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External Evaluation and Review Report

Transpower New Zealand Limited

Date of report: 5 July 2019

About Transpower New Zealand Limited

Transpower Grid Skills (Grid Skills) supports its parent organisation, Transpower New Zealand Ltd, by delivering short courses to workers employed by service providers to build and maintain transmission lines to ensure the ongoing delivery of electricity services nationally.

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| Type of organisation: | Private training establishment (PTE) |
| Location: | Corner Ashley and Ferguson Streets, Palmerston North |
| Code of Practice signatory: | No |
| Number of students: | Domestic: 2,329 (50 per cent identified an ethnicity, of whom around 8 per cent were Māori and 1 per cent Pasifika; 2 per cent were female) |
| Number of staff: | Six full-time equivalents; nine instructional design staff; 23 contract trainers |
| TEO profile: | See NZQA: Transpower New Zealand Limited |
| Last EER outcome: | Highly Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment (2014) |
| Scope of evaluation: | Substation Entry 1 – Training Scheme. This replaces the Restricted Area Entry Training Scheme (507 new and 611 refresher participants). Transmission Line Mechanic course – pilot programme (six enrolled August 2018) |
| MoE number: | 6660 |
| NZQA reference: | C32306 |
| Dates of EER visit: | 12 and 13 March 2019 |

Summary of Results

There are valued outcomes for electricity service providers and employees in developing their knowledge and skills to meet electricity regulations and Transpower service specifications in the safe and reliable transmission of electricity.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- The Substation Entry 1 health and safety compliance course has high completion rates typical of short courses. Completions for courses in the building and maintenance of transmission lines are also high and are an accurate indication of the knowledge and skills acquired to work safely and competently, supported by robust training and moderation.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Outcomes are highly valued by service providers and meet Transpower's need for qualified people to carry out maintenance of transmission structures. Workers also see the value in formal qualifications aligned to career pathways.
- The organisation uses feedback from multiple stakeholder engagements to check the currency of course content to ensure the training is meeting stakeholder needs.
- The training delivery is monitored closely to ensure it is meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders. Grid Skills' has created an active learning culture, indicated by comprehensive needs analysis and effective mentoring of trainers, leading to improvements to course content and delivery.
- However, the one training scheme required to hold NZQA registration was not delivered within the last twelve months at the time of the EER visit and the PTE was de-registered following the EER. However, the organisation was re-registered and a replacement training scheme approved shortly after with no impact on learners. Strengthening of oversight of NZQA regulations would ensure all areas of compliance are well managed.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>High levels of course completion show that the learners gain the required assessments. Achievement is high because the outcome is related to the work environment and people are motivated to be qualified to work on transmission assets in the lines or substation environment.</p> <p>The Substation Entry 1 course is required by service provider employees and others who need to enter restricted areas and perform work under supervision. In 2018, all but one of the 507 learners enrolled passed, and 610 of 611 of workers enrolled in refreshers passed.</p> <p>A pilot for the Transmission Line Mechanic course replaced the previous programme which consisted of block courses. While the previous programme had high completion rates, the introduction of more on-job assessment in the new programme aims to improve the application of knowledge within the workplace. To date, six transmission line workers have enrolled in the pilot programme – three have submitted assessments for marking, and the other three are still completing on-job verification work.</p> |
| Conclusion: | There is high completion of courses due to the requirement for working in the industry, supported by robust assessment processes. Learners achieve a good understanding of Transpower service specifications and are competent to apply their skills on-job. |

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Transpower, as a primary stakeholder, values the course outcomes because it is providing trained workers to build and maintain its electricity transmission equipment and assets.</p> <p>The Substation Entry 1 course is required for substation workers, and the knowledge and competency gained are valued by the industry workers. The transmission line mechanic qualification is a mandatory requirement for line mechanics to register with the Electrical Workers Registration Board (EWRB).</p> <p>The workers are employed by service providers who manage the training requirements – not just those of Transpower but other related industries – to ensure there is a qualified, capable workforce to carry out the work. Transpower uses Grid Skills reporting data to show service providers how many of their employees completed training to help monitor their workforce compliance needs.</p> <p>The interactions of Transpower contract managers and the regional service manager with service providers provides feedback supporting the value of the training. Reduced incidents across service providers – which are monitored closely by Transpower and service providers – is another indicator of the value of the training. A key outcome is continued supply of electricity nationally.</p> <p>Increased numbers of courses are being held as a result of Transpower identifying additional training needs, particularly for refresher courses relating to grid projects. Refresher courses keep industry current with latest practices and service specifications to maintain the condition of assets.</p> |
| Conclusion: | Grid Skills provides value in meeting service providers' need for workforce capability to carry out Transpower projects safely using appropriately trained and qualified people. Transmission line mechanics also gain formal qualifications that facilitate career pathways and engage them in the workforce. |

