Rail e-Mentoring Program

Sharing industry knowledge and connecting minds across Australia and New Zealand

Information Pack

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) is the peak body for rail in Australia, representing all sectors of the rail industry. We represent an array of rail organisations, including private and public, passenger and freight operators, track owners and managers, manufacturers of rolling stock, construction companies and all other organisations supplying and contributing to the Australasian rail sector.

This new, whole-of-industry Rail e-Mentoring Program provides employees of ARA member organisations with a way to contribute to the rail industry as a mentor by sharing their industry insights and practical career advice or by taking on the professional development opportunity as a mentee.

The e-Mentoring format enables mentors and mentees from different organisations, cities and states to communicate online at their convenience, providing broader opportunities for growing networks and the cross-fertilisation of ideas throughout industry, benefiting all participants and our industry as a whole. Recognising the importance of connecting rail during the coronavirus outbreak, this whole-of-industry e-mentoring program has been established in addition to the existing ARA Women in Rail Mentoring Program and is aimed at providing further support to ARA members.

How the Rail e-Mentoring Program is different from the ARA Women in Rail Mentoring Program

- **The Women in Rail Mentoring Program** is aimed at facilitating gender diversity and retention of female employees in the rail industry through empowering women and providing professional and leadership development opportunities. Only women can apply as mentees.
- **The Rail e-Mentoring Program** encompasses all gender and age groups and focusses on sharing industry knowledge including specific professional issues.

Both programs facilitate professional development, cross-industry networking and are aimed at strengthening our industry.

Benefits of the program

For Mentees:

- Engagement with knowledgeable and experienced rail professionals
- Exchange of expertise focusing on specific industry issues
- Guidance and support regarding workplace matters and career development
- Enhancing leadership skills and capability
- Excellent networking opportunities across the Australasian rail industry
- Receiving feedback and developmental guidance
- Identifying professional growth opportunities
- Support with career planning in the rail industry
- Goal setting
- Gaining new perspectives from outside your organisation

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For Mentors:
- Satisfaction in helping others
- Giving back to the industry or your profession
- Supporting rail industry emerging leaders
- Staying abreast of issues relevant to the industry
- Further development of mentoring skills such as listening, asking questions, guiding, providing feedback, communication and interpersonal skills
- Gaining new perspectives
- Developing business networks
- Engaging with mentees from different organisations, sectors of the industry and locations around Australia and New Zealand

Some examples of what mentors may assist with:
- Act as a source of information and insight
- Suggest relevant options regarding career development or strategies for achieving professional goals
- Recommend resources to expand knowledge in a particular industry area
- Facilitate improvement of specific skills
- Help a mentee solve professional challenges in their working life
- Discuss issues of professional ethics, workplace related issues and options of how these may be addressed

The program is not aimed at directly securing job opportunities for mentees, however will aim to facilitate longer term career progression as an indirect result.

Program capacity

Up to 40 pairs will be selected in 2020.

Who can participate as a mentee?
- The program is open to employees of ARA member organisations only who have been involved in the rail industry for 24 months or more on the date of application.
- No limitations regarding gender or age.
- Mentees are required to obtain approval from their employer to participate in the Rail e-Mentoring Program. **Employers are asked to cover the program cost of their nominated mentee at $350 (incl. GST).** *The ARA has introduced a special reduced rate to acknowledge the financial pressures being experienced by rail organisations during this time.*
- Interested candidates are to submit an application specifying their area of professional interest/potential outcomes as well as responses to other questions for consideration by the ARA.
- The ARA selection committee will seek to ensure a spread of mentees from a variety of ARA member companies, and the most suitable match between mentor and mentee pairs.

Who can participate as a mentor?
- Rail professionals with career experience greater than 10 years (this includes rail and non-rail experience)
- Employment with an ARA member organisation is mandatory
- A passion to see people reach their full potential
- Willingness to share industry specific expertise
- Good reputation for values and conduct
- Proven excellent communication skills, with an ability to challenge and encourage mentees and enhance their professional development
- Personable and outcomes focused
- High achievers
- Located anywhere in Australia and New Zealand

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- Capacity to commit time to engage with their mentee (as per the table on page 4)

Program Fees
- Mentors: Free
- Mentees: $350 (Incl. GST). This includes participation in the program, webinars and supporting online resources.

Mentee responsibilities
- **'Drive' the mentoring relationship – give your mentor direction about what you want from the program and be responsible for booking online meetings**
- Respect your mentor's time and also your own. Make sure you give this program your full attention and devote enough time to achieve the outcomes you are seeking
- Undertake the program training provided
- Prepare for your meetings to maximise mentors time and the experience
- Read and abide by the Code of Conduct (in Information Pack)
- Respond to your mentor and the ARA Program Manager in a timely manner
- Complete the short feedback surveys sent to you to ensure we can continue to improve the program
- Advise the ARA Program Manager immediately if there are problems or you cannot fulfil your responsibilities

Mentor responsibilities
- **Be available and accessible to the mentee according to the meeting frequency guidelines of this program. Understand that, if you cancel or postpone meetings frequently, you may send the wrong signal to your mentee and they might give up trying to contact you**
- Undertake the training provided. It will help you, even if you are an experienced manager
- Listen more than you talk
- You may not have the answers to all your mentee's questions. Don't go beyond the bounds of your experience or expertise
- Read and abide by the Code of Conduct (in Information Pack)
- Respond to your mentee and the ARA Program Manager in a timely manner
- Complete the short feedback surveys sent to you
- Advise the ARA Program Manager immediately if there are problems or you cannot fulfil your responsibilities
- Be available to discuss workplace strategies to address the coronavirus situation

Application process
Mentees and mentors will be asked to complete an application form to assess their eligibility for the program and to collect details about what they are looking for in a mentoring partner. To ensure quality and integrity of the program, applications will be reviewed by the ARA Rail e-Mentoring Committee and selected applicants will progress to the matching process that aligns suitable mentees and mentors for the best program outcome.

