

Dear Committee members,

Further to our submission to the Senate Education and Employment Reference Committee, we surveyed our members at Holden to better understand their current employment situations and prospects, to ascertain the degree of satisfaction with the Company's transition of its employees, and what further support could have been offered to them.

We received 33 responses. De-identified data – qualitative (attached) and quantitative (below) – is provided to you for your consideration.

Regards, Melissa Cadwell,  
Organiser, Professionals Australia

## Holden employees PA Members Survey August 2020 - RESULTS

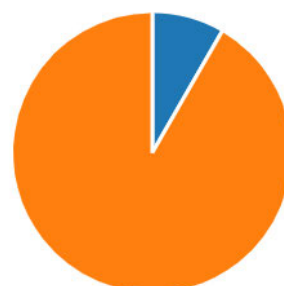
Have you been able to secure other work since leaving Holden?

[More Details](#)



Are you working for multiple employers?

[More Details](#)



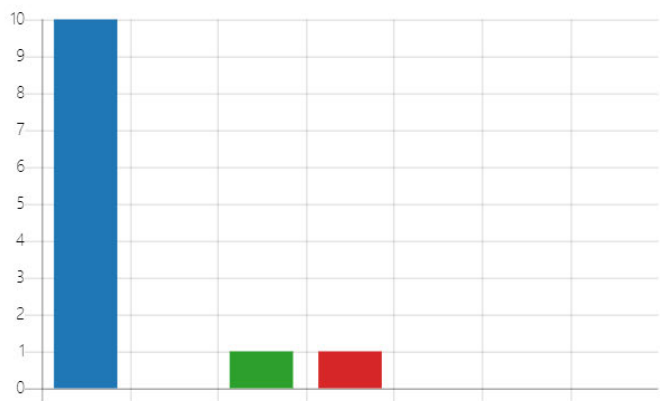
Are you now working in the same field, or in a similar role?

[More Details](#)



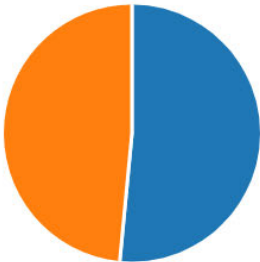
On what basis are you currently employed?

[More Details](#)



Do you think Holden did enough to support people with transitioning into new careers?

[More Details](#)



Do you think the Government did enough to support Holden's ex-employees in finding new positions?

[More Details](#)



**What do you think the Government could have done to better assist Holden's ex-employees to find new positions?**

Government positions could have been more open to the skillsets of automotive engineers especially with regard to rolling stock and transport positions

Anything. The government did not take any action as far as I'm aware.

Government could have used Holden employees for many roles out there they (the government) are currently advertising for positions such as project managers. I applied for many of these and did not even get feedback. They could have also helped with financial aid like the first announcement for further training.

I didn't see any government initiatives implemented so any help would have been valuable

Support manufacturing in Australia! Provide incentives for companies to employ ex auto engineers.

Govt should have supported them by offering job openings, etc.

I am not aware they did anything this time (again in 2014 they appeared to have done more).

Lots. I don't know of anything the government has done.

I wasn't at Holden at the time

They should have supported the industry, manufacturing is a key resource to being self sufficient.

Offer incentives to companies for taking on ex-automotive engineers.

I am not aware of any government support - so anything

As far as I'm aware there was no specific support from the Government at all!

There does not appear to have been any effort by the government to assist any of us. I recall that when the Elizabeth plant shut down there was a number of schemes available for retraining and assisting with the process of looking/obtaining new employment, but for me I have seen nothing from the government.

Provided incentives to re-train such as waive/discount tertiary fees at universities

Previous closure in Holden manufacturing in 2017 there was funding to reskill to other industries outside of automotive which was \$3k per person based on the approved course. This was not available to Engineering in

Maybe take some time to understand the skill set of automotive engineers to better promote them to other industries

Encouraged defence companies to recruit ex auto staff of all flavours

The same support offered previously

Holden experience is a transferable skill. Since automotive jobs very less, Holden engineers should be given waivers that would enable them to work in Food, Pharmaceutical, Defence and other industries where we can transitioned into newer challenging roles.

I am not aware of any support provided by the Federal Government to be honest. I actually felt their sentiment after the shutdown announcement was quite hurtful and showed little compassion to the employees.

