



I DRIVE CHANGE IN MY INDUSTRY

Victoria Kent
Learning and Development Specialist

Shattering the glass ceiling is just another workday for Victoria Kent. Being the first female Train Driver for the Perth Public Transport System was just the beginning for Victoria. She is now the lead instructional designer for Australia's first autonomous rail network, the largest in the world.

Victoria started her career in the Military but had a desire to become a Forensic Psychologist and a Criminal Profiler. Her background in Psychology, has led her to a career as a revenue protection officer then as a Railway Police Officer, before embarking on a whole new career as a Train Driver.

Fast forward to today, and not only is Victoria the first female Train Driver, but after more than twenty-five years in the rail industry, she is now at the apex of the industry; working for Rio Tinto as a training and development specialist, designing resources for the rail industry, which encompasses the implementation of new technologies for Australia's first autonomous rail network, the largest in the world.

Victoria's rail training began with a Certificate III in Rail Operations (Train Driver). Then, in 2001, according to Victoria the rest is proverbial history.

"As I transitioned, it opened the door to the upskilling opportunities which supported new roles. I have a passion for development, and I love learning new things. Not one to rest on my laurels, after two years of being a Train Driver, I become a 'Driver-Trainer'. Next, I became a Driver Coordinator which involved the provision of fault support to other drivers, ongoing assessment, overseeing the school and teaching people the fundamentals of train driving".

After six years as a Driver Coordinator with the new B Series railcars and developing and delivering training programs Victoria moved to Rio Tinto's Learning and Development department, where her expedition with the first autonomous rail network commenced.

"We would be in crisis as a society if we didn't have automation. It has enabled us to yield things effectively and at pace. It hasn't really replaced any people in the workforce, in fact if you look at it, workforces continue to grow," She added.

Victoria is passionate about the future of rail, especially in the area of autonomous trains, and exploring the future job roles for school-leavers and career changers.

"Work looks quite different to what it used to be. Instead of driving a train, I am now sitting in a hub responding to various train and technology faults along the line. Technology has changed the way we work - and has provided opportunities for people of all physical abilities to participate in the industry."

With a focus on future skilling and the interchangeability of her skill sets, Victoria has transformed her career through the power of reskilling. Her resilience has seen her pivot from her role in the military to more operational and management-centric roles now.