



## Meeting the challenges of training head-on

Peter Strandly, Managing Director of Australian Onsite Training, heads one of many companies in Australia that offers onsite, face-to-face chain of responsibility (CoR) training. His view is that safety and CoR obligations are two areas that benefit from student feedback and consultation rather than other forms of training such as online modules. We sat down with Peter to learn about his work.

**CoR Adviser (CA):** Peter, I believe you focus on teaching the one critical accredited unit 'TLIF0001 – Apply chain of responsibility legislation, regulations and workplace procedures'. Why is that?

**Peter Strandly (PS):** I guess Australian Onsite Training would be considered a niche registered training organisation (RTO). We teach this unit because we are passionate about making a positive contribution towards improving safety and awareness in the transport and logistics industry. I chose to concentrate on this unit because everyone in the supply chain needs to understand their obligations. The unit explains the 'reasonable steps' everyone should take to contribute to a safe workplace.

**CA:** Why do you prefer to conduct training face-to-face?

**PS:** Face-to-face training allows people to actively participate in their training and to discuss the challenges they face in a high-risk work environment. It also allows me to contextualise the training to the specific needs or requirements of the company I am training with. For many of us, technology is an important part of our day-to-day business; however, there are still many for whom technology may be unfamiliar and a somewhat challenging platform. We aim to provide training that is accessible for all.

**CA:** How do you cater for different learning styles and literacy skills within a class environment?

**PS:** During enrolment, trainees are given the opportunity to inform us confidentially and discretely of any challenges they may expect to experience in a learning environment. We understand that some of our trainees have not been in a class environment for some time. We use a variety of assessment techniques, such as role/industry-based

case studies, videos, group activities and verbal assessment to assess competency. If someone has severe literacy issues, they can be verbally assessed on the training and I would usually do this in a one-on-one situation. As a registered RTO, it is our obligation to provide equitable and accessible training for everyone. The advantage of face-to-face training is that I can adapt and contextualise the assessment.

**CA:** What are some online training organisations not delivering?

**PS:** Online may suit some learners but I find that trainees want to ask questions, clarify certain points and receive immediate, direct and personal assistance with the material as required. Many of my trainees haven't been in a learning situation in years and would possibly struggle to complete online training under their own steam. It also doesn't have the scope to contextualise learning materials to the learners' own work environment and specific workplace, and this is something I try to introduce with each company I work with.

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**CA:** Which is the hardest group in the heavy vehicle transport supply chain to get in front of, and why is that?

**PS:** Generally, the drivers themselves. There is the obvious difficulty for employers in a busy work environment to provide downtime for training. We aim to provide flexible solutions for this issue such as evening classes or several small group sessions to fit in with a company's scheduling as much as we can. I strongly believe the cost of proper induction and training should be weighed against the cost of potential future liability. All businesses going forward, big or small, will benefit by investing in a company culture that actively supports worker safety.

**CA:** Is there a part of the industry, or demographic, that comprehends the importance of what you are teaching more than other groups?

**PS:** It's not a demographic or an age. It's someone who understands that they work in a high-risk work environment and wants to improve safety. Obviously, it is helpful if the training is supported by management and vital that CoR policy and procedure is combined into current company safety and reporting systems.

**CA:** What is the most frequent question you are asked?

**PS:** Load restraint. All loads need to meet the requirements of the *Load Restraint Guide 2004*. [www.ntc.gov.au/heavy-vehicles/safety/load-restraint-guide](http://www.ntc.gov.au/heavy-vehicles/safety/load-restraint-guide).

**CA:** Is industry going to be ready to adopt the new changes in mid-2018?

**PS:** Companies need to be getting ready now for the changes slated for mid-2018. The HVNLR is looking to align itself with current Work Health and Safety legislation. Companies need to be proactive rather than reactive. They need to look at their current safety measures. As a minimum, they need to conduct a risk assessment at their workplaces, get feedback from their staff and put measures in place to control the known hazards. Industry needs to work towards all levels in the supply chain getting on the same page. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has conducted (and is still conducting) a large number of free information sessions around the country and has produced a substantial amount of accessible documentation that is available on its website or by direct request.

**CA:** What is some of the best feedback you've received from those who now understand the importance of CoR?

**PS:** I know the training has struck a chord when students stay back upon completion to continue the discussion among themselves. I am often contacted post-training to provide certain policy/procedure templates used in the training so that they can be introduced or implemented in the workplace. I find it personally satisfying to know that people are thinking about how their role, whatever that may be, can contribute to a safer and more efficient workplace. ■