

# Downs Group Training

# Case Study

For the last 14 years, Downs Group Training has placed young people in full-time and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships throughout the Toowoomba region of Queensland, and currently have more than 520 people placed.

Until recently, it was the male apprentices who made up the bulk of placements in traditionally male-oriented trades such as engineering and building construction. Female placements tended to be fewer in number and mostly in traditional roles such as office administration. However, the recent shift to school-based apprenticeships and traineeships has opened up diverse opportunities for more young people to take up a wider variety of trade and training options.

## Workplace Program Development

What did they analyse?

- Reviewed workplace profile
- Conducted a sample survey of staff, apprentices and trainees
- Formed an EEO Committee to discuss issues

What did their analysis show?

- No women in management positions or on the Board of Directors.
- Low percentage of females in school-based traineeships.
- No females in school-based apprenticeships.
- Of the Field staff, only a quarter are female.

## Recruitment and Selection Issue

To increase the number of female trainees and apprentices in the school-based area and to increase female numbers in non-traditional areas of work.

Actions taken

- Appointed a female Field Officer to work closely with local and rural schools in the region.
- All Field Officers actively encouraged to increase the number of women started in non-traditional roles for both trainees and apprentices.

Outcomes

The appointment of a female field officer resulted in a 12 per cent increase in female school-based apprentices and a 19 percent increase in female school-based trainees.

At the end of the period, employed 25 female apprentices and 29 female trainees in non-traditional roles.

## Quick Facts File

**Industry:**

Group training company

**Number of employees:** 530

**Male/Female:** 123/408

**Status:**

Compliant

**Relevant Employment Matters:**

✓ Recruitment and Selection

"We've discovered that people in the bush are really receptive to females entering non-traditional roles, particularly on farms and horse studs. If a female wants to do something and we can find them a job, there's nothing standing in their way."

Melessa Buenen  
Traineeship Officer