy visited the country to meet with Minister Yasmin. Mr Guppy represented Challenger through his participation in roundtable discussions at the Vocational and Technical Education and Training Forum 2012.

The tour was to further promote Challenger’s development and expansion of skills in oil and gas training and to increase the opportunity for commercial involvement in Brunei’s focus on the contribution of the energy sector to the right of Challenger CEO Liz Harris (front, centre) at ACCEPT.

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Challenger Institute clinches top WA training award

Challenger Institute of Technology has been named Western Australia’s best large training provider. The Institute took out the top accolade at the prestigious WA Training Awards celebrated at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Challenger Institute’s Governing Council deputy chair Mike Deeks accepted the award on behalf of the Institute and said he’d had the privilege of watching Challenger grow from strength to strength in recent years. “The Institute has demonstrated creativity, excellence and innovation in not only its training delivery, but also in its staff development and internal processes and systems,” Mr Deeks said.

“Challenger’s corporate values of excellence, integrity, collaboration and sustainability are not just lip service – Challenger operates by these values at every level of the organisation and this is reflected in its very high performance in surveys of students and employers. Collaboration has also been vital to Challenger’s progress. Its emphasis on corporate collaboration and industry partnerships, notably in the resources sector and in local government, health, engineering and construction, has strengthened the Institute’s capacity to deliver training that specifically addresses the needs of business.

“As a result, Challenger’s specialist schools are closely aligned to business needs, providing industry-relevant and learner-driven training, flexible and contemporary apprenticeship and traineeship delivery; and versatile workforce development.” Challenger Institute CEO Liz Harris said the organisation’s success was built on its solid investment in the right staff, relevant skills and leading technology and resources. “We invest significantly in the development of staff and teams and we are committed to life-long learning,” she said.

“Challenger delivers thousands of hours of internal and external professional development every year, resulting in staff satisfaction levels that are above the state average. The Institute also invests generously in information and communication technologies infrastructure to enhance internal systems and learning technologies. In recent years Challenger has greatly strengthened its capacity to provide flexible ‘anywhere, anytime’ training for industry and the community through leading ICT projects.”

Ms Harris said winning the WA Large Training Provider of the Year Award, as well as a WA Premier’s Award last year, was testament to Challenger’s mission to provide every student with a pathway to a better future.

The annual WA Training Awards recognise and reward the outstanding achievements of training organisations, as well as apprentices, trainees and vocational students.

Three Challenger students were among the finalists in the individual awards. Process plant operations students Blake McCarthy and Christopher Davey were shortlisted for the WA Trainee of the Year Award, while Conservation and Land Management student Veronica Ingriß contested the Vocational Student of the Year Award.

Challenger Institute is now eligible to compete for a finals place in the Australian Training Awards in Melbourne on 16 November.
Howzat for a great career move?

Rory Bairnsfather-Scott’s decision to study horticulture at Challenger Institute has culminated in the young man working alongside some of the biggest names in Australian sport.

Now a groundsman at the Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA), 22 year-old Rory prepares and maintains the WACA’s internationally renowned cricket pitch, outfield, practice pitches and surrounding gardens.

“With the state cricket team based and training at the WACA ground, I’ve had the chance to meet international cricketers such as Mitchell Johnson, Mike Hussey and Shaun Marsh,” Rory said.

“And cricket greats such as Dennis Lillee, Geoff Marsh and, until recently, Graeme Wood are still involved in administration or coaching roles at the WACA, so I’ve enjoyed meeting these legends of the game too.

“It’s always good to get feedback about the playing surface and the players from past generations are telling us as we are getting the WACA back to its best.”

Rory, who last year completed a three-year Certificate III in Horticulture (Turf), also recently won the 2012 National Sports Turf Graduate Award.

Presented by The Australian Golf Course Superintendents’ Association for excellence in turf management, the award attracts competition from ground staff at the biggest and best stadiums and golf courses across the country.

As part of his prize, Rory will travel to the United States to attend a specialised seven-week winter turf program at the University of Massachusetts. He will also spend a week touring the Minneapolis factories and headquarters of major corporations in his field.

