

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Lean graduates boost local business performance

Around 80 students will graduate this week from a course that boosts industry skills in North West Tasmania.

The Competitive Systems and Practices program evolved as a result of a study of 46 local businesses, in which 91 per cent expressed an interest in implementing lean workforce principles.

The training program was funded through a grant of \$424,000 secured through the Regional Training Alliance, a partnership including the University of Tasmania's Australian Maritime College, the Cradle Coast Authority, Skills Tasmania and Productivity Improvers.

The Competitive Systems and Practices program, also known as lean systems, started in March this year with the grant covering around 90 per cent of employee training costs, and employer contributions making up the remainder.

The training was carried out by industry experts Productivity Improvers, covering topics including efficiency gains, waste reduction, customer service, employee morale and costs.

Adjunct Associate Professor Marcus Bowles from the Australian Maritime College said that the training courses directly supported the needs of local businesses.

"The program provided employees and managers with the practical skills for implementing continuous improvement in their businesses," Associate Professor Bowles said.

"The aim was to highlight opportunities and develop workforce skills to increase productivity, reduce waste and improve workplace culture; from the feedback we have received, positive change is already occurring."

Manager of the North West business Penguin Composites, David Mercer, completed the training program, along with 16 of his employees.

Mr Mercer said that his company had already benefited from the practical implementation of lean practices learnt during the course.

“We committed our staff to the Competitive Systems and Practices program because we knew we needed to improve the way we do manufacturing,” Mr Mercer said.

“We are already seeing the benefits of the program. We cut 200 hours of work out of one of our projects building slide on campers, just by implementing a number of the lean processes.”

A certification ceremony for the Competitive Systems and Practices program will be held tomorrow (Tuesday December 9) at the University of Tasmania Cradle Coast Campus.

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