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SP AusNet awarded a top employer of Australian apprentices

Victoria's largest diversified energy business SP AusNet, has been awarded the 2010 Minister's Award for Excellence for Employers of Australian apprentices by Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations.

The award recognises and rewards employers who demonstrate commitment, innovation and outstanding achievement in the training of Australian apprentices with SP AusNet taking out the top award in this category for the Gippsland region.

SP AusNet's Apprentice and Trainee Manager Gerard Cooke said the award was recognition of the importance the company places on its training and development on the mix of apprentices, technical trainees and graduates at every office and depot across the business.

"We support our apprentices to 'learn while they earn,' combining trade school studies with on-the-job experience in a workplace that is safe, healthy, fair and equitable and where diversity is valued and outstanding performance rewarded," Mr Cooke said.

"Within our apprentice and trainee program, we are currently training 109 trainees and apprentices for careers in the energy utilities industry – of this, 42 are currently working in the Gippsland region," he said.

Mr Cooke said one of the keys to measuring the success of SP AusNet's apprentice and trainee program was by the high retention of apprenticeships.

"To date, more than 90 per cent of apprentice and trainees who begin their working life with SP AusNet, remain with the company to continue their careers," he said.

Mr Cooke attributes parts of the success of this award to SP AusNet's training and mentoring culture within the business while being part of an industry-wide push to strengthen the country's energy industry skills base.

"SP AusNet is committed to excellence within our business. Our apprentices and trainees play key roles in career skills expos, career presentations and visits to secondary schools, providing them with valuable personal development opportunities," he said.

"We are very proud to be recognised with this award. We will build on this success to continue our commitment to always improving and building our apprentice and trainee program, with the continued aspiration toward our corporate value of excellence in the way we operate," Mr Cooke said.

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