



Unitywater

Technology is driving the way that Unitywater delivers services, interacts with customers and achieves efficiencies. By increasing the skills and knowledge of field crews to use new tools in the workplace, Unitywater has achieved significant and sustainable productivity

and efficiency gains.

In 2012, Unitywater created the EASE Program to proactively tackle language, literacy and numeracy issues within the business and ensure that:

**Everyone (has the)  
Ability and  
Skills to  
Excel**

The EASE Program has a long-term focus and an aim of improving field-based productivity and efficiency by changing the behaviours of field crews.

Unitywater identified literacy and computer literacy as significant issues in their Infrastructure Services Division. The Learning and Development Team identified issues:

- by conducting a training needs analysis
- by interviewing field staff and their supervisors
- through feedback from the roll out of previous systems.



**Unitywater** is a statutory authority providing water supply and sewerage services to the Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast and Noosa local authority areas. The organisation employs 760 people, including 300 field staff across a wide geographic area.



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The EASE Program is designed to help staff gain confidence with technology whilst increasing their literacy and numeracy skills.

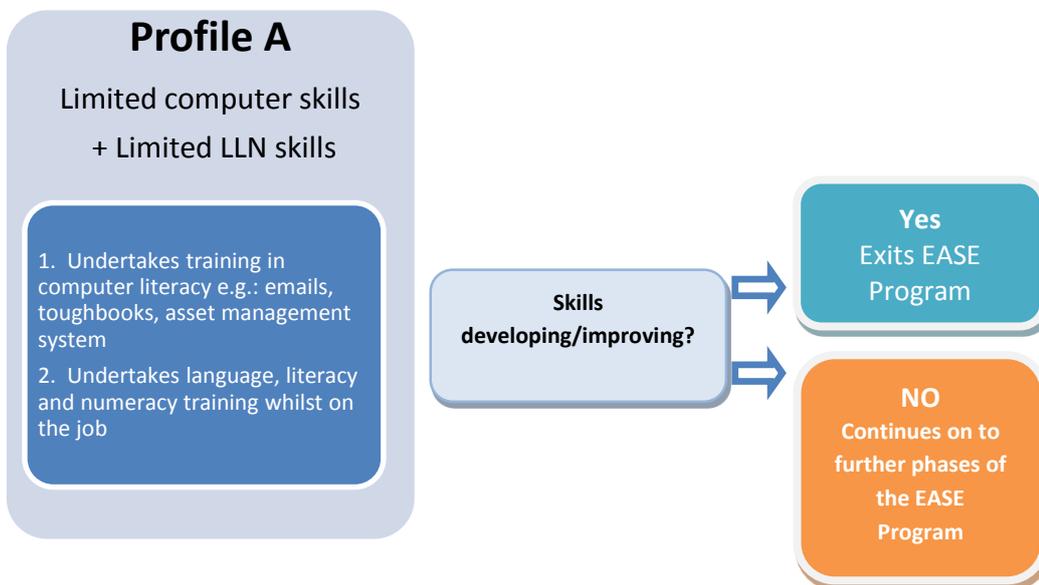
Unitywater formed a partnership with TAFE Queensland Brisbane to develop the program with federal government funding support. After the program's launch, 55 staff members voluntarily registered to participate in training during work hours.

Assessments, based on the Australian Core Skills Framework, were used to determine the training needs of each participant using three distinct profiles.

- **Profile A:** Limited computer literacy and limited LLN
- **Profile B:** Limited computer literacy and sound LLN
- **Profile C:** Sound computer literacy and sound LLN

By using participant profiles, Unitywater was able to develop a flexible training program that met the needs of individual participants. Training in small groups or one-on-one was used according to the needs of participants.

In total, 300 hours of training was provided through the EASE Program with the duration of training varying for each participant according to their identified needs. Program flexibility and ongoing assessment allowed participants to continue developing their skills over a number of years if necessary.



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Unitywater has realised significant productivity and efficiency gains from the EASE Program.

- **Improved productivity:** restoration of Priority 1 events in 5 hours has increased by 17%
- **Improved safety:** 100% of jobs now processed with electronic risk assessments
- **Improved efficiency:** now only 30 seconds required to electronically locate an asset within a Unitywater site facility which previously took 10 minutes
- **Reduced need for support:** training has led to a 50% decrease in field staff requests for assistance from the organisation's IT help desk.
- **Reduced injuries:** significant reduction in injury rates over the three years' of the program
- **Reduced lost time:** the organisation's Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate has reduced from 9.81 to 2.1 over the life of the program.

Unitywater has introduced compulsory LLN testing into the recruitment process as a way of ensuring its staff are ready for technology changes in the future. Use of Unitywater's asset management system has been identified as a core skill for field crews within Unitywater's competency framework.

This program has ensured that field staff are better prepared for technology changes. Staff are now more confident and are embracing the systems that promote safe work practices and support operational excellence.

### Keys to success

- *Ownership of the program by the company and high level of collaboration*
- *Internal design and development of the entire program*
- *Flexible training methodology with EASE trainer embedded into the business*
- *Six monthly progress reports provided by the training provider*



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## Seven Workplace Champions have been appointed as public ambassadors for foundation skills

The Foundation Skills Workplace Champions aim to raise employer awareness of the benefits of addressing foundation skills in the workplace by sharing positive outcomes from their own organisations.

### Foundation Skills Workplace Champions

- Anthony Kittel, Redarc Electronics Pty Ltd
- Victoria Jacques, Villa Maria Aged Care
- Yvonne Webb, CHARTTES Industry Training Advisory Council, NT
- Vince Ball, ACT Regional Building and Construction Industry Training Council
- Graeme Finlayson, Oak Training and Development, Tasmania
- Ro Coroneos, Lend Lease
- Kim Moore, Unitywater

Further information on individual champions is available on the website of the National Foundation Skills Strategy Project: <http://www.statedevelopment.sa.gov.au/nfss>

Support for the Workplace Champions is being provided by Michael Taylor from the Australian Industry Group, and the National Foundation Skills Strategy Project Team.

The National Foundation Skills Strategy Project (NFSS) 2014-2015 is a joint initiative by Australian governments to support priority action areas from the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults.

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