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Empowering engineers

Victorian Industry programs working group project are well advanced.

Working closely with the Victorian Government Department of Education and Training, the Society of Automotive Engineers-Australasia (SAE-A) is heading up the Industry Programs Working Group (IPWG) and is making positive progress towards opening up opportunities within wider industry sectors for skilled Automotive Engineers.

With the imminent closure of the three large vehicle manufacturing plants there has been widespread concern within the State Government, Industry and the SAE-A that this could lead to the loss of engineering knowledge and skills to Australian industry. Detailed research and work over nine specific industry sectors outside the automotive industry identified by the State Government and the SAE-A is producing positive prospects for engineers seeking exciting new opportunities.

“The aim of the IPWG is fundamental to empowering engineers and professionals to make their next career decision into roles that add value to the employer and where the engineers can utilise their skills,

knowledge and experience with long term benefits to Australian industry,” said Kelvin Clissold, Manager, Industry Programs Working Group, SAE-A.

Detailed research and analysis undertaken with key stakeholders is now completed in sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, defence and aerospace, construction, oil, gas and energy, mining and metals, health, electricity, gas, water and waste services, mining and metals, education and training plus light and heavy rail.

Surveys have also been widely publicised through FAPM and SAE-A members and promoted via the HR departments of the car companies.

The SAE-A's focus is on the needs of the engineering professional at the individual level with more than 100 engineers in the automotive industry and supply area surveyed with input also from universities and training institutes.

This research is producing positive signs and bringing about a greater awareness of the opportunities for engineers to

make a valuable contribution to industries identified as being important for the further development of the state's economy.

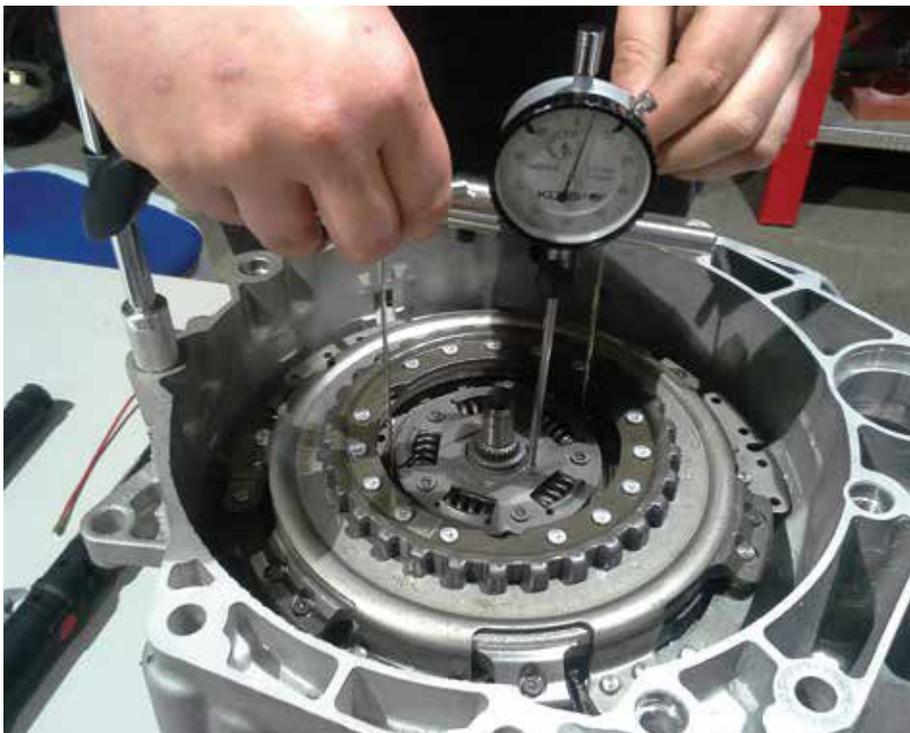
A skills matrix produced by SAE-A, maps in detail the automotive professionals skills, knowledge of various advanced processes, project management experience, etc. and overlays these skills against those required by other industry sectors.

This process has clearly illustrated the breadth and depth of the transferable skill set possessed by automotive engineering professionals and confirms the likely benefits they could bring to Australian industry as a whole.

Recent positive outcomes for the industry include Ford Motor Company retaining up to 1,000 engineers in their Australian Design Centre for global development, development and test engineers remaining at Holden and component manufacturer Continental (VDO) retaining more than 30 engineers within Australia for future product development plus engineers starting their own businesses.

Engineers who have transferred to industries outside the automotive area are already bringing high level automotive skills to industries such as plastic moulding, defence, modular designs in the building industry as well as the development of new processes and project management in areas such as mining and construction.

“Whilst there are positive signs that some form of automotive manufacturing will continue in Australia in areas of special vehicles, defence and recreational vehicles, there is a strong focus by the IPWG in identifying opportunities outside the automotive industry,” said Kelvin Clissold. “Various training programs are also being developed and industry stakeholders are being made aware of this valuable resource and the high level of skills these engineers can bring to industry,” he said.



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