

## CASE STUDY

### SkillStart: Developing Talent from the Ground Up

*Underground Coal Mine*

#### Objective

Core Crew was engaged to manage a longstanding underground coal operation. Due to tightness across the employment market and to improve outcomes for the operations, we decided to implement a shift in our workforce through the engagement of inexperienced workers.

Our objective was to create a structured pathway that accelerated skills development, reduced workforce turnover, and enabled capable workers to progress into higher-skilled roles. The program was tailored to meet the immediate operational requirements while supporting the broader industry goal of building a sustainable, skilled mining workforce.

#### The Challenges

Our team needed to address several workforce challenges to meet the client's operational and long-term skills requirements, including:

- **High turnover of staff** - The site experienced frequent departures of staff, which disrupted team continuity, increased recruitment costs, and slowed the development of a stable, competent workforce.
- **Shortage of skilled workers** - There was an ongoing need for operators with proven competency, creating pressure on the site to fill critical roles and meet production targets.
- **Delayed progression for new starters** - Inexperienced recruits were taking longer than required to reach operational competence, impacting operations

## AT A GLANCE

### CHALLENGES

- High Turnover disrupting team flow and increasing recruitment costs.
- Limited availability of experienced operators.
- Slow Competency – Longer ramp-up time for inexperienced starters.

### BENEFITS

- SkillStart participants achieved **0–4% turnover**, compared with 11% among experienced operators.
- NTI workers onboarded through SkillStart were **4x more likely to stay** than the average workforce member.
- **90% increase** in new-to-industry hires.
- **46% decrease** in annual forecasted training costs
- Faster competency development contributed to lower operational expenses and higher production rates.
- Purpose-trained NTI workers aligned to site processes and culture.

## Our Approach

To meet these objectives, Core Crew implemented its SkillStart program; a structured, end-to-end approach tailored to site-specific challenges. A dedicated New-to-Industry Coordinator oversaw the practical and operational delivery of the program, ensuring a seamless transition from recruitment through to site readiness.

SkillStart goes beyond standard recruitment by rapidly upskilling new-to-industry (NTI) workers, building teams that are capable, adaptable, and ready to drive change. This approach enables clients to secure skilled personnel in a competitive labour market while strengthening long-term workforce capability.

### Designed Recruitment Pathways

Identified candidates with the highest potential for success, ensuring the right people were selected for site.

### Implemented Structured Onboarding

Delivered a clear, consistent onboarding process using the SkillStart program to build competence and confidence from day one.

### Developed Tailored Training Program

Created site-specific, in-house training and development pathways aligned with operational standards.

### Fast-Track Workforce Upskilling

Supported new starters to progress quickly into higher-skilled roles, enhancing operational capability and reducing reliance on external providers.

### Monitoring and Feedback

Ongoing performance tracking and feedback ensured early identification of challenges and optimised each worker's progression in line with site needs.

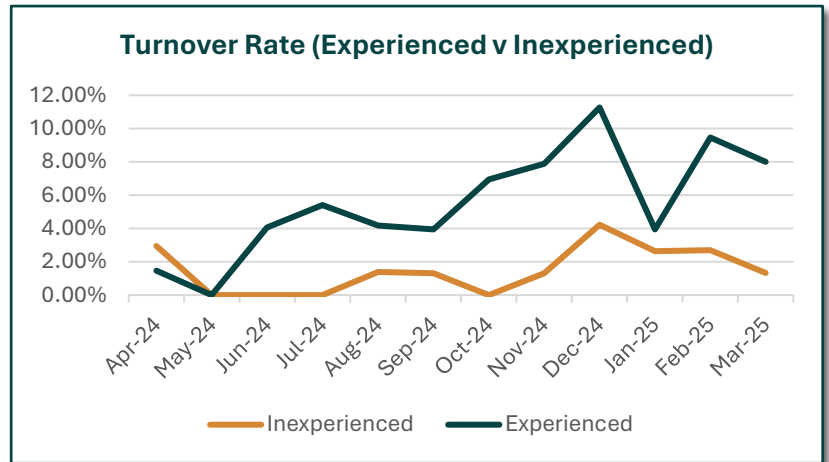
### Workforce Sustainability

By combining recruitment, onboarding, and upskilling, we built a reliable, low-risk workforce that met production targets and reduced dependence on external hires.

## Our Results

The SkillStart program delivered measurable improvements in workforce capability, operational efficiency, and cost-effectiveness:

- SkillStart participants achieved consistently low turnover rates of **0–4%**, compared to peaks of over 11% among experienced operators.
- NTI workers onboarded through SkillStart were **four times more likely to remain** than the average workforce member, highlighting the impact of targeted onboarding and training.



- Increased NTI recruitment and accelerated upskilling through SkillStart contributed to **reduced operational expenses** and **measurable gains in production rates**.
- Annual forecasted **training costs decreased by 46%** through in-house, site-specific training and accelerated workforce development.
- Recruitment of new-to-industry workers **increased by 90%**, significantly expanding the talent pipeline.
- Purpose-trained NTI workers developed through SkillStart were aligned with site processes and culture, supporting safer, more efficient, and lower-risk operations.

**New-to-industry workers**  
**4x**  
 more likely to stay than experienced workers

**Forecasted training costs reduced by**  
**46%**

**Recruitment of NTI workers increased by**  
**90%**

**Upskilling of workforce led to**  
**Decreased operational expenses and improved production rates**