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Good |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Grid Skills employs instructional designers to design courses aligned with industry requirements and develops activities that meet the needs of learners. Courses are developed with the input of technical experts to ensure that industry specifications and EWRB requirements are included. Courses contain a strong focus on health and safety, which befits the nature of the industry.</p> <p>Transpower supports Grid Skills' redevelopment project for the review of all qualifications and training schemes following the targeted review of qualifications. The project aim is to incorporate any changes in industry practice into the training materials and enhance the application of skills on-job. To date, the organisation is on target to complete all planned programme reviews including piloting new developments.</p> <p>Grid Skills is changing perceptions about training by introducing pre-course work and requiring employers to verify on-job activities following the off-job course, which are checked by Transpower field staff. Assessments are closely monitored and provide valid, consistent results. The organisation has met all external moderation requirements. This is evidence that the previous training strategy, to develop trainers' teaching skills and ensure implementation of robust assessment processes, has been effective.</p> <p>Grid Skills carries out ongoing formal and informal programme reviews. There is a quarterly review of programmes and an end-of-year review using feedback from a range of sources, including feedback from course evaluations, trainer reports, service providers, and Transpower field team staff. All programmes undergo a pilot to check that the training activities are effective. There was a delay in submitting a replacement training scheme, which shows a gap in meeting NZQA requirements for delivery of a current training scheme.</p> |
| Conclusion: | The training programme development and delivery is highly effective in meeting the needs of service providers and Transpower. The organisation demonstrates an ongoing, reflective nature to ensure that the courses are meeting the needs of key stakeholders. However, the delay in submitting a replacement training scheme for approval indicates a more |

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| | systematic review process is required. |
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Grid Skills is effective in supporting learners' engagement with the appropriate information and resources. The organisation's online learning app provides information about available courses, entry requirements and steps to completion, along with information on how courses are aligned to career pathways within the industry. Learners can access course materials online.</p> <p>Grid Skills introduced a blended learning approach where learners provide workplace evidence to support the off-job learning. Engagement is monitored using completion rates and learner course evaluations. In response to longer completion times, the organisation has developed a policy on expected timelines to encourage employers to support learners with appropriate work activities and advise learners of expected timeframes for completion. A new learning management system has been designed to send automatic reminders to help learners to complete, based on expected duration dates. This will help with completion of on-job components.</p> <p>Individual support is provided, which is facilitated by a 1:6 teacher-student ratio, or 2:6 where there are safety issues. Trainers are provided with lesson plans and suggestions for learner-centric activities to encourage learners' engagement in their learning. The trainers are competent in supporting people with learning difficulties. Learner feedback is used to identify improvements to the materials or the learning activities.</p> <p>The organisation identified a need for trainers to be culturally aware and responded by including a guest speaker at the annual training conference to talk about engaging culturally, as well as providing professional development in unconscious bias, inclusive language use, and teaching techniques to remove barriers.</p> |
| Conclusion: | There is appropriate support for learners with blended learning opportunities and effective classroom engagement, supported by field activities. Learners are provided with clear training pathways aligned to their career. |

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Good |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Grid Skills reports to Transpower’s people division. Grid Skills also benefits from Transpower’s corporate function, including training sites, policies and governance structure. This support is effective in enabling Grid Skills to provide courses that meet the needs of Transpower for a qualified workforce to maintain transmission lines. The oversight in maintaining registration shows a more comprehensive approach is required in programme review and monitoring compliance. The organisation has since responded, and an approved training scheme is now in place.</p> <p>Reporting is two-way, with monthly training reports and quarterly feedback from field staff and service providers. Governance is monitoring the volume and nature of courses to ensure the training is meeting Transpower project needs</p> <p>Operational plans include tasks and projects targeted at educational development and review, as well as ensuring trainers are effective and there are suitable resources to meet goals. Ongoing monitoring of business activities helps to ensure that there is capacity to manage training needs and that programmes are current with industry standards. The governance structure provides multiple reporting channels to identify areas for improvement and for accountability.</p> <p>The parent company, Transpower, is wanting to increase diversity within its workforce and the PTE has provided diversity training for its trainers, using te reo in the learning material, as well as actively encouraging Māori to become trainers.</p> <p>Governance is forward planning and monitors training volumes to forecast asset maintenance and training requirements for business continuity. The organisation is open to innovation and seeks new ways to ensure that transmission employees receive comprehensive training.</p> |
| Conclusion: | Governance and management support training functions with strong accountability reporting and sector needs analysis to ensure training meets current work projects. Future sector capacity and capability development needs are met. |

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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| Performance: | Good |
| Self-assessment: | Marginal |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Grid Skills' lack of oversight in ensuring registration requirements were met led to the de-registration of the PTE following this EER; the PTE has since re-registered with NZQA. Although the PTE was compliant at the time the statutory declaration was submitted in October 2018, the organisation did not deliver the training scheme as approved in the 12 months prior to the EER. NZQA has previously notified Transpower that it was not meeting this requirement, indicating a deficit in applying a self-assessment process for ensuring all NZQA rules are met.</p> <p>There are strong processes for managing industry compliance to ensure inclusion of the latest industry regulations and Transpower service specifications in courses, so learners know how to perform their work to industry requirements. Health and safety practices are also emphasised in the course materials and in the way that trainers deliver courses.</p> <p>The governance team is made up of general managers of Transpower's three divisions (Service, People, and Projects). The governance team manages compliance with technical requirements through participation in industry sector groups. Grid Skills has managed compliance with external moderation requirements set by Connexis, the standard-setting body for training in maintaining transmission assets.</p> |
| Conclusion: | The governance and management teams are managing compliance with industry-specific requirements and mostly managing compliance with NZQA rules and regulations. |

Focus Areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Substation Entry 1 Level 2

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Good |

2.2 Focus area: Transmission Line Mechanic Level 4

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Transpower Grid Skills:

- Include reporting of compliance requirements at governance level. This will provide a higher-level oversight to monitor requirements and assist in identifying risks and managing accountabilities.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

NZQA requires that Transpower Grid Skills:

- Ensure an approved training scheme or programme is delivered within any 12-month period in accordance with section 234(1) of the Education Act 1989 - Lapse of registration.

Appendix

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud²*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

² NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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