



Punda's Pearls

Focus : Pre-Start



The tacit knowledge of experienced workers is often overlooked as a training tool. But the overwhelming evidence suggests that informal advice from experienced workers is retained and remembered. The Ngarda Plant Operator training program has encouraged as many Ngarda Indigenous workers as possible to come in to talk to our trainees informally about the work they do. Ngarda Service Truck Operator Greg "Punda" Brahim was an inspirational presence for our trainees. He pulled no punches and everyone appreciated hearing his tips, explanations and his recommendations about the pre-start checking process.



Photos: BP Australia

Inside this issue:

Punda's Pearls	1
Frank Schwalger	2
Pundulmurra Partnership	2
Pre-Start Checking	3
A Word from the Executive Chairman	4

Special points of interest:

- The importance of having a pre-start routine and to take care in documentation. Thorough maintenance checking reporting faults, Places to look for lubrication, weaknesses and signs of wear and tear.
- The importance of thoroughly checking machinery before operations
- Ngarda's unique partnership with Pundulmurra College

Frank Schwalger

Frank Schwalger is the person who embodies the strong and productive relationship on the Pundulmurra College side with the plant operator training program. Frank is respected by trainees, trainers and all who come into contact with him.

If “Go the Extra Mile” is becoming the slogan of the plant operator training program, then Frank embodies that spirit. He is very dedicated, caring and has bent over backwards to make sure that the training works and that all the trainees needs are met. Frank is an all rounder who has been the lecturer responsible for the occupational health and safety training modules, confined spaces, working at heights, bob cat, front end loader training and several other modules. In all of these things the trainees have very much en-

joyed his company and his philosophy. Frank hails from Samoa and emphasises



with the Indigenous trainees and understands just what is needed to give them the start they need in the mining industry.

He and his family live locally and so many of the trainees know him personally as well as professionally.

For any partnership to work, good people on both sides of the equation are needed and Frank Schwalger, along with Lisa Jenkins and Alan Scott, have been outstanding to work with at Pundulumurra. TAFE is constantly changing to meet the needs of industry. Sometimes there is criticism that it is not changing fast enough. Our feeling is that often the people on the front line like Frank, Lisa and Alan need to be listened to by the central city based bu-

reaucracy. If they were industry would work more closely with TAFE. Thanks Frank, Lisa and Alan for helping to make

Our Partnership with Pundulmurra



Trainees with Frank Schwalger, Lisa Jenkins and Peter Donovan at Pundulmurra College

The partnership between Pundulmurra College and Ngarda Civil & Mining has been a strong and refreshing one. At a time when the relationship between TAFE and industry is under review, Ngarda and Pundulmurra have worked extremely well together based on an informal partnership in which any problems that emerge are solved swiftly with mutual understanding on both sides.

Ngarda is extremely grateful for the use of Pundulmurra’s plant and equipment at a time when the demand for production equipment is very high. Ngarda’s fitters have in turn provided some servicing, repairs and all fuel costs of the Pundulmurra machinery through the sponsorship of BP Australia.

One of the unique aspects of the Pundulmurra partnership is that the trainees work regular eight and ten hour shifts in line with Ngarda workplace expectations for the duration of the training program and they fill out regular production time-sheets. This ensures that there is a sense of urgency and relevance to the training which makes it more than just a skill development process for its own sake. Ngarda has guaranteed all the trainees who finish the eight week program a full time position with the company.

During the program trainees complete accredited modules including W206, (BCCCM1001B) follow OH&S policies and procedures, C5006 (HLTFA1A) apply basic first aid , W2079 (BCCCM 3005B) carry out site based risk control processes , W2061 (BCCCM1002B) conduct workplace communication, W2258 (MNMEG”S312A) drive and recover a 4WD vehicle, W1759 (BCCCM2009B) work in confined spaces, W2085 (BCCPO3008B) conduct Skid Steer Loader Operations, W1740 Conduct Dozer Operations (Part1, Plan Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks), W1747 Conduct Wheeled Front Loader Operations (Part1, Plan Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks, W2093 (BCCPO3016)Conduct Dump Truck Operations, W1744 Conduct Excavator Operations (Part1, Plan Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks), S2288 (TDTC497C) Drive Heavy Rigid Vehicle, W1750 Conduct Grader operations (Part1, Plan Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks), W2091 (BCCPO3014B) conduct water cart operations.