More government involvement would have been handy. eg. Government staff member run an explanation of their support and grants in a similar way to the employer fair days.

Nothing.

Maybe more generous retraining assistance but in view of the pandemic this seems a bit much to ask.

Anything would have helped. There was nothing from government, not even guidance on how to access whatever centrelink could provide.

Even give us details regarding links, where to .. etc, in applying for occupations in the government sector.

N/A

what support?

Review financial position with GM and see if a deal could've been made to keep a small portion of engineering open. Discuss with Holden job opportunities for ex-employees.

no idea.

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meet with holden employees to see skills and redeploy on major government projects  
provide incentives/requirements for use of ex-holden employees on major government projects

VERTO offered some financial assistance, but I found it sufficient to help with professional training, courses varied from \$15 - \$32k. Government offered up to \$2k. Which while appreciated, did not provide incentive to undertake more expensive courses with no guarantee of work at end. More government support of manufacturing, and hence jobs is best thing they can do.

The Senate Committee is also interested to know what other examples of industry policy in Australia could help keep manufacturing viable here. Do you have any thoughts about this?

Better incentives to manufacture in Australia.

Tariffs on imported products & subsidies for manufacturers.

No

Co-investment in companies employing Australians in Australia. Not be short sighted considering this as handouts, instead investment in Australia's future to attract smart businesses. Auto OEM investment is done by every government in the world, but somehow Australia should survive without assistance with high wages

No.

Now they ask? Giving equal support to industries as other countries do would have been a good place to start. Support the industry like every other government in the world does. Stop talking about the amount of tax payers money and start to quantify the return on investment in the Australian manufacturing economy.

They could bench mark each industry globally to define what support each country gives to it, then "THIS" becomes the baseline, not the theoretical "level playing field" that destroyed our Auto Industry.

The current Government strategy of move automotive engineers into defence is flawed. Many are philosophically opposed to the defensive industry. As a result automotive knowledge is being diluted as engineers disperse into infrastructure (main alternative). Not enough is being done to retain the critical mass  
The justification for local work re. the Naval industry and other defense contracts should have been applicable for other industries, so we are not reliant on the whims of international companies

I would like to see government purchasing policies that support locally engineered/manufactured products. There needs to be recognition that the lowest possible price does not necessarily provide the best long term benefit to the community. Witness the urgent demand for medical goods that would normally be sourced from China and cannot be manufactured in Australia as evidence!

If it had have been a policy of local, state and federal governments to "buy Australian made" when it came to vehicles purchases, we would not be in the situation we are now in. Too many politicians wanted their BMWs at their ComCars, and now it seems those vehicles are no longer to be sold in Australia.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how dependent we are on other countries to manufacture key or essential items that are needed in times of crisis. The Government could identify those skills and manufacturing capabilities and provide incentives to help those industries flourish here. For example, the govt could mandate that our hospitals have to buy a certain proportion of each PPE item from local manufacturers using locally sourced materials. This would ensure that there is an industry here that could ramp up during a  
The Covid situation puts this in even more focus given countries and even states closing borders. Not sure what policies will help but needs exploring.

Salary levels for manufacturing employees and labourers are too high compared to other countries.

Companies here also need to meet rules and regulations that countries in Asia doesn't so if there are no import duties to protect the industry manufacturing is dead in this country.

I don't think the current govt has an industry policy at all! They subscribe to free market thinking whilst countries like Germany Japan UK etc kill us in advanced manufacturing output! We are ranked ~75th (same as Pakistan!). They could with a long term renewables policy for starters

Comparable support to other countries is required to keep auto manufacturing viable in Australia. It has to be understood that the playfield is not level. If we play the game fair, we'll get crushed

This is high time to think about localising manufacturing, especially the hi-tech and green jobs by providing better incentives and subsidies to Aussie manufacturers. Need an industry plan to deal with post covid issues. Automation and mass production of critical and essential products, equipments, machinery should make us not only self sufficient but also we can help our nearby neighbours by providing them these items free or at a cost they can afford, which will gain our country some respect and standing as a regional and global citizen.

Ensure all government agencies source locally where possible with all infrastructure, maintenance and service projects all levels from Federal to councils. This provides a stable base revenue platform that Australian companies can then use to support chasing private contracts. Alliances can be forged between Schools, Unis  
Consistent bipartisan policy. Why would anybody invest their own money in a manufacturing start up when the long term government policy is to transition our economy to one that focuses on the service industry?