Program format and communication
Considering the current environment related to the coronavirus outbreak, this is a six (6) month **online program** with applications opening at the beginning of April 2020.

Mentees and mentors will be expected to complete the Art of Mentoring program training online to prepare for their mentoring relationship.

Mentors and mentees will be expected to be in contact at least once per fortnight via their choice of online communication method, e.g. phone, email or videoconferencing.

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During the program, mentees and mentors will receive regular communications from the ARA, access to support materials and be provided with helpful tips and information via webinars.

During and at the end of the six (6) month program, participants will be invited to provide feedback to the ARA about their experience.

Resources and program materials

Both mentors and mentees will be provided with the following resources:

- Access to the 'e-Mentoring' platform
- Online tool kits and resources
- Art of Mentoring online training
- Participation in the program webinars
- Certificates of completion

Once participants have been selected and matched, all the necessary materials will be made available online.

Certificates

Certificates of completion will be provided to mentees and mentors upon conclusion of the program in PDF format.

Indication of the time commitment for mentors and mentees

Activity	Approx. length
Training, reading and webinars	About 3 days in total
Preparation and time spent in mentoring conversations and follow-ups	1-2 hours per fortnight
Program surveys	½ hour in total

Key dates (*dates may slightly vary*)

Activity	Approx. date
Applications Open	22 April 2020
Program Information Webinar	1 May 2020
Applications Close	25 May 2020
Matching Pairs, Confirmation to Participants	8 June 2020
Program Launch Webinar	22 June 2020
Completion of the Program	Mid December 2020

Additional webinars to provide program tips will be scheduled during the program*

Code of Conduct

In applying for and entering into the Rail e-Mentoring Program, mentees and mentees agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct:

1. Demonstrating commitment to the relationship and getting the most out of the Mentoring Program.
2. Both mentors and mentees have a responsibility to invest their time, skills and experience into the partnership. Mentors and mentees must respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.
3. All participants must maintain confidentiality and privacy of any information discussed during the program.
4. It is recognised by both mentors and mentees that the ARA is not responsible for any career advice provided during the program; participants should use their best judgement in determining whether to follow and implement the counterpart's recommendations.
5. Both mentors and mentees may request to opt-out from the relationship if they feel it is not working for them. However, they have a responsibility to discuss options to improve their relationship before deciding on this step.

Privacy policy

Information about the program privacy policy with regards to the personal information of all program applicants is available via https://artofmentoring.net/privacy/

What do I do next?

Submit your application by completing the online application form.

Mentees will be asked questions about their background, and what they would like to achieve by working with a mentor for 6 months.

Mentors will be asked about their career experience and areas in which they feel comfortable mentoring. Please give as much information as you reasonably can as it will assist the matching process. You will be advised if there is a suitable match by the end of May 2020.

Frequently asked questions

What is professional mentoring?

Professional mentoring is a developmental relationship in which a mentor takes time to assist the career and professional development of a mentee. A mentoring relationship is one that is built on trust, in which there is an exchange of knowledge, experience and goodwill.

Why is mentoring important?

Participants in mentoring programs report a number of benefits including: improved confidence; self-awareness, clearer career direction; better communication skills; listening skills; feedback skills; more assertive communication; and enhanced management skills.

How long will the Mentoring Program run for?

The Mentoring Program will run for 6 months from May 2020 to November 2020.

Is the program open to ARA members and non-members?

Only employees of ARA members organisations can participate as mentors and mentees.

What's the cost?

Employers are asked to cover the program cost of their nominated mentee of $350 (incl. GST). *The ARA has introduced a special reduced rate to acknowledge the financial pressures being experienced by rail organisations during this time.*

Mentors participate free of charge.

How many people can participate in the program?

Up to 40 pairs (subject to sufficient applications and matching between mentees and mentors)

Why do you need me to provide so much information on my application form?

The information you provide will help us 'match' the right mentee with the right mentor, based on experience, skills and what you both want to achieve from the program.

What are the matching principles of the Mentoring Program?

Matching process is primarily based on the requirements related to career/professional development areas that a mentee would like to advance and a mentor is ready to add value to.

When will I know if I've been successful, and if so, who I've been matched with?

Once the selection/matching process is finalised, we will contact you to confirm whether you've been accepted into the program and who has been selected as your mentoring partner. It's important to note we won't 'match for matching sake' to ensure high quality and integrity of the program. You should hear from us by late-May as to whether your application has been successful.

How often does a pair communicate?

A pair should communicate at least once every two weeks.

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Will discussions between mentees and mentors be confidential?

Absolutely! Great mentee/mentor relationships are based first and foremost on trust. Discussions between mentors/mentees in the program are not reportable as part of the program. Mentor/mentee pairs are encouraging to discuss upfront how you will handle confidentiality.

Contacts

Contact Maria Morozova, Program Manager at the Australasian Railway Association via programs@ara.net.au or 0499 919 496.

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