

# Powerco's Journey to the Common Competency Framework (CCF)

Moving from compliance-based competency to demonstrated capability

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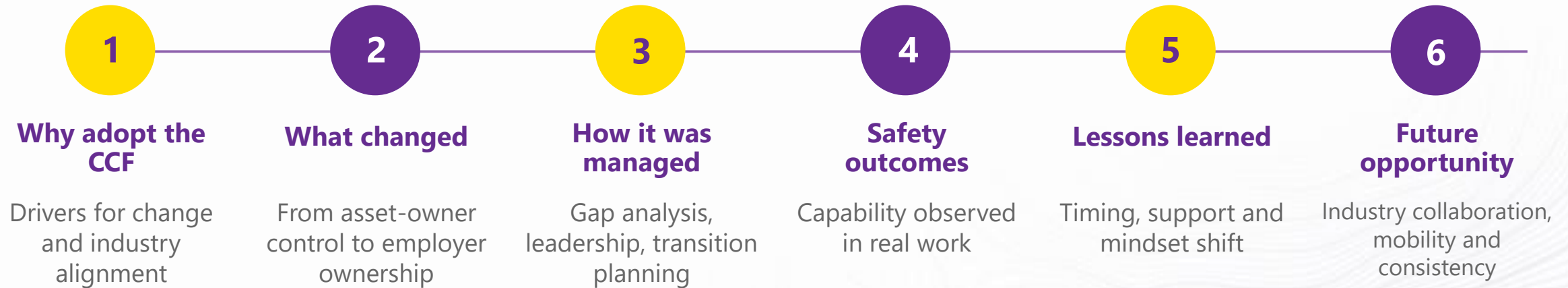
EEA Health & Safety Workshop

**Dean Stevenson**  
(Senior Operations Specialist)  
**Cory Gardiner**  
(Technical Assurance Team Leader)



# Workshop arc

From why Powerco changed to how the industry can keep moving



# The drivers for change

A mature framework was working, but the operating model needed to shift

**20+** years of mature competency framework

- Based heavily on NZQA qualifications and unit standards
- Managed and directed by Powerco
- Mandated Powerco training
- Successful, but prescriptive and asset-owner driven
- Opportunity to move from competency management to competency assurance

## What Powerco wanted to shift

### FROM

Powerco-directed requirements

Records & qualifications

Competency management

### TOWARD

**Employer-owned competency**

**Observed workplace capability**

**Competency assurance**



# From asset owner control to employer ownership

The strategic shift is not “less competency” — it is clearer accountability for demonstrated safe performance.

## Previous approach

- Powerco defined competency requirements
- Powerco directed pathways
- Powerco controlled assessment expectations

