

Karyn Downs – Power Distribution Apprentice

NSW Apprenticeships Ambassador Program – Apprentice and Trainee Career Profiles



Karyn Downs with Bert Evans AO, NSW Apprenticeships Ambassador at Endeavour Energy's Technical Training Centre in Western Sydney.

Current role: Power Distribution Worker, 2nd year apprentice at Endeavour Energy.

Age: I'm 30.

What got you this role?

My outgoing and bubbly personality probably helped. I've had a strong work ethic all my life. My former boss gave a phone reference and said that I ticked every box for the type of employee they were looking for.

Formal qualifications:

I completed Year 12, did security for 4 years and also studied horticulture and worked in the nursery industry for 8 years.

What did you want to do when you grew up?

I grew up with a love of the country and animals so I wanted to be either a vet or own a large cattle station and be a farmer.

Best school time memory?

I met some life-long friends at school and got to study some subjects that really interest me like Biology, Geography and Agriculture.

Work/life so far?

Life has been enjoyable so far and I've learnt a lot. I have had a few jobs along the way but none I really looked on as a career until now.

Career bumps so far?

I worked for one wholesale nursery for 8 years. I loved it there but knew it wasn't what I wanted to do forever. I'd also bought my first home which was a long way away. When I left the nursery I felt lost and didn't really know what career path I wanted to choose. Someone mentioned this job, so I applied thinking 'what have I got to lose?' I have never looked back.

About this trade

- Power distribution workers are involved in the installation, maintenance and repair of electrical distribution networks.
- The role suits people who enjoy practical, outdoor work.
- Power distribution workers work with high and low voltage at considerable heights.
- They must be able to work well in teams.
- Workers can be called out during emergencies at any time of the day or night and in all weather conditions.

A snapshot of this Apprenticeship

- At Endeavour Energy successful candidates receive on-the-job training and the opportunity to obtain a Certificate III in an Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) Distribution qualification.
- First year apprentices are rotated through a variety of locations and roles and are provided with a uniform, safety gear and tools to work with.
- The apprenticeship usually takes four years to complete but may be completed earlier when the apprentice has completed the qualification and achieved industry standards.

This profile is an initiative of the NSW Apprenticeships Ambassador Program 2014.

For information on Apprenticeships and Traineeships visit

www.training.nsw.gov.au

Who are your career development supporters?

All the trainers here have been so helpful. We are the new Endeavour workers and its great how encouraging they are.

Current job description:

Every day is different, one day we might be upgrading a pole sub, the next replacing a pole. I work with a crew. I climb a pole nearly every day, work with tools, replace equipment on poles. It's physical and outdoors which I love.

Strangest thing you've had to do?

A long house service was being replaced from open wire to aerial bundled conductor. I was up a pole in a paddock to remove the arm and drill holes and hang the ABC when I noticed donkeys in the paddock. Sure enough next thing I knew I had some of the donkeys standing by the pole, next to my crew. All of them were checking out my work.

Your strengths?

My eagerness to learn new things, my outgoing personality which helps me get along with people I work with, and the need to do well at whatever I do in life. I don't like just doing a job - I want to be good at it as well.

Your weaknesses?

My drive to learn more always makes me ask a lot of questions. I like to understand why we do things a certain way. This isn't always a bad thing though. Oh and being a female, of course I like to talk a lot!



Endeavour Energy Apprentices with Bert Evans AO, Apprenticeships Ambassador and Graham Robinson, State Training Services

The best part of your work?

Working as part of a team and working outdoors. I like a challenge and this job keeps me busy. Every day I learn something new.

The worst part of your work?

I am yet to come across a worst part, though if I had to say something it would be the lack of females, especially not having a female to chat with at lunch.

Your greatest mentor/inspiration?

My friend Morgan. She had a not so perfect younger life but has proved that if you set your mind to something you can achieve it. She was an adult apprentice baker. By doing the very best she could she has gone above and beyond. She came second in Australia for the Apprentice of the Year award. She is now working overseas after winning a scholarship. She has encouraged me as I started out as an adult apprentice in a new industry, just like she did.

What job do you most crave?

I would love to work as a safety officer for the company – it is such an important aspect of this industry. Or I'd like to join the rapid response crew who fix outages quickly and restore power to the community.

Your work motto?

Never stop learning, and learn as much as you can from everyone around you. Take pride in your work and you'll always do your best.

Where will you be in 15 years' time?

Working in this industry, hopefully with Endeavour Energy. When I'm finished my apprenticeship I'm interested in moving into a management role or something to do with safety.

Learn more about this Apprenticeship

Start by searching the web at:

- State Training Services
- Endeavour Energy
- Ausgrid
- E-Oz Energy Skills Australia
- myfuture
- Job Outlook

Steps to starting an Apprenticeship

To make informed career decisions you'll need to know:

- The range of apprenticeships and traineeships available.
- Where to search for an apprenticeship or traineeship vacancy.
- How you start and successfully complete an apprenticeship or traineeship.
- Who can help and the types of assistance available to you.

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Apprenticeships and traineeships:

- Are a great way to start a career or change career direction.
- Consist of structured off the job training which compliments the on the job training in the workplace.
- One of the best ways to get job training and qualifications.
- Are highly regarded by business and industry.
- Are nationally recognised.
- Can be full time or part time or school based.
- Are regulated by State Governments to ensure fairness and compliance with all state laws.
- Are competency based so they are completed when the apprentice or trainee has achieved the relevant qualification and competencies to industry standards.