



# Cunnamulla's VET program a triumph for whole community

CUNNAMULLA State School is quickly establishing itself as a key community hub with its vocational education and training (VET) program.

It is generating outstanding educational outcomes not only for students but also for the entire community.

The program is so successful that in 2005, 18 out of 28 Year 11 and 12 students at the school are involved in school-based apprenticeships, traineeships and work placement.

According to principal Chris Jewell, the program's success is the result of work by Karen Ticehurst, the Paroo Partnership for Youth Advancement coordinator who has worked to match students and employers.

"Karen has been delighted by the response from the small community over the last two years and so have I," Mr Jewell said.

"Around 75 percent of students in the senior phase of learning — Years 10, 11 and 12 — are now taking part in some form of school-based traineeship or apprenticeship, work placement, or certificate-based TAFE course.

"The VET program stemmed from the need to develop a real-life approach to practical education and to provide pathways through senior schooling that didn't just involve going to university.

"Using Education and Training Reforms for the Future trial funding our school has worked with the local community and the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE to develop programs that draw on local expertise and promote relevant courses.

"This means we can offer our students short courses that have very real and practical application in the local community — courses such as rural motorbike operation, chainsaw operation and maintenance, Macropod harvesting and senior first aid.

"The students are also involved in various certificate-based courses in areas such as carpentry, horticulture, hospitality, engineering and mechanical, butchery, hairdressing and childcare.

"The enthusiasm for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships doesn't end with the students.

"The local community including



Karen Farnham, workplace training officer with the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, is working with Cunnamulla State School to provide students with alternative education and career pathways.

the Paroo Shire Council has embraced and fully supported the vocational education and training program with offers of work placement, apprenticeships and traineeships for students.

"And to add another string to our bow, the school has recently entered into an agreement with the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE to become a teaching facility for student and adult courses.

"This is an excellent opportunity to develop a shared resource centre that will benefit both students and adult learners," he said.

Through the agreement, the school will offer Certificate I, II and III programs as part of an alternative education program and through evening classes.

Karen Farnham, Work Place Training Officer with the institute's Indigenous Studies Faculty, said the

courses were available to people of all cultural backgrounds.

"We're working with the school to provide alternative education and career pathways," she said.

"The training will be relevant to the needs of some students and people working and living in the Cunnamulla district.

"The high school is more than happy to offer its facilities for us to deliver the training as it believes in offering flexible education that appeals to a cross-section of people.

"It's all part of the State Government's Education and Training Reforms for the Future that aims to keep teenagers in school and give them career prospects they want no matter what their circumstances."

The TAFE programs are scheduled to begin in March and interest from potential students is said to be high.



Year 10 student Rebecca Jackson is ready to pull on the work boots and get started building a career in the construction industry. She's one of five girls taking part in the Building and Construction Industry Career and Employment Opportunity Project at Browns Plains State High School.

## New program gives students insight into construction

CONSTRUCTION hats, work boots, safety vests and cement mixers are about to become a common sight at Browns Plains State High School, and it's not the start of major extensions but rather an innovative new program designed to give students an insight into the construction industry.

The Year 10 Building and Construction Industry Career and Employment Opportunity Project is the brainchild of Construction Training Centre (CTC) general manager Rick Elliot.

The project is a 19-week pilot program that will give 20 Year 10 students from four schools in Logan City the chance to learn a range of practical skills in a simulated work environment.

Fifteen boys and five girls from Browns Plains, Woodridge and Shailer Park State High Schools and from Chisholm College are taking part in the program.

Each Wednesday, they will meet at Browns Plains State High School and work on a construction project incorporating basic concreting, bricklaying, carpentry, tiling and painting skills to build an outdoor area with tables and seating.

According to Robyn Case, a Head of Department Senior Schooling at Browns Plains State High School, the work area is treated like any other construction site with students having to observe health and safety guidelines, wear appropriate protective gear and follow the construction supervisor's directions.

"In fact the students spent the first day completing the training they would need to get a blue card — which is a requirement if you're going to work on a construction site — before getting fitted with their boots, vests and hard hats," she said.

"This is just part of the process of making the working environment as authentic as possible to give these students a better insight into what they can expect when they finish school and get a job.

"They also get the chance to broaden their knowledge of the industry by talking to the trainers, visiting other construction sites and talking to people involved in major construction works.

"As well as the on-the-job training, the students also have to complete a written assignment task that they will present on the final day of the course.

"Both parents and students have been very supportive of the program and we're developing some very positive partnerships between state and non-state schools, parents, training providers and businesses in the local area," Ms Case said.

Mr Elliot said this was an innovative way to achieve the objectives of the Queensland Government's Education and Training Reforms for the Future initiative and build productive and positive links between the education, training and the construction industry sectors.

"The program isn't intended to be a manual arts type program, even though it incorporates a number of competencies from the Certificate I in General Construction," Mr Elliot said.

"There are many career opportunities available besides those provided by apprenticeships.

"We hope that by the end of the program, the students will have been exposed to a variety of career and employment opportunities in the building and construction industry, including those available through university.

"We're keen to promote the industry to both female and male students so we intend to incorporate briefings by representatives from the National Association for Women in Construction and we'll also look at high-profile men and women working in the industry.

"At the end of the program we hope that the students will have achieved the intended objectives and will also experience the satisfaction of making a practical contribution to the improvement of the school's facilities and infrastructure.

"We expect that some will move on to school-based apprenticeships, while others will follow the academic pathway and use the experience to help them with their subject choices for Years 11 and 12.

"It's very encouraging to see the enthusiasm and interest shown by the students and teachers involved and we are hopeful that a successful pilot will lead to further programs in other areas," he said.

Local businesses have generously donated materials or supplied them at discounted prices. The Department of Employment and Training and Construction Training Queensland have also contributed funds for training delivered by qualified instructors from the Construction Training Centre and the Construction Skills Training Centre.

## Online Career Information Service

THE Queensland Studies Authority's Career Information Service (CIS) website ([www.cis.qsa.qld.edu.au](http://www.cis.qsa.qld.edu.au)) is now online.

This is the first phase of the QSA's online CIS strategy, which will also include a free-call service in 2006.

The website has been designed with a Queensland focus to provide students, teachers and parents with accurate, up-to-date and useful information. It provides access to a range of information resources, including:

- the national career information service website [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)
  - the DET website [www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au](http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au)
  - Education Queensland's website [www.education.qld.gov.au](http://www.education.qld.gov.au)
- By 2006, CIS will be developed into an individualised service linked to each student's learning account. Young people will be able to use



The Queensland Studies Authority's Career Information Service (CIS) website is now online.

their own learning achievements, interests and goals to map out personalised career pathways based on up-to-date career information.

- The site includes articles and links on a range of topics including:
- What is a career?
  - Explore the world of work

- Researching careers
  - Career guidance tools
  - Information about an industry
  - What can I study?
  - Where can I study?
  - How can I study?
  - What skills will I need to apply for a job?
  - What jobs are there?
  - Where do I look for a job?
  - Enterprise and small business
  - What more do I need to know about a job?
  - Transition to university and vocational education and training
  - News and events with links to EDNA online news service
  - Career practitioner resources and teacher resources
  - Links for parents and carers
  - Frequently asked questions
- For more information contact Yvonne Warnick QSA telephone (07) 3864 0267.