

NATIONAL SKILLS WEEK

27 AUGUST - 2 SEPTEMBER



DUSTIN, VET GRADUATE, SHEARER

presented by



Are You Ready for 2018 National Skills Week?

FIND OUT WHAT IT MEANS TO GET REAL SKILLS FOR REAL CAREERS.

Not sure what life after school will be like? Wondering which career is right for you? Feeling the pressure to pick a pathway ASAP?

We hear you. Thankfully, there's a whole week devoted to finding out which pathway best suits you, as well as the fastest and smartest method to get real skills for real careers.

National Skills Week kicks off 27 August and runs until 2 September, and all week long, students can learn about the vocational education and training (VET) sector, along with the diverse career pathways available through VET.

In this guide, you can read about some real students who took a VET pathway and landed in their dream career, loving the study along the way too.

You'll meet Dustin, who dreamt of working as a farmer and wound up being awarded the 2017 Australian Apprentice (Trainee) of the Year at the Australian Training Awards, securing a job by graduation.



Dustin, VET Graduate, Shearer

You'll hear from Bethany, who enrolled in Business Administration in Year 11 and earned enough through her apprenticeship to put a deposit on a block of land before turning 18.

And you'll be introduced to Leteah, who took a VET pathway to follow her passion for social work, and James, who started a VET course in Information Technology at high school, to give him a head start before studying (and even teaching) I.T. at university.

All the VET journeys you'll read about come from members of the Australian VET Alumni, a community of VET graduates passionate about sharing the benefits of gaining real skills for real careers. To find out more about the Australian VET Alumni, visit www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au.

BE INSPIRED BY THEIR STORIES, AND START THINKING ABOUT YOUR NEXT BIG MOVE.

If you are interested in an Australian Apprenticeship and how to get started, download ***An Australian Apprenticeship - Endless Career Possibilities*** brochure or contact your local ***Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) provider***.



Australian Government

real skills for
real careers

“Dad suggested that I maybe should do an apprenticeship and that’s pretty much when my whole life changed.”

**Jessica
Wooley**

High Voltage
Electrician
VET Graduate



To find the skills you need for
the career you want visit
www.myskills.gov.au

Farmer: **DUSTIN CROSS**

For Dustin Cross, 2017's Australian Apprentice (Trainee) of the Year, the benefits of a VET pathway are undeniable.

"You go to trade school and you learn more about why you do things," he says.

"If I was to go for a job one day, later in life, if I had these Certificates and I was going against someone who didn't, [the employer would] be more inclined to have a bit of a deeper look into me.

"If you have a Certificate, you can [also] ask to have a higher wage; you're not just a kicker. You have something behind you and you're worth something to that boss, and that employer would entrust you with more jobs because he believes you're more highly skilled in those areas."

The 21-year-old knows what he's talking about too. After beginning a traineeship on a friend's farm in Year 10, Dustin went on to earn his Certificate III and IV in Agriculture, before heading to Longerenong Agricultural College and getting an Advanced Diploma of Agribusiness Management.

He's now about to start working as a Junior Stock Agent, two-and-a-half years earlier than he had anticipated. (Dustin was preparing for three years of shearing sheep after graduation, but a friend at a local stock agency tapped him, six months in, to say, "The boss wants to have a meeting with you.")

Dustin chalks a lot of his success up to his early Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA).

"At my high school, you have to go on work placement for a week somewhere," he explains.

"My dad's a builder and I thought 'Oh, I don't really want to do that.' I had some friends who were farmers, and I grew up on 40 acres [in Horsham, VIC], so I went out and worked for them for a week, and I thought, 'Gee, this is really good'. Basically, that one week out on their farm was the turning point.

"I got to drive a tractor for a couple days, and I got to do sheep work, and do fencing. The one week that I spent on this farm really introduced me to every aspect, and that really got me."

Thankfully, Dustin's dad didn't mind he wasn't following in his footsteps.

"He just wanted to make sure I did the right schooling



and had something to fall back on," Dustin says.

"That's why I did my Certificate III and IV and then my Advanced Diploma; I didn't just become a farmhand with no Certificate."

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Community Services: **LETEAH MITCHELL**

“I’ve always had a big passion for helping people,” says Leteah Mitchell.

“I want to see them out of dark places. I want to see them empowered. I want to see them reaching their goals and going further into education or employment.”

So, that’s exactly what Leteah’s doing. She undertook a Certificate IV in Community Services Work in 2015, before completing a Diploma of Community Services and being named the 2016 NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year and a finalist the same year at the [Australian Training Awards](#).