If you are going to give subsidies without part ownership of the company then you only have yourself to blame if they leave or you thought it was a worthwhile Return on investment.

There is always money for manufacturing if they want the industry and see the benefit. Perhaps with COVID they realize they may need to diversify the economic portfolio of Australia and not just rely on tourism and education.

very worthwhile career when put up against the traditional choices. The process must run back deep in our educational system. so the educators must be educated first. Most professionals in education never rub shoulders with the manufacturing sector so there is a lot of work to be done in this area. I would think a lot of integration will be required. In the long term a stronger manufacturing sector is the only thing that will provide Australia with a good future.

The Government appears to have forgotten that co-investment with industry is necessary to be competitive in a global environment. There were economic studies that showed that automotive manufacturing returned far more to the economy (jobs, turn over, revenue, skills transfer to other industries) than was ever provided in co-investment. It also provided national security - remember when we relied on local manufacturing to support the war effort last century? We won't be so lucky if ever we need that again - our allies, however close, will need to support themselves before assisting us. Also as an island, we can be blockaded from imports. I hope it doesn't happen, because we are totally unprepared. The policies for the future need to take these into

Investment in University research, and protection tariffs for manufacturing.

Yes in Australia we are not on a level playing field as no support for manufacturing

the world has moved to small scale high flexibility and high capability intelligent manufacturing, we need tech hubs with co-located research and development for new products and multi stream manufacturing which need incentives and infrastructure. We have large mining operations yet all the technology is brought into Australia instead of developing here! Almost every segment would benefit from smarter manufacturing that is

ahhh, the horse kinda bolted for holden, but.... for the remaining manuf: SUBSIDISE! every other bloody country does it, and it keeps people off the streets and upskills a workforce.

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on major government projects there are requirements such as 90% use of Australian steel and other Australian first policies on material use, this should have been applied to government fleet vehicles and even company vehicles in general if they want to claim tax benefits.

vehicle import tariffs should have been reviewed, such as at current having no import duties on countries with low labour costs (i.e. Thailand) but tariffs with countries that pay 1st world wages (i.e. USA, Germany).  
potential for import tariffs calculated to equate the labour and energy price discrepancy between Australia and the import country

Australia needs to compete on a level playing field. Where other countries offer incentives to their own industries to export cheap goods, of course Australia cannot compete with that. Aust needs to be more informed on where Aust cannot compete, and if it not a level playing field look to what needs to be done to help Aust compete. Manufacturing is a vital industry for any country, other countries know how important it is - Aust it seems is willing to let it die off to its own peril.



Is there anything else that you would like to comment on?

I only had success due to personal connections in the industry, others at Holden may know less due to the period of time they have spent in the company. This is another area which we could have received more support

N/A

No.

I am employed at Vinfast Australia along with many ex holden engineers, some who moved before the shutdown and others after.

In the words of Joni Mitchell (Big Yellow Taxi),,,,, "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone" ,,,,,,

no

This whole issue is a function of the conservative side of politics going back to the Abbott/Hockey government not caring about the working public, caring too much about ideology and destruction of the union movement. Even Howard was smarter than that, he knew there needed to be a industries within the country to enable employment to flourish. The failure of the auto industry and subsequent failure of associated supplier levels and Australia's ability to manufacture can be laid at the feet of Abbott/Hockey. In a time of war, the actions that Abbott/Hockey started would be described as "sedition".

No

Engage the engineers on the ground to provide advise and participate in corporate board meetings to ensure a balanced approach to the decisions made. Most of the times the high paid board members make decisions that are not verified and seems one-sided for just profit making and are not simply helping the hard working employees.

No

No

I wish that Holden had followed previous practice in considering redundancies. The EBA was intended to capture this but clearly the company has tried to find wriggle room and abandon earlier processes. The delays in resolving this through legal process are not making my position any easier.