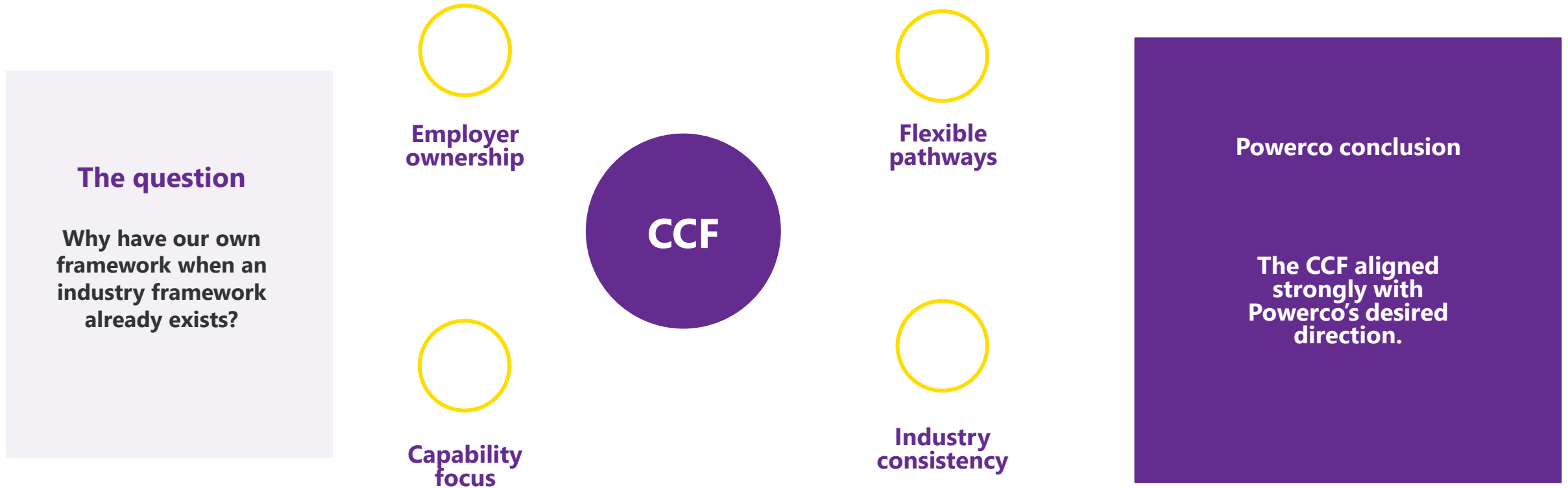


assure outcomes

## Future approach

- Employers own worker competency
- Employers assess capability directly
- Employers have their own assessment systems
- Powerco provides assurance, audits outcomes and contractor systems

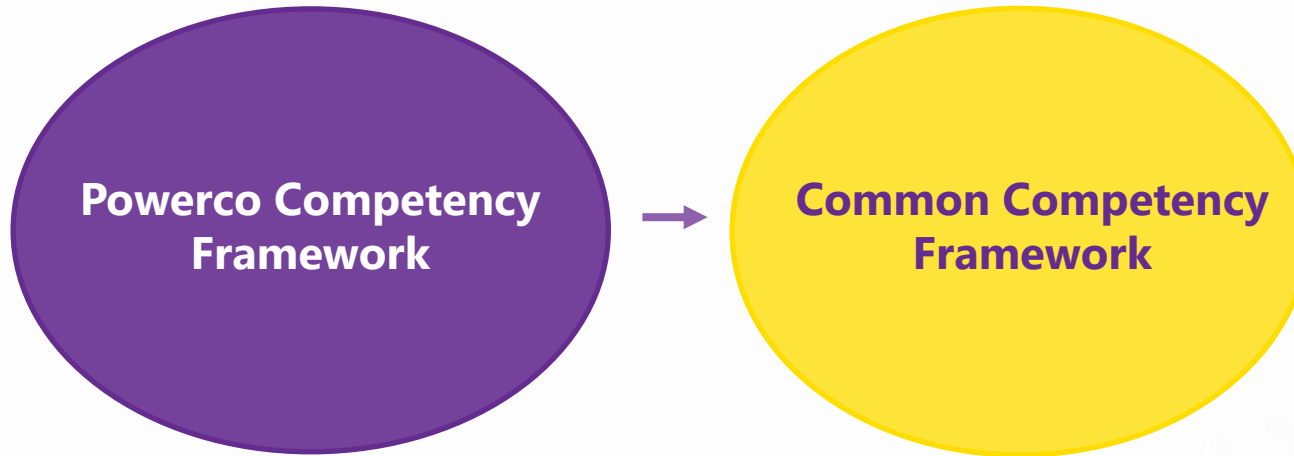
# Why the Common Competency Framework?



# Ensuring it was fit for purpose

A detailed gap analysis protected the safety intent before committing to transition

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- Identify any competency gaps
- Confirm suitability for Powerco operational requirements
- Have confidence it would support contractor capability

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**Confirm Worker Safety requirements would be maintained**

**Outcome: the CCF provided sufficient confidence to support contractor competency requirements in Powerco's operating environment.**

# Senior leadership commitment

The transition was backed by a clear business case and strong senior support



Leadership support helped implementation by reinforcing direction, enabling decision making, and signaling that safety and accountability were the drivers for change.

# The timing challenge

The CCF transition coincided with the C25 contract change and contractor mobilisation

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The logic was: implement one major change programme and embed competency expectations from day one.

- New contracting arrangements
- New contractor organisations
- Introduction of the C25 contract structure
- Tight implementation windows

**Lesson learned: large organisational changes are easier when staged and sequenced.**

# Managing the transition

Powerco supported contractors through clear roles, planning, and ongoing engagement



1

## Dedicated representatives

Each contractor assigned a competency lead as the key liaison point.

2

## Transition planning

Each contractor developed a plan, progress milestones and implementation actions.

