



MEDIA RELEASE – For immediate release

Meet the VET success stories who, for them, VET has been life-changing

National Skills Week 2025 Urges Australians to ‘Explore ALL the Options’ Amid Widening Skills Shortages

Sydney, 22 July 2025 – From 25–31 August, National Skills Week 2025 is calling on Australians—parents, school leavers, career changers, and job seekers alike—not to discount the merit of a skills-based tertiary education, and to explore ALL the options.

With critical skills shortages across multiple industries, now is the time to discover how Vocational Education and Training (VET) can be a powerful, first-choice pathway into Australia’s fastest-growing sectors—health, construction, digital tech, aviation, manufacturing, and more.

Whether you’re looking to upskill, re-skill, or completely change direction, VET delivers practical, job-ready skills for real-world success. And for many Australians, it’s been nothing short of life-changing.

National Skills Week Chair Brian Wexham said this year’s campaign is a reminder of the extraordinary demand for skill-based careers, and the importance of positioning vocational training as a first-choice pathway alongside a traditional university education.

Minister for Skills Andrew Giles says there needed to be a “parity of esteem” between vocational training and university to ensure there are more young people attracted to the jobs of the future.

This year’s campaign will spotlight **inspiring VET success stories** from across the country, alongside key themes including women in trades, Indigenous participation, regional and remote access, and the urgent need for skills in high-demand areas.

Media are invited to speak with VET graduates whose stories demonstrate the transformative power of skills-based education.

QUEENSLAND

Harry Roberts-Yatala, Australian Apprentice of the Year Award 2024-Finalist

Course Completed: Certificate III in Arboriculture, Certificate II in Civil Construction

RTO: Interlink Training Private

School:

Employer: Brisbane City Council



Driven by his passion for trees and the environment and wanting to be part of making Brisbane City green, climate stable, and sustainable, Harry decided to enter an arboriculture apprenticeship as a mature aged apprentice. As part of his training, Harry was enrolled in a Certificate III in Arboriculture at Interlink Training and employed at Brisbane City Council.

Harry's enthusiasm for his arborist trade is so great that he completed his qualification 12 months ahead of schedule. He was also recognised with a Customer Service Award at the council's 2023 Lord Mayor's Apprentice of the Year awards for providing lifesaving first aid to a member of the public.

As the team leader of the council's arborist team, Harry loves getting up in the trees and engaging with the public on the ground to talk about conservation and the importance of trees are to local ecosystems, how he enjoys his trade, and how to make a greener, happier, and safer world.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Lara Wilson, Adelaide, South Australia



Award/s: Australian School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year Award 2024- Winner

Qualification: Certificate III School-Based Education Support

RTO: MADEC Australia

Employer: MEGT

Host Employer: Hospital School SA

School: Underdale High School

Having dreamed of being a teacher since she was 7 years old, Lara couldn't wait to get into the classroom. A school-based traineeship with MEGT has gotten her there sooner. Lara is getting real industry experience at Hospital School SA, whilst completing a Certificate III in School-Based Education Support at MADEC Australia

Through her traineeship, Lara discovered how to find her voice, trust her judgement, seek help and feedback, and work in a collaborative team. She also found an incredible group of friends! She held the leadership role of School Captain, and the VET qualification contributed to a great ATAR, with the subjects she studied in the VET course helping her in her current focus of studying to be a primary school teacher.

Lara has a passion for making a positive difference and helping others achieve their dreams and goals.

Completing her traineeship has been one of the best experiences of Lara's life. She feels fortunate for the opportunity to learn from the Hospital School SA team as she works towards achieving her goal of becoming a primary school teacher.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Lachlan Carey, Kotara South, NSW



Qualification: Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care

Award/s: Trainee of the Year Award 2024- Winner

RTO: Atkinson Training & Development Pty Ltd

Employer: A Magical Time Children's Centre

Lachlan wants to make a difference in the lives of children. Having faced his fair share of challenges for someone so young, Lachlan decided it was time to pay forward the acts of kindness he received by becoming an early childhood educator.

As part of his traineeship, Lachlan was enrolled in a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care at Atkinson Training and Development and employed at A Magical Time Children's Centre.

Suffering significant health issues in Year 10 that required a lengthy recovery time, Lachlan was unable to return to school and decided to pursue his passion for educating kids.

