



BUSLINK TRAINEE PROFILE

Russell Houston

Driver Trainer

Real-life accounts of how the National Workforce Development Fund is benefiting Australian transport and logistics enterprises.

Over two decades Russell Houston has driven 3 million kilometres, or 50 times around Earth. He's one of those workers every bus company wishes they had.

A loyal employee of Darwin-based Buslink for 17 years, Houston, a qualified driver trainer, is the bus and coach company's second longest serving employee.

Houston moved to Darwin from Brisbane as a youth in 1983, working as a supermarket casual before moving into car detailing for a few years, which in turn led to Buslink's wash bay, servicing a fleet of 40 buses and coaches.

I'VE ACHIEVED SOMETHING ... I'VE WORKED MY WAY UP FROM WASHING BUSES TO BEING A TRAINER.

As Buslink grew in size, so did Houston's aspirations. He scrubbed up and left the wash bay to get behind the wheel of the vehicles he had once cleaned.

His calm temperament, excellent people manner and driving skills made him a prime candidate to train new drivers to Buslink's uncompromising standards. "I sort of feel like I've moved up the ladder," Houston says. "I've achieved something ... I've worked my way up from washing buses to being a trainer."

Buslink used the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) to develop Houston and a few other fellow drivers with a Certificate IV in Transport and Logistics (Road Transport - Heavy Vehicle Driving Instruction), a qualification developed by the Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council (TLISC).

The certificate covers driver technique and human factors. Being a good driver is important, Houston says, but being adaptable and respectful are paramount. "You have to be able to adapt your training style to the trainee. You have to cope with people's needs. There are times where you have to be a bit more patient."

Having both experience and qualification, Houston is able to step into operational roles, such as radio control and rosters, and knows the school and urban routes like the back of his hand. He can also mentor and assess other drivers.

He comes across as self-effacing, but his colleagues are less shy, speaking highly of him, their descriptions peppered with "modest", "well-liked" and "social".

"I get on well with people," he says. "If you have a happy go lucky nature in this job, it's really good. If you say hello to somebody when they get on the bus and they don't say hello to you, don't take it the wrong way. Just don't worry about it."

For more information about how TLISC can assist your enterprise in accessing the National Workforce Development Fund, please contact our Workforce Development team:

Email workforcedevelopment@tlisc.org.au

Telephone 03 9604 7200

tlisc.org.au