She’s now doing a Bachelor of Social Work at university.

“Although it’s really, really great at uni, at TAFE, it felt more like a home environment,” she says.

“For me, it provided a lot more flexibility. We did a lot more hands-on stuff instead of sitting and listening to lectures. At TAFE, it was way more practical.”



Self-described “country girl” Leteah—based out of Taree in New South Wales, three hours north of Sydney—particularly appreciated the flexibility of TAFE, which allowed her to “stay home and study”.

“In the future, I’d love to go work in remote communities; Indigenous communities, specifically. I’d love to spend some time in cities as well,” she says.

“

I want to be part of empowering our younger generation and seeing them go further than we have.

“Being Aboriginal, I can see the disadvantages we face; especially our young people. I want to be part of empowering our younger generation and seeing them go further than we have.”

Thankfully, she’s been able to help students through a youth mentoring program at Charles Sturt University called Strong Moves.

However, she insists she wouldn’t have had the confidence to do so without going through TAFE first.

“I really believe that my confidence came from being able to go to TAFE, to learn how to communicate with others,” she says.

“To have an inner strength to know that I can be a voice for things that I’m passionate about.”

WATCH LETEAH’S SUCCESS STORY:

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Health Services Assistant: **DANIEL O'BRIEN**

They say you never know until you try for yourself, and that's something Daniel O'Brien learnt first-hand.

While in Year 10, Daniel got to explore his interest in the healthcare system through an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA).

"At that time, I didn't really know where I wanted to progress with Year 10, 11, 12 studies," he says.

So, while still in school, he was able to train at Caboolture Hospital, working alongside patients, helping nurses administer medication, and even assisting during procedures.

"You're learning hands-on, as opposed to being stuck in the classroom, stuck in a lecture hall," he recalls.

"[My parents] were a little apprehensive that it would take away from my time studying the actual school subjects, but I feel like after a couple months of doing it, they saw that it didn't really affect me."

Daniel went on to complete his Certificate III in Health Services Assistance in 2015, earning the 2015 Queensland School-based Apprentice of the Year prize, as well as a place as a finalist at the [Australian Training Awards](#).

Today, however, his attention has turned elsewhere; but it's perhaps a realisation he could have only gotten while training on the job.

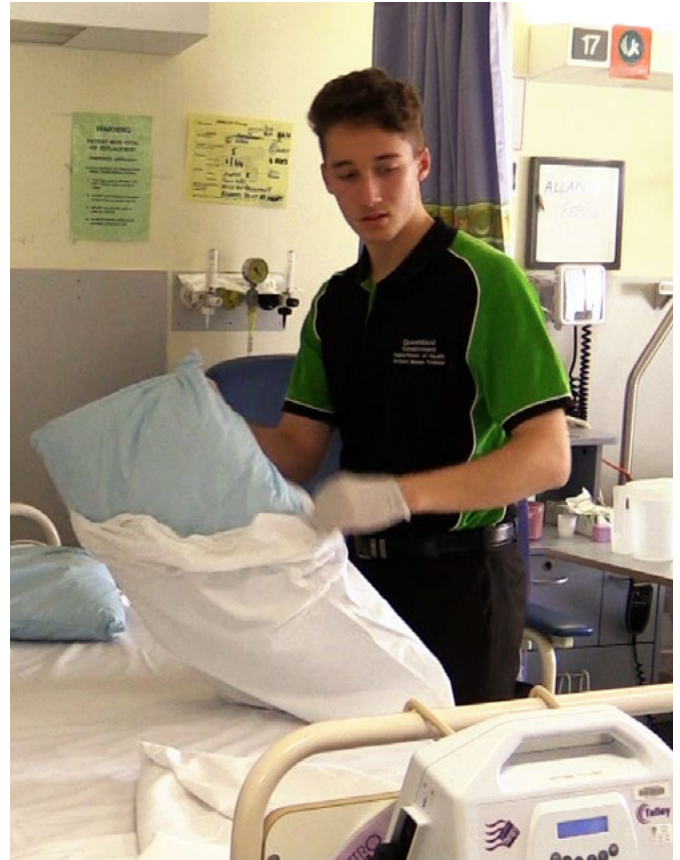
"I learned along the way that it's communications-based roles that I like," he explains.

"From health care—which obviously involves patient management, as well—I just learned that it's communication, in general, that I enjoy."