“The prize is a great reward for three years of study and the chance to build on these qualifications in the US is a wonderful opportunity,” Rory said.

“My ambition is to travel and try my hand at preparing cricket pitches in different climates and conditions around the world.

“I want to continue studying turf and horticulture to increase my knowledge and one day become a leader in the industry.”

Horticulture studies at Challenger Institute provide students with a sound practical and scientific knowledge base. For Rory, the focus on science was an enjoyable addition to the hands-on component of the course.

“I really liked the study side of my apprenticeship,” he said.

“I found the technical and scientific part of the course fascinating and as I see the practical side every day at work, I enjoyed the time spent learning in a classroom.”

Challenger Institute’s science and environment training area delivers specialised training, research and development for industry, communities and government in environmentally-customised primary industries, natural resource management, environmental management, laboratory technology, pest management, water industry and water conservation services.

Educational partnership to benefit shipping industry

Challenger Institute has joined forces with two major interstate maritime training providers to raise the profile of seafarer training and support the Federal Government’s shipping policy reform.

The Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Tasmania, Hunter Institute of TAFE in New South Wales and Challenger Institute have agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding to further strengthen and develop their cooperation in maritime education, training and research.

Representatives from the three institutes recently met at AMC to work through details of the agreement, which will have far-reaching benefits for students, the shipping industry, and the Australian government.

“This will usher in a new era of cooperation and a national approach to maritime education and training that spans all levels of vocational and higher education qualification and all locations across Australia,” AMC principal Professor Neil Bose said.

“The goal now is to meet regularly, implement the actions agreed at this meeting and exchange ideas to promote the best outcomes for maritime students and the industry.”

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Challenger Institute uses the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) quality indicator surveys to evaluate and constantly improve training delivery.

The surveys measure Challenger’s performance to ensure the Institute continually strengthens its training and business performance.

Challenger’s commitment to a culture of pursuing excellence resulted in an overall increase in student and employer satisfaction in the most recent survey results from semester 1, 2012. Quality indicator highlights from the learner survey include:

- Overall good results, consistently averaging above 90%
- 95.1% of students agreed that overall they were satisfied with their training
- 96% of students would recommend the training to others
- 96.7% agreed that the training focused on relevant skills.

Highlights from the employer survey include:

- 91% of employers agreed that employees gained the skills they needed from the training
- 98.5% agreed that Challenger trainers were effective in their teaching
- 100% agreed that the trainers had good knowledge and experience in the industry.

A total of 3,803 survey responses were completed by students and 220 employers across a wide range of industry areas and demographics. Outstanding results were achieved in the training relevance and training resources sections of the survey.

Challenger’s commitment to continuous improvement saw satisfaction levels increase, including a result of 88.5 per cent in the training resources section (up-to-date equipment, facilities and materials), which was an increase of 8.5 per cent from 2009 and up 6 per cent from 2010.

Challenger’s commitment to excellence within the AQTF was recognised with an AQTF Gold status in 2008. The Institute was the only training provider in the state to be awarded this significant national recognition.

Challenger Institute building lecturer Alexander Dodd praised the efforts of Rhys and the broader impact of his work ethic.

“Rhys’s attitude is infectious and helps lift the standard of everyone in the class,” Mr Dodd said.
Jet-setting students
gain unique qualification

A new program at Challenger Institute is allowing local and international students to gain a unique qualification, while travelling the world.

The Working Globally course runs for six months, with a proportion of the program taken overseas to give students a genuine global experience and a chance to put their skills into practice.

The new project involves six higher education and vocational training organisations from across the globe working cooperatively to deliver the study program. These institutions are Challenger, Box Hill Institute (Victoria), South West TAFE (Victoria), Adam Smith College (Scotland), Silkeborg Technical School (Denmark) and Alfa College (The Netherlands).

Challenger general manager training services Jill Jamieson said eight students from Challenger were studying at Silkeborg Technical School in Denmark and Alfa College in The Netherlands.