Bringing his fun, nurturing and patient nature to every interaction during his traineeship, Lachlan was immediately adored by colleagues, families and, most importantly, the children in his care

Having now also completed his Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, Lachlan is enrolled in the Bachelor of Education using the knowledge and skills he has gained along the way to advance his career and life.

VICTORIA

Carly Brown, Melbourne, Victoria



Qualification: Certificate II in Electrotechnology plus Certificate II in engineering, Certificate II in plumbing, Certificate II in Automotive Technology,

Awards: Vocational Student of the Year Award 2024- Finalist

RTO: Northern College of the Arts and Technology

A childhood fascination with trains and all things mechanical sparked Carly's decision to follow a comprehensive VET pathway as part of her Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).

With incredible determination and passion, Carly has completed pre-vocational qualifications in engineering, electrotechnology, plumbing, and automotive alongside her core VCE subjects at the Northern College of the Arts and Technology (NCAT).

Carly has now secured an electrical apprenticeship and is well on her way to becoming an A-Grade electrician.

Carly's approach to VET has broadened her perspective and prepared her well for a career in the trades, proving that a woman's place in the world of work is wherever she wants it to be.

With an unwavering commitment to vocational inclusivity, Carly is challenging gender stereotypes, promoting diversity in the trades, and working tirelessly in her role as ambassador for the Young Women in Trades and Technology **Group**.

Taylor Hampton, Victoria



Qualifications: Certificate IV in Leadership and Management

Awards: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Award 2024- Finalist

RTO: Kangan Institute

Employer: Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA)

Taylor is a proud Ngiyampaa/Wiradjuri man. His training journey began when his enthusiasm for leadership sparked a desire to gain practical leadership skills. During his training, Taylor was enrolled in a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management at Kangan Institute and employed at the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency.

Growing up, Taylor had minimal knowledge of his Aboriginal heritage because his father wasn't allowed to speak his language or practice his culture. Taylor is determined to ensure this is a long-gone scenario. He took a job at Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA) and works tirelessly to advance Indigenous cultural awareness in Victoria.

Taylor has also completed Diploma in Youth Work, Certificate IV in Youth Work and Community Services, plus whilst at school undertook a traineeship in Certificate II in School Support Services.

Through Kangan Institute's leadership program, Taylor has become a supportive manager and confident negotiator. He currently holds the position on Senior Cultural Facilitator for VACCA Staff supporting culturally strong, safe and thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

TASMANIA

Benjamin (Ben) Barker, Tasmania, Hobart

Qualifications: Certificate III in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology

Awards: Apprentice of the Year 2024- Finalist

RTO: TasTAFE

Employer: Veolia Environmental Services (Australia)



Benjamin grew up around vehicles and developed a love of fixing cars with his grandfather, and this motivated his choice to become a diesel mechanic. As part of his apprenticeship, Benjamin was enrolled in a Certificate III in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology at TasTAFE and employed at Veolia Environmental Services.

Benjamin describes his grandfather as an influential mentor, because he taught him about patience and attention to detail. Benjamin drew on these skills during his apprenticeship, and he has been recognised for his proactive approach in the workplace.

Benjamin surmounted a number of significant personal challenges in order to embrace leadership roles at Veolia Environmental Services. Currently he is the second in charge of his team. He has acted as a training representative, advocated for the transport industry and mentored younger apprentices. His own early life experiences have given him the drive to help young people overcome personal and life challenges, and to be the best they can be.

Andrew Barlett, Devonport, Tasmania



Qualifications: Certificate III in Individual Support

Awards: Vocational Student of the Year Award 2024- Finalist

RTO: Avidity Training and Development

Employer: Possability Tasmania

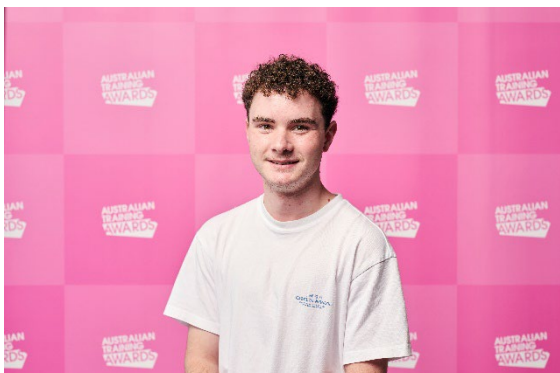
Just a few years ago, Andrew could not have predicted that he would be employed as a disability support worker, take on the role of a team leader, and become an advocate for the vulnerable at Possability – a national disability services provider. Such has been the impact of vocational education and training on his life.