No

No

our skills will diminish in global value quickly if we don't invest in smart manufacturing hubs, create microgrids, have electric cars with bidirectional energy storage and create autonomous arterial roads and geofenced precincts for high density living

yes, australian minerals. make local processing and value adding mandatory. stop just giving it away.

very little PA support for junior employees who unlike our senior colleagues do not have 6 figure pay outs and are struggling to find employment in a flooded engineering market - especially given there is higher % of PA membership amongst junior engineers compared to the rest of cohort. Jobs in which we would have been suitable in the past are now being given to more senior engineers due to the flood of ex-holden engineers. The last EBA meant the divide between junior and senior engineers widened meaning lower salary and lower pay out. Many junior engineers moved towards the PG (due its location away from melbourne metro), purchased houses and even moved countries on the promise of at least 5-10yrs guaranteed work.

Holden was much more considerate to employees circumstances when manufacturing closed. This latest round of retrenchments, Holden is showing little consideration to 'doing the right thing' by loyal employees who believed Holden's' narrative that they would be here for the future. They are putting uncompromising cost saving over employee interests.



1 month
Zero days
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>
2 days
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>
I left Holden before the shut down but after the announcement
<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Not answered</i>

*Not answered*

No luck in finding engineering work. Took 4 months to find work as a casual driver.

What do you think Holden could have done to better assist ex-employees in finding new positions?
Publicly promote the skills and quality of its employees
More personalised CV and job application training.
Similar up or "down" skilling allowances that were available after the first end to Holden announcement.
N/A
Training! Have not had industry relevant career training while at Holden
Holden should refer ex employees to current- or ex- supplier base. Reach out to these suppliers if there are opportunities for employment.
Holden should keep referring ex-employees for potential roles at GM Global. Send them links to their personal emails.
I think Holden did pretty well but the support offered in 2014 was more comprehensive (more courses etc).
Further assistance with resume writing. Engage with a head hunter to all professional engineers to assist with placement in a new career.
Sorry. I wasn't at Holden at the time
I think the real issue is, the Government could have supported the industry better, then this would not be the situation. Holden have done OK by me.
We exited the business into a market place with an unemployment rate of 8-13%, I'm not sure anything could have helped.
Better resume preparation program
The company only provided group "outplacement" sessions. These sessions needed to be more specific to the Engineering workforce, rather than generic help for people who were unskilled. These were too generic. I think personalised, interactive assistance (resume review, etc.) would have been more helpful.
Yes, most definitely. Holden arranged two sessions with an outplacement company to discuss getting back into the job market, creating a CV and covering letter, searching for available advertised positions, but it was just general information. Nothing from an individual perspective, nothing from a perspective that many of us have quite niche' work experience, nothing really from the fact that many of us have not been in the position of looking for a job for over 20 years. Holden (and in particular the Holden HR dept.) failed us in this regard.
1. provided more funds or been more actively involved in getting more from the outplacement service. For the time allocated by the providers, it would have been more beneficial if we had a couple of large seminars to cover the topics discussed, which then would have given us the opportunity to have individualised sessions to review resumes. As it was, the HR department left that to the union delegates to drive the program and we are not subject matter experts. 2. Holden were really good by arranging prospective employers to talk to the teams in webinars. Unfortunately, this was focused on the group who were leaving first from Port Melbourne, all that support seemed to fizzle out for the PG employees.

Nothing
I think Holden was doing a great job
Trading provided by Bayside ( \$600 worth) was inefficient and group-based which could have been done offline. Time could have been better spent on resume checking and interview practice.
The outplacement support / Resume writing sessions were a complete waste of money. I would have much preferred the \$600 per person was used in a different manner.
Holden could have engaged Defence employers to provide concessions to Holden engineers especially for the Australian Citizens with regards to the Security clearances. Its a 'catch 22' situation for us - that we need a security clearance to get a defence job and only after getting the job once can apply for security clearance considering most of our skillsets and knowledge is much required in the defence sector.
Thankfully I found work quickly but having a consolidated list of work employee contacts to establish a network outside of Holden would be a great idea (obviously opt in). There were some careers workshops run with some employers but Covid-19 made that difficult.
I'm currently taking a much needed break. Holden did a very good job of linking us up to new job opportunities. I just need to follow them up when ready.
Retraining opportunities.
I could go on for ever but really they did a reasonable job of covering the essentials.
I was made redundant at the end of March so didn't get much opportunity for Holden to assist. As soon as I left the business, I heard very little.
I think Holden did enough. It's up to me to find a job, not Holden.
Better transition programs like they did last time.
Be supportive and actually allow people to move on when they were ready instead of holding them captive.
I thought the support was ok. Maybe some additional training on Linked In, job market trends etc
Maybe, the transition training was pretty generic, some colleagues wished it could have been 1:1 specific. But hey, i had a mate from Alston just get marched out the door, so i count myself as being treated reasonably.



