# An Australian Qualification At Your Doorstep



Founded by Jean Paul Barallon in Melbourne Australia, TrainEdge Institute of Education is forging ahead in providing qualifications in hairdressing to an international standard. Having identified the potential in the country, TrainEdge commenced its Sri Lankan campus in August 2008. Accredited by the Australian Government and supported by the Sri Lankan Government through the BOI, TrainEdge provides its students with a multitude of career options upon completion of its course. Ranjeeva Perera, Founder and Managing Director of TrainEdge Sri Lanka spoke to Udeshi Amarasinghe about the courses and services on offer and the future plans of the education institute in Sri Lanka.

**Can you tell us a little bit about TrainEdge, Australia?**
TrainEdge Institute of Education Australia initially commenced its operations in Melbourne in the year 2002. The aim is to provide high quality training in hairdressing, hospitality and certain management subjects to students at a reasonable price. TrainEdge is very much like a family. For an international student Australia is not easy, the funding is very high – you have to study and also find a job. However at TrainEdge we provide the facility where payments can be made in instalments where students can pay by the month. At TrainEdge students are part of the family.

**Why did you decide to bring TrainEdge to Sri Lanka?**
Our speciality at the moment is hairdressing.We recognised that Sri Lanka has immense potential in this sector.This is the reason we started TrainEdge, Institute of Education in Sri Lanka. We started this campus in August 2008 with the support of the BOI. The courses offered at TrainEdge are accredited by the Australian Government. The Australian Government has been very supportive. I must specially mention the Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Kathy Klugman and Dr Sarath Amunugama attended the opening ceremony in August 2008.
In Sri Lanka we see two segments in the market. There are many people in Sri Lanka and lot of institutions that are purely focused on sending people out of Sri Lanka. They would say that hairdressing is the key to Australia. It could be, but that is not our aim. We are very committed to Sri Lanka. We want to develop and enhance the hairdressing industry in Sri Lanka. At the same time TrainEdge has some of the best trainers in Australia and we want to share our skills with our Sri Lankan students. Currently our Head Trainer – Suellen Conway is in Sri Lanka. This is the TrainEdge difference. I would really like to stress on that, we are an institution that is investing heavily on bringing Australian trainers to Sri Lanka. This is truly an Australian course. We have very good Sri Lankan trainers as well.
Sri Lanka has fantastically talented people and we can enhance and develop these talents further. This is the vision of TrainEdge, to capitalise on the amazing talent that Sri Lanka has and give them the skills that is required. We want to work with the hairdressing industry within the country. We want to work with the salons here. It is only them who know the situation in Sri Lanka and we would love to work with them. We want to develop relationships with them so that it will benefit our students.
I must emphasise that TrainEdge, Sri Lanka is not an agency – we are not agents. This is a direct branch of the Institute in Australia. This is why we have TrainEdge trainers coming from Australia to Sri Lanka.

We are the only Australian hairdressing institute with a campus in Sri Lanka.

**Can you tell us a little bit about the courses that are offered at TrainEdge Sri Lanka?**
We are offering the Australian Certificate III in hairdressing. This qualifies you as an Australian standard hairdresser. To be able work or migrate to Australia as a hairdresser you have to have this qualification according to the Point System that governs the immigration process in Australia. This is an international qualification that is recognised in other countries as well.
The subjects we provide, covers everything from haircutting, colouring, perming to managing a salon, handling a cash register and communication in the work place. We give a comprehensive course in which the structure is decided with the Australian Government. In order for the Australian Government to accredit us we have to these subjects. A person can open his/her own salon or work in a salon. It is a complete course we are not just teaching people to cut hair. It's not just hairdressing. At the final stage of the course students are trained in a commercial salon environment. People can complete this course in 9 months if they do it full-time.

**We Are The Only Australian Hairdressing Institute With A Campus In Sri Lanka.**

**What about the trainers and their qualifications?**
The Head Trainer in Sri Lanka is Sri Lankan. She has been sent to Australia for training. On top of her hairdressing qualification she had to get a specific Australian qualification – Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Anyone in Australia who wants to be a trainer needs to get this certificate. This basically trains you to be an Australian standard trainer. It has nothing to do with hairdressing, it teaches you assessment and training techniques. All our other trainers are doing this course now. As I mentioned earlier the Head Trainer of the Australian campus is currently in Sri Lank.

**Can students complete this course in Australia if they wish?**
This is the beauty of this course; students can complete Certificate III here and then do Certificate IV and the Diploma in Australia. There are some students who want to go to Australia to do the course in our Melbourne campus. In such instances we facilitate the process.

**TrainEdge Sri Lanka provides Assessments and Gap training; can you tell us what this is about?**

There are couple of ways of obtaining Certificate III. If a person needs to go to Australia as a hairdresser, the Australian Government requires that the person's qualifications and experiences be assessed; one way of doing this is showing the Certificate III in hairdressing, which is an Australian qualification. Now if you are an experienced hairdresser you don't need to do the course for 9 months. What you can do is come to us and then we will conduct a skills assessment. This is where we assess your skills and if you are up to the standard then we award the Certificate III. Usually though people have experience in hairdressing in Sri Lanka they sometimes lack the criteria required by Australia. This is where we would provide gap training. We provide training to get them up to the required standard, once completed we award the Certificate III qualification to them.

**Is TrainEdge promoting migration to Australia?**

No, we are not encouraging people to leave the country. However we want to provide the proper services that are required for immigration especially in the hairdressing sector. Currently there is a shortage of hairdressers especially in the regional areas in Australia. A TrainEdge qualification presents an opportunity for those who want to migrate to Australia.

TrainEdge is committed in providing a genuine qualification at an affordable price. Our course in Australia is about AUD 10,000 for international students. In Sri Lanka we looked at the market and we are offering the same course at approximately AUD 2000. That's the difference. We offer high quality advice, high quality training and a course that is affordable. By having a campus in Sri Lanka, we want people to have the quality education within Sri Lanka without having to spend a large amount of money abroad. We are not here to make quick money, that is not our intention. We want to be fair.

**What is the response so far?**

The response has been very positive. We are getting a large number of applications, more than we can handle actually. With this response we have decided to expand further in Sri Lanka. We are thinking of Kandy, Hopefully within the next year we will be able to open our other campus in Sri Lanka. We are focusing on hairdressing but we are also looking at hospitality, which will include training for bar staff, chefs and cooks. The Australian campus offers Business Management, thus we are trying to introduce a course in front line management to Sri Lanka as well.