Conversely, an enthusiastic group of students from The Netherlands and Denmark are currently studying at Challenger as part of this unique project to develop, accredit and deliver a Vocational Graduate Certificate in Working Globally.

“The program is designed to enhance mutual understanding between the peoples of Europe and partner countries, including a broader knowledge of their languages, cultures and institutions,” Ms Jamieson said.

“This is an innovative project that provides an opportunity for students to develop employability and soft skills, increasingly sought by employers globally.”

Stacey Miller recently returned to WA after spending three months in The Netherlands and Denmark, attending classes and working with mentors in workplaces.

“It was an amazing opportunity, the subjects we were taught were really varied with different units, and focused on what businesses are looking for: sustainability, innovation, leadership, and all those things that look good on your resume,” she said.

Having previously completed a qualification in occupational health and safety, Ms Miller said the experience allowed her to see different ways of working that would hold her in good stead.

The qualification is intended to prepare students who wish to work in or across global environments. This could include working on cross-border projects, with global partners or clients, managing a culturally diverse work team, or introducing new approaches into the workplace informed by global standards.

Challenger, Chevron partnership
a boost to Aboriginal training

Challenger Institute has partnered with Chevron Australia to offer a 12-month training program to 10 new Aboriginal trainees in business, technology and management-related units.

The trainees work in Chevron’s Perth offices, where they have the opportunity to work with, and learn from, people with diverse industry experience and skills.

Challenger general manager training services Jill Jamieson said the Challenger Chevron inaugural business training program was a win-win arrangement for both organisations.

“At Challenger, we pride ourselves on our long-established, mutually-beneficial relationships with industry partners such as Chevron Australia. Chevron’s support of Challenger and our training programs has been tremendous,” Ms Jamieson said.

“This new training program will enable Chevron’s Aboriginal trainees to receive the latest on-the-job training and, most importantly, afford them the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in a supported learning environment.”

Challenger business and management lecturer Ann O’Neil has been involved in the workplace training component and will be continually assessing the trainees’ progress.

“The training program has gotten off to a positive and progressive start,” Ms O’Neil said.

“Initially, we conducted skills assessments to determine the qualification level and experience of trainees, and I have continued to work closely with Chevron supervisors to monitor the type of work being undertaken by trainees so we can customise their qualifications.”

“The Challenger business training is a combination of workshops and online units, which provides interactive learning and flexibility for the trainees.”

The trainees are currently working towards a Certificate II or III in Business.

Challenger Institute business traineeships have already been delivered with great success in the township of Boddington.

With the success enjoyed in Boddington, word-of-mouth has spread throughout the community, leading to a marked increase in traineeship enquiries to Challenger from organisations operating in the area.
Art students collect sculpture award

A group of creative Challenger Institute art students have been recognised with an inaugural art award at the City of Rockingham’s popular annual Castaways event.

The students were awarded the new Collective Art Award, which included a $1,500 cash prize.

The group’s sculpture titled Origin, is a life-size figurative sculpture made from recycled woollen blankets. The figures were modelled on two students in the class and sewn entirely by hand.

Challenger art lecturer Shaaron du Bignon said the sculpture was made over seven weeks and involved cooperation between the Certificate III and IV Visual Art and Contemporary Craft course students.

“Patterns were made of the students’ bodies and the blankets carefully cut and sewn to size. The body shells were filled with recycled drycleaner lint to give the figures form,” Ms du Bignon said.

“To inspire the project, students were introduced to the work of the late Louise Bourgeois, a French-American contemporary artist and sculptor. Her unique work in textiles gave us the idea to recreate the human blanket sculpture.

“The students were thrilled to be announced as the winners of this award. It was a wonderful reward for the hours spent designing, cutting and sewing the sculpture.

“We have been participating in Castaways for the past three years. It’s a great event for the students to be involved in as it teaches environmental awareness and allows them to explore the creative recycling of materials.”

The Castaways Sculpture Awards have been running on the Rockingham foreshore since 2008. More than 15,000 visitors attend the exhibition each year.