Still, the 20-year-old has no regrets about his Australian School-based Apprenticeship.

"It's something that I never, ever will regret doing," he says.

"It's such an amazing experience. If you have the opportunity to take on board an apprenticeship or traineeship during school, it's always going to be worth it, even if you choose not to stay with that particular industry. It's gonna give you the skills and knowledge to take on board in any industry you want to be in."



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Event Planning Coordinator: **RACHELLE BOYLE**



At just 22 years of age, Rachelle Boyle from South Australia has turned her VET qualification into a dream career.

In late 2017, shortly after graduating with her Advanced Diploma of Event Management from TAFE SA, Rachelle secured a role as Event Planning Coordinator (Administration and Small Events) at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

Before that, Rachelle interned while studying, testing her talents at the Adelaide Fashion Festival.

“Originally, I wasn’t even aware that event management was a career path,” she says.

“It was just happenstance that I was scrolling through the TAFE SA website and came across the course.”

It paid off. Rachelle’s determination and hard work not only scored her an awesome job right out of TAFE, but also the 2017 Vocational Student of the Year Award at the [Australian Training Awards](#).

To explain what potentially separated her from the pack, she offers this tip: “I was also never afraid to put up my hand for a volunteering opportunity!”

Though there were challenges in balancing study and work, Rachelle got through “one assignment at a time”.

And it was worth it, she says, to get to her current job.

“My days are always really varied, and I rarely do the same thing every day, which is part of the excitement of the role,” she says.

That means “working with clients to ensure that their events are successful, and arranging everything they require from a venue perspective”.

“I believe that the hands-on training, and industry trained and experienced lecturers provided in a VET pathway greatly assisted me in achieving my career goals,” she adds.

“I was also connected directly to industry, and offered many volunteering and interning opportunities that assisted me in developing a practical knowledge of the industry.

“Some people say university study is more prestigious than TAFE,” says Rachelle, “but there’s no doubt that VET is a high-quality level of learning. It’s a valuable method of study and a great pathway to a career.”

“

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Apprenticeship and Traineeship Consultant: **BETHANY SIMPSON**

When Bethany Simpson was just 16—waitressing, answering phones and “doing a bit of everything” at her family’s motor inn restaurant in Mildura—she had a chance encounter with a customer who ended up changing her life.

The customer asked if she knew what Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA) were. Bethany responded honestly: “I’ve got absolutely no idea.”

But, as the customer described it to her, Bethany got excited: “I called dad over and said, ‘Dad, listen to this’.”

Not long after that impromptu meeting, Bethany enrolled in a Certificate III in Business Administration, balancing an apprenticeship with her Year 11 studies.



You can always learn about things in text books, but being able to do these things hands-on, and experiencing them, is just a completely different thing.

When we caught up with Bethany two years later, she was working for Sunraysia & Murray Group Training (SMGT) while undertaking a Bachelor of Business at La Trobe University. And she revealed how, from her apprenticeship, she had saved enough to put a deposit on a block of land, which she did “the Monday after” turning 18.

“It was a bit daunting going in,” she says, thinking back to when it all began in February of 2016.



“I suppose at the start of Year 11, like most kids, I wasn’t the most organised of people, but I think that’s one thing that [ABsA] really taught me. I had Wednesdays off, to work... so, I didn’t have a choice. I had to be organised.

“My teachers were so good, they offered to go through the classes I missed, with me, one on one.”

Still, Bethany says she wouldn’t have traded the ASbA opportunity for anything.

“You can always learn about things in text books, but being able to do these things hands-on, and experiencing them, is just a completely different thing,” she says.

“At school you’re only with people your age, but in the workforce, I was communicating with people of all different ages, cultures, backgrounds. It wasn’t theoretical, it was practical.”

Bethany flourished and went on to win the 2017 Australian School-based Apprentice of the Year Award at the [Australian Training Awards](#), which she credits to her experience growing up in a “very small country town” with “very limited” options before moving to Mildura.

“When I moved to Mildura, I couldn’t believe what was available to kids, so I really jumped at doing all these different things, because I thought they were awesome,” she says.

“So I went and spoke at Parliament for a council program; I did part-time university alongside Year 12. I just jumped at all these little opportunities that, I think, kids from the city take for granted.”

Bethany’s now working at SMGT as an Apprenticeship and Traineeship Consultant, recruiting and mentoring young people, or, as she puts it, “[working] with other

kids that are in my situation as well.”

For all this and more, she’s thankful she learned about the ASbA that unexpected evening, as it put her on a path to success and professional satisfaction.

