CAREER JOURNEY

KELLY SOPHER – PLANT OPERATOR



YANCOAL
兖煤澳大利亚有限公司

1. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR YANCOAL?

I'm a Plant Operator at the Stratford Coal Mine.

2. TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY AND HOW YOU GOT HERE.

I began at the Stratford Site in 1997 in an Administration Role with Henry Walker. And continued in various admin roles in the small community of Gloucester whilst starting a family & taking time out of the workforce to look after our 3 sons. Returning to the Stratford & Duralie Sites in 2008 with Leighton Contractors, as a Site Administrator until I was made redundant. Then in 2021, I gained a 12-month Dump Truck Traineeship with Programmed, at Stratford, that led to gaining a permanent Operator position with Yancoal the following year.

3. WHAT WAS A CAREER DEFINING MOMENT FOR YOU?

There have been a couple, and I put them down to not being afraid to keep asking or saying Yes. A significant one would be beginning my role as an Operator.

4. TELL US ABOUT ANY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAT HELPED YOU GROW.

Cert. 3 Surface Extraction with Programmed, whilst I was familiar with the Stratford Site, systems & procedures, this qualification helped identify and apply practical tools at an operational level.

I have been part of the ERT Team at Stratford for 2 years, I'm working towards my Cert. 3 in Emergency Response & hope to complete it before closure. I love the monthly training sessions with a great team, who support my eagerness to get in and have a go as well as gaining skills that go beyond my current role.

Cert. 4 Open Cut Examiner with Strategic Corporate Training. A great facilitator Jeff, with a great group learning the theory in class. Completing the practical assignments with the Crews at Stratford and Duralie were a great encouragement, the last 12months have been a massive development journey academically and personally. Constantly putting myself outside my comfort zone & finding the confidence to back myself. Last month I sat the OCE exam (the 1st exam I have sat in 31 years). Whilst I don't yet have the results, I feel a great sense of achievement to have sat in that examination room.

Women in Yancoal mentoring program. I joined this program early last year and my Mentor, Braedon Gaske and I had some great conversations about my potential growth. His advice essentially was look broader than where you are right now, and beyond even where you want to go. That, and get comfortable being uncomfortable! This was a fantastic program bringing together colleagues from other Yancoal sites in a variety of roles.

CORE OCE Program, with Kim Nguyen at CORE Mine. This course was an invaluable experience on exam preparation. Also, bringing together a lot of the candidates – which gave us opportunities to speak with each other about our experiences, and the differences and similarities of our sites.

MTW OCE Tutorials. An opportunity for me to join the MTW candidates with Jeff Hanlon and brainstorm scenarios. There are many points from Jeff's advice that have sat with me since commencing my Cert. 4 and participating in these sessions, particularly that you do have a voice and can use it. Don't be discounted by yourself.

5. WHAT WAS ONE OF YOUR PROUDEST MOMENTS?

A significant one would be having prepared a letter to our younger selves as part of the Yancoal Mentoring program, it was sprung on us to deliver the letter to the group! It culminated a lot of what I had been learning along my journey as well as putting into practice, advice & demonstrating to myself – Yes, I can!

6. IF NOT THIS PATH, THEN WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN YOUR CAREER PLAN B?

This is a difficult question; along the way I have always just kept asking questions & saying Yes to opportunities. Wherever the path may take me.