Allow flexibility with exit date - we initially respected that we had work to do and therefore final date could not be brought forward if a new job was found, but when people's dates were brought forward and no guarantee provide that it wouldn't happen to others, it seems unfair that we (as employees) couldn't bring our date forward but Holden could at any time.

Holden could've reached out to it's industry partners to advocate them to take employees; Holden could've provided formal training to reskill employees in new technologies/industries. They could've assisted employees in gaining certifications; lobbied government to take Holden employees on in government projects

Careers counselling service. Retraining allowance.

What support offered by Holden did you find the most beneficial?
Support from management to make contacts in industry
Meetings setup with potential employers to showcase what jobs and companies were looking to hire.
Networking opportunities with different companies interested in Holden employee's skills
Training course provided to get "employment ready".
Resume training. Company information sessions held by Holden were not as useful as I expected they might be.
Information on CV format and current expectations of it.
Bayside consulting training on resume and job interview techniques.
Webinars with different employers and groups e.g. for people who wanted to pursue a career in program management

External companies presented what job opportunities they have available or coming up. Also Resume writing and interview techniques.
CV writing, external company presentations during work time
Organised sessions with potential recruitment companies
Transition support from Right Management Consultants was good enough to create better linkedin profiles and resumes. But the jobs are far and few at the moment.
Allowing reasonable time post shut down announcement to focus on prospective employers, write resumes etc. The Bayside Group 2 half day course was also worthwhile.
"Job Fairs" where prospective employers ran Zoom sessions explaining their job opportunities and where to apply etc.
Access to training such as resume and interview skills.
The outplacement sessions as well as presentations from various engineering companies.
The businesses that presented on job opportunities (like a virtual career fair), the project management presentation they organised,
the resume and interfacing training was good, but we set up a peer meeting each week to talk about experiences of applying for jobs and interviews. sort of a support group but also an indicator of what the real world is like.



What do you think Holden could have done to better support their employees?	
proactively sought employers for its employees	
Nothing.	
an allowance to train for a transitioning to different industries.	
N/A	
Provide better internal training and support with records of what had been done. Work with employees to achieve RPEng status.	
Engineering did something (ie weekly seminars from defense companies, etc) but I cannot confirm on other groups.	
One on one advice and training	
Engage with a professional recruitment agency to assist with breaking through the experience barrier.	
I wasn't at holden at the time	
Better resume preparation program	
The presentations from potential employers (BAE Systems, Segula Technologies, Carbon Revolution, VinFast, etc.) were excellent. I would like to have seen more of these.	
Experts in the area of job placement should have had one-on-one sessions with people. The group sessions (over zoom) were just above being useless.	

Nothing
Allowed us to spend our \$600 training allowance on courses of our own choice
I don't think Holden did much above and beyond the standard requirements. There seemed to be less support than when manufacturing cessation was announced back in 2013. However there were government funds then to support this.
Engaging the recruiters, employers agencies for placements. Maybe a jobs expo inviting other industry leaders and managers to have job opportunities discussion with holden employees.
The vehicle purchase scheme for those leaving early was rushed making decision making on vehicle purchases difficult. This however was a task I imagine was quite difficult to organise with little notice.
None I can think of.
\$ to pursue alternate options to that provided.
See Q 2
I was given some support for financial advice and there was some training on resume preparation. There was no one-on-one training provided. I would have appreciated someone going over my CV/resume and providing feedback. All the assistance was very general in nature and (other than financial contribution for financial advice) didn't help me personally very much.
They did enough.
The transition programs were not run like before
Be fair and honour the commitment people made instead of the double standard they ran the business by.
Organised more 1-1 career planning and training. The sessions they did organise were ok, but not significantly beneficial. I wanted more 1-1 resume coaching, career planning and feedback on my pathway to transition to my next job.
not gone and closed the proving ground. we did bloody good work, taking a cadillac program from bottom to top of JDPowers customer satisfaction list. that is a big thing. we did it with the GMC truck too. its hard because Holden don't make the decisions, GM USA do, and the local exec contingent roll it out.

help gain certification, recognised training and lobby government

Career counselling to look at skills and provide some direction of suitable alternative careers. Retraining allowance.