Pre-Start

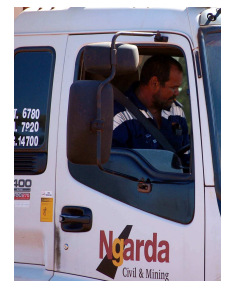
The theory is now over for the Ngarda plant operator trainees. The hard hats have been issued, the water bottles, gloves, clips and hat brims are on and the practical work has begun.

The trainees have been given a very good start up job by TAFE CEO Alan Scott which will provide just the right level of challenges and skills. It involves moving a bung wall behind the TAFE tennis courts, leaving a garden space and re-creating another bung wall near some open space in an adjacent area. Hopefully over coming years our trainees will be able to say: we laid the foundations for that fence and gardens!

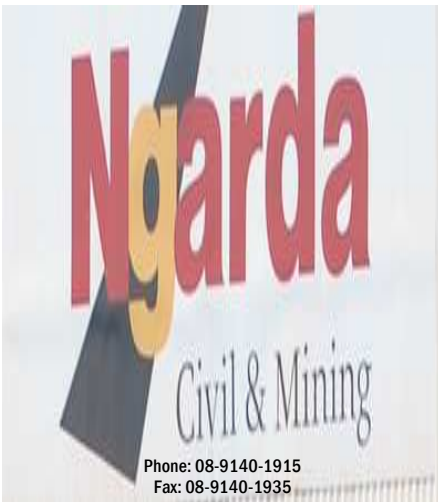
After this initial job the trainees will be moving to our mock mine site that we have been given access to by Contract Consulting who are laying out the new Port Hedland Hospital site. Over the next four weeks there will be much to learn as the front end loader, water truck, bob cat, grader, excavator and tip truck are employed in exercises around the mock mine.

But the all important pre-start process was the focus of this week's activities as Greg "Punda" Brahim arrived with the Ngarda Service Truck. Punda was able to demonstrate the isolation process and to show trainees exactly where to check the machines for oil leaks, wear and tear and general maintenance tasks such as greasing, oil changes and water changes.

Punda was so successful in his demonstrations that two of the trainees James Wally and Justin Cortez have indicated that they are interested in the service area with an aim to become a fitter. On Monday 12 November they will be working in Ngarda's Wedgefield workshop on a 12 hour shift to give them an insight into the world of fitting and maintenance.



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From the top left: Glen Aubrey, Henry Whalebone looks on during the pre-start drills, a visit from ITEC staff, James Wally, Lisa Stone gave a timely insight into occupational health and safety and showed a very strong video on the importance of staying safe at work, Lew Nan-nup and “Brocky” go through the pre-start process on the grader.

A Word from Barry Taylor—Executive Chairman, Ngarda Civil & Mining

For many years I have been harping to all who will listen that there is a ready and steady Indigenous workforce just waiting to be tapped by the Australian mining industry in the Pilbara.

Four weeks into the plant operator machine course and I think I have been vindicated.

Was there anything special in the recruitment process for our trainees? The answer is no, definitely not.

All our trainees came directly from the CDEP lists for the Yandeyarra and Marble Bar communities, and from the Centrelink, Job Futures, ITEC and Bloodwood Tree lists in Port Hedland.

When we conducted our interview process on October 1 we made no attempt to cream skim or to recruit candidates with prior experience in the mining industry. The primary pre-requisite we sought was a commitment to have a go and a willingness to work in the mining industry.

What have we found? Our expectation was that by this stage we may have lost some of our trainees. But so far we have a perfect record with regard to our trainees.

Out of the twenty trainees that started our training, twenty remain. Every day the men and women trainees turn up an hour before they are required to do so. Next week the training moves from the classroom to the practical area and a week ahead of schedule all of the trainees have now had experience driving bob cats, front end loaders, graders and trucks. We hope that by the end of the course we will be able to issue half a dozen HR licences which is again something that we did not anticipate when we were designing the course.

It is too early for me to crow about our successes. But in a sense the boring part of the training is now over. I know that all of the trainees are excited about learning how to operate plant and equipment and are keen to gain experience within

Ngarda in practical working areas. The trainers tell me that Aboriginal people have a natural aptitude for operating heavy equipment and machinery and that our trainees are showing great promise. I want to particularly congratulate our female trainees Nat, Teena and Janine for going that extra mile for Ngarda!



Teena Poland, Leon Borlace, Shane Foley, Rodney Hall & Benson Dickerson study the pre-start requirements for the Front end loader