“I finished school, I had all of these savings I could buy a car with, or in my case, buy my first house,” she says.

“It was really good to have some money to fall back on, because it’s so hard to juggle a part-time job alongside Year 12, so being able to integrate that in my studies was brilliant.”

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Automotive Mechanical Technology: COURTNEY HARRISON

Courtney Harrison is completing a Certificate III in Automotive Mechanical Technology (Light Vehicle) as part of her Australian Apprenticeship at Deselequip, a diesel and turbo specialist shop in Inverell. This trade, as the foundation of a career in the world of cars and mechanical technology, will provide her with many options for future pathways.

The practice and theory of identifying problems accurately and working safely and effectively on all vehicle components are key features of Courtney’s training. She believes that when performing her job, she has the lives of the vehicle owner, their families and other road users in her hands.

WATCH COURTNEY’S SUCCESS STORY:

Courtney has succeeded in a traditionally male-dominated workplace and her employer recognises her as an essential member of the team. Through her positive attitude, strong work ethic and support of trainers and family, she is close to achieving one of her major goals and looks forward to giving back to the community through teaching at a high school or training organisation.

Courtney was 2016 NSW Apprentice of the Year and placed runner up to the Australian Apprentice of the Year Award at the [Australian Training Awards](#) the same year.



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Computing IT: **JAMES SCHIFFERLE**

When asked, in high school, what he wanted to do for a career, 20-year-old James Schifferle had a familiar response: “I really had no clue.”

“I knew I was kind of interested in building computers, but that’s really as far as it went,” he adds.

Thankfully, that was enough to get him to put his hand up in Year 12 to begin an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) at Swan Hill College, while he was still studying there.

“Our school actually advertised to the I.T. students that they were looking for an apprentice,” he explains.

“At the time, I knew I was really interested in computers and general I.T., and VET allowed me to take a more hands-on way to learn more about it. I was able to experiment with different fields and find out what, specifically, I am interested in.”

James’s outstanding results earned him the 2016 Victorian School-based Apprentice of the Year Award which led him on to representing Victoria as a finalist at the [Australian Training Awards](#).



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James not only manned the help desk to fix I.T. issues, but also replaced physical computer parts and dealt with servers and network administration.

However, this experience means his mates now ask him for assistance with their tech issues “all the time,” he laughs.

With VET having helped him figure out what it is he wants to do with his life—software development and

WATCH JAMES’ SUCCESS STORY:



programming—he’s now undertaking a university degree, which he’ll complete in 2019.

“[The apprenticeship] gave me a huge amount of experience; it’s given me a massive [advantage] over other people at uni,” he says.

“A lot of the introductory classes I found I was already really knowledgeable on.”

In fact, thanks to his apprenticeship, he’s even leading some classes for younger uni students too.

“I’m only in second year, but I’m already a lab demonstrator, so I’m actually teaching some first-year labs,” he adds.

When he graduates from uni, James will take his qualifications, his experience, and his award for Victorian School-based Apprentice of the Year (2016) and embark on a career in “new and emerging technology,” including “artificial intelligence”. There’s nothing artificial about that intelligence.

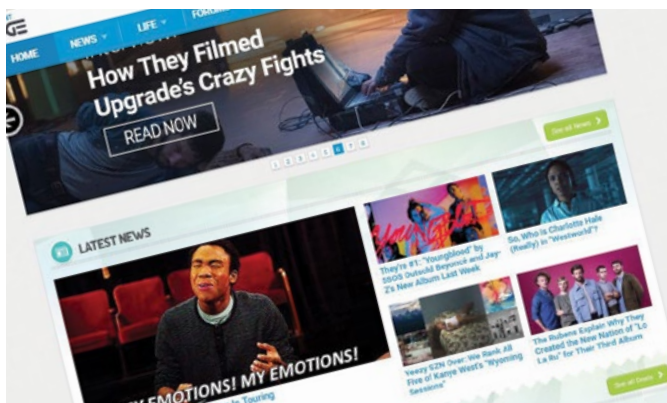
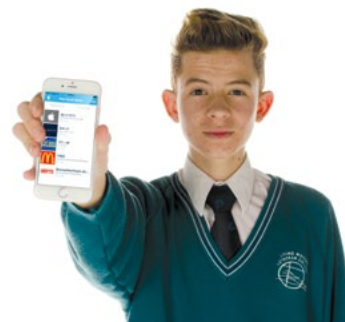
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