3

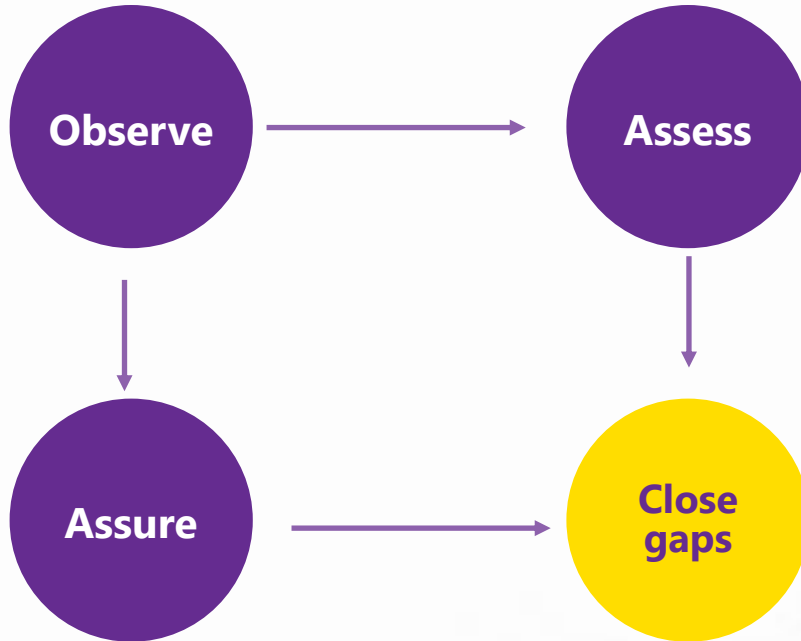
## Ongoing engagement

- Regular check-ins
- CCF interpretation guidance
- Clarification of expectations
- Support through implementation challenges

# Safety through ownership

The people closest to the work are best placed to determine competence

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- Direct worker observation in real work environments
  - Effective Supervision
  - Capability assessments tailored to actual tasks
  - Competency gaps identified earlier and acted on faster
  - Powerco assures the system is effective

# From qualifications to capability

The transition encourages a different way of thinking about competence.

## Historically, competency has often meant

- Qualifications achieved
- Unit standards completed
- Training records updated

**We wanted to encourage organisations to ask**

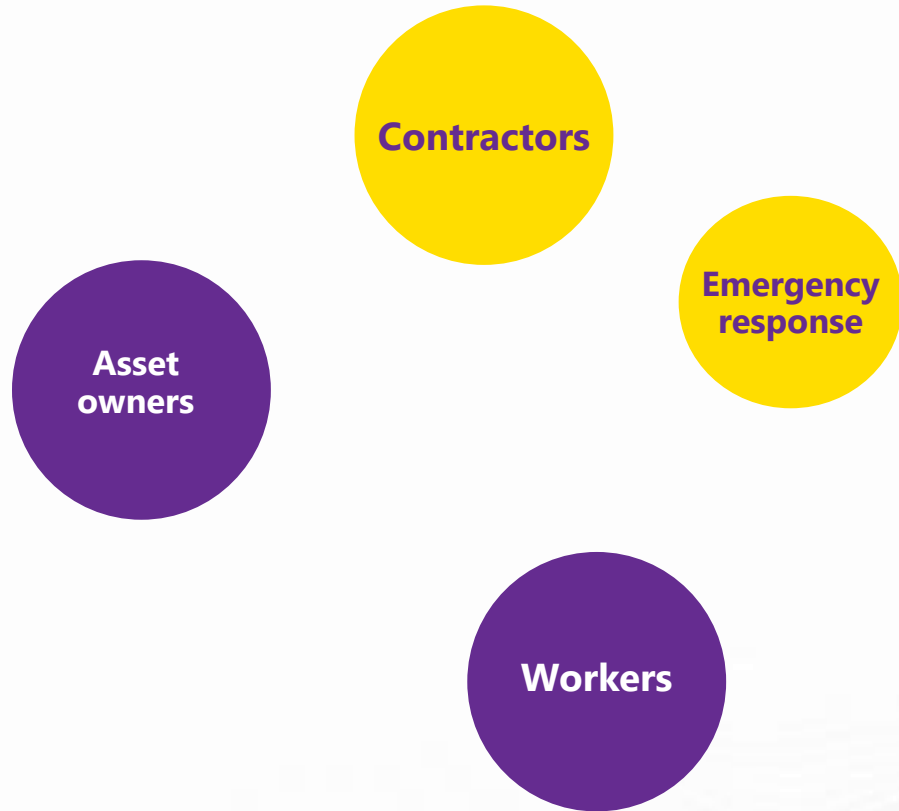
**“Can this person safely and effectively perform the work?”**