Andrew's personal journey has been challenging and rough. However, with dedicated and tailored support from the staff at Avidity Training and Development, Andrew has been able to complete a Certificate III in Individual Support, which in turn has allowed him to recognise his own strengths and give back to others in the community.

"I now have the confidence to advocate for myself. My dream job would be to become an advocate for those at risk or who are fearful due to their circumstances and for those who feel their voice is not heard," Andrew says.

ACT

Lawson Dane Connor, Canberra, ACT



Qualification: Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance

Awards: Australian School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year Award 2024- Finalist

RTO: Canberra Institute of Technology CIT Solutions

Employer: Indigenous Allied Health Australia Group Training

Host Employer: Canberra Health

Services

School: Gungahlin College

Lawson is a Year 12 student at Gungahlin College with aspirations to pursue a career in paramedicine. Committed to getting a head start on his career pathway,

Lawson was enrolled in a Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance at CIT, employed by IAHA Group Training and hosted by Canberra Health Services.

Lawson is a proud Wiradjuri man, and his interest in the health care sector stems from his own lived experience. He has seen the impact, both good and bad, that health professionals can have on patients and their families, and he wants to positively contribute to the sector in any way he can. Lawson's career goal is to become a paramedic and work in disadvantaged Aboriginal communities or in rural and remote areas of Australia. He is currently working with the ACT Ambulance service whilst completing Year 12.

As part of his school-based traineeship, Lawson was able to actively participate in Canberra's Indigenous community, and he welcomed his experience at the Gudan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation.

Ariah Holmes, Canberra, ACT



Qualification: Diploma of Leadership and Management

Award: Trainee of the Year Award 2024-Finalist

RTO: YWCA Canberra

Employer: Volunteering ACT

Ariah initially studied to become a nurse-midwife, but personal circumstances necessitated a career change. She now works with hundreds of not-for-profit organisations, supporting them to build healthy, safe, and sustainable volunteering programs.

As part of her traineeship, Ariah is enrolled in a Diploma of Leadership and Management at YWCA Canberra and employed at Volunteering ACT.

Ariah is a strong advocate for continued development and learning. Her goal was to obtain a qualification that would support her career when her role and portfolio of work expanded. "The VET pathway provided a safe and inclusive space for me to learn and grow, helping me to increase my confidence and capability both in my work and as a leader," Ariah says.

Ariah loves to help, and she has a passion for reducing barriers for people from vulnerable cohorts, including those with disabilities, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and young people.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Ellie Wotherspoon, Perth, WA



Qualification: Certificate III in Engineering Industrial Electrician

Award: Apprentice of the Year Award 2024- Finalist

RTO: South Metropolitan TAFE

Employer: Programmed

Host Employer: Woodside Energy

Despite her grandfather, father and brother all being electricians, Ellie knew there were few female tradespeople in the country town she grew up in. Undeterred, Ellie stepped headfirst into the male-dominated energy industry, and in so doing has become an advocate for women in non-traditional trades. Ellie is also part of the FIFO workforce – offshore and on shore.

As part of her apprenticeship, Ellie was enrolled in a Certificate III in Engineering – Industrial Electrician at South Metropolitan TAFE, employed by Programmed and hosted by Woodside Energy. She also completed the Certificate IV in Instrumentation.

While undertaking her apprenticeship, Ellie completed her Bachelor of Secondary Education at the University of Notre Dame. Through sheer dedication and determination, Ellie is on-track to inspire the next generation of tradeswomen.

Ellie is grateful for the support she received from her group training organisation during her apprenticeship. She feels it is a testimony to the energy industry and the value it places on education.

Almira Dall, Busselton, WA

Qualification: Certificate IV in Agriculture

Awards: Trainee of the Year Award 2024 - Finalist



RTO: South Regional Tafe

Employer: Kerridge Farm