## CCF shifts the question to

- Observable performance
- Demonstrated capability
- Work-relevant evidence

**The focus shifts from Certificate achieved to Capability demonstrated.**

# The CCF supports industry collaboration, mobility and simpler ways of working across networks

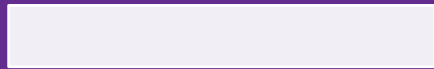


- Shared industry expectations
- Reduced duplication for contractors
- Improved workforce flexibility
- Better support during storms and major events
- Reduce administrative burden by operating under one framework



# More flexibility and control for contractors

CCF allows contractors to build competency pathways that fit their work while remaining accountable for safe outcomes.



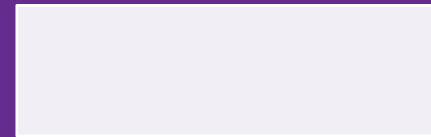
## Assessment systems

Design assessment systems that will suit the business



## Competency pathways

Develop pathways that are relevant to actual work



## Workplace evidence

Use workplace evidence and observation practice



## Internal capability

Build internal assessment capability and ownership

**Better relevance | better worker engagement | stronger ownership of outcomes**

# Challenges experienced

Organisational size, internal capability and existing competency maturity influenced how easily contractors adapted to the new requirements

## Larger Organisations can adapt Faster

these contractors generally had established system and resources including

- Internal training and competency management systems.
- Established assessment and quality assurance processes.
- Experience in developing training and development for their own operational requirements

## Smaller Organisations face more challenges

smaller organisations often rely on

- External training and assessment providers.
- Limited internal training and capability resources.
- Administrators who are coordinating multiple operational and compliance activities

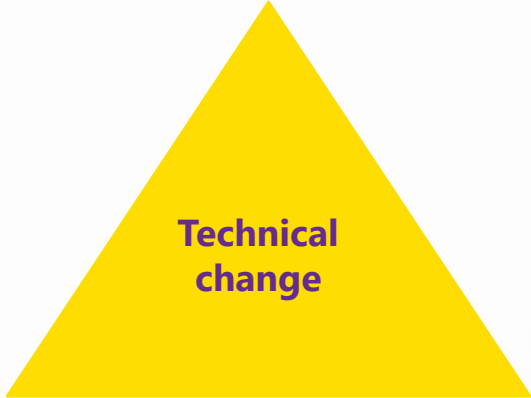
## Key Insight

**Organisations with established training, assessment and competency management systems can generally apply the CCF requirements effectively, while those without these capabilities often need more support to implement the change successfully**

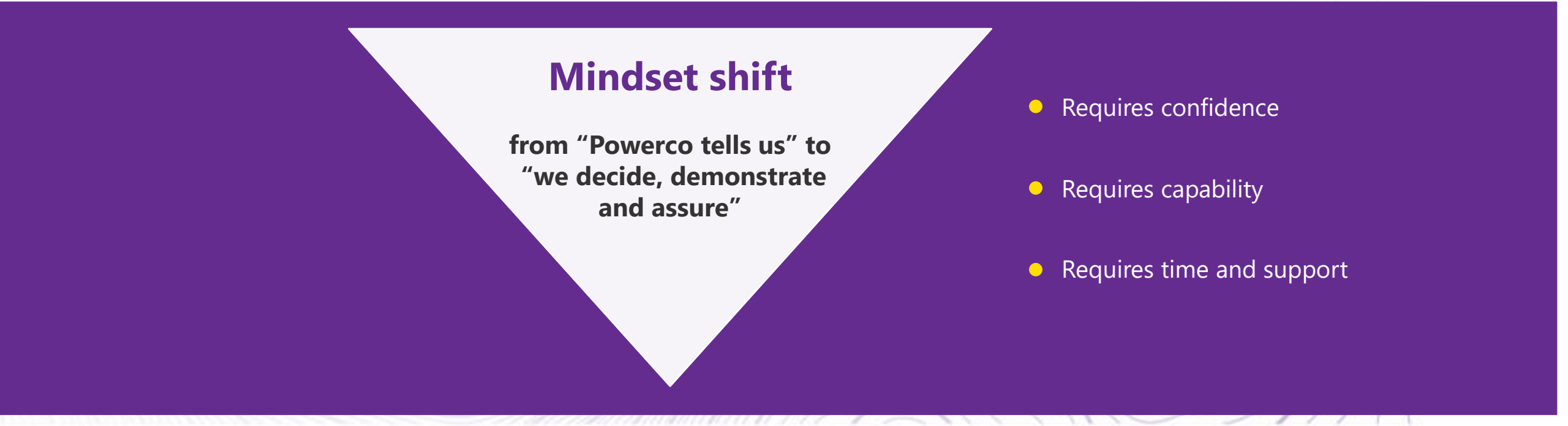
# The biggest challenge: a mindset shift

Changing the process was easier than changing thinking about who organisations were accustomed to owning competence

- Move away from prescriptive asset-owner direction
- Develop their own processes and evidence assessment
- Make competency decisions as the employer



**Technical  
change**



## **Mindset shift**

**from "Powerco tells us" to  
"we decide, demonstrate  
and assure"**

- Requires confidence
- Requires capability
- Requires time and support



# Lessons learned

The core takeaways are practical: ownership, engagement, sequencing and evidence of real capability.

- 1 Leadership support is important
- 2 Competency ownership should sit with employers
- 3 Engagement and communication matter
- 4 Framework change is organisational change and takes time and support
- 5 Competence is more than qualifications
- 6 Capability must be demonstrated in the workplace
- 7 Industry alignment benefits everyone**



# Audit and Assurance

## Why Competency Audits Matter

A competency audit program is a critical assurance tool that helps Powerco and its contractors:

- 1 Maintain and improve workforce performance.
  - 2 Ensure compliance with Powerco and industry standards.
  - 3 Support ongoing learning and professional development.
  - 4 **Reduce the risk of errors, safety incidents, and reputational damage.**
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# Why We Audit Competency Requirements

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1

## Ensure Role Effectiveness

Verify that employees and subcontractors have the skills, knowledge, and experience required to perform their roles safely and effectively.

2

## Compliance with Standards

Confirm alignment with Powerco requirements, industry regulations, and competency standards to minimise the risk of non-compliance.

3

## Risk Mitigation

Identify competency gaps early and implement corrective actions before they impact safety, quality, or operational performance.

4

## Continuous Improvement

Use audit findings to identify training needs, support workforce development, and drive continual improvement.

# How Competency Audits Will Be Conducted

Competency audits form part of the routine contractor audit program and may include:

## 1 Competency Governance

- Review Contractor Competency Representatives' understanding of Powerco and industry standards.
- Verify knowledge and application of the Competency Certification Standard.

## 3 Competency Records

- Ensure individual competency records are current and accurately maintained.
- Verify competency information is reported and updated within the Powerco database.

## 5 Contractor Assurance

- Review contractor audit schedules, including subcontractor oversight.
- Verify that employee and subcontractor competencies are regularly assessed.
- Confirm the workforce is suitably competent and prepared to meet operational, safety, and regulatory requirements.

## 2 Certification and Assessment

- Confirm alignment of employees to the appropriate competency classes and certifications.
- Verify that personnel responsible for certifying employees as competent meet all required assessor criteria.

## 4 Field Verification

- Conduct site checks to confirm individuals are working within their approved competency classes and endorsements.
- Validate that competency records reflect the work being undertaken in the field.

## Expected Outcomes

- ✓ Increased confidence in workforce capability
- ✓ Improved compliance with Powerco standards
- ✓ Reduced operational and safety risks
- ✓ Better visibility of competency gaps and training needs
- ✓ Stronger assurance across employees and subcontractors

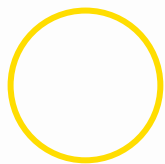
# Looking forward

The future of competency in the electricity industry is capability-led, aligned and collaborative.

The CCF provides an opportunity to



**Ultimate objective: workers have the knowledge, skills and demonstrated capability to perform safely, effectively and consistently.**



# Thank you

Powerco's Transition to the Common Competency Framework

Moving from compliance to capability.  
Moving from qualification ownership to employer accountability.  
Keeping safety at the centre of competency.

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## Questions & discussion

*How do we as an industry continue to improve competency systems while keeping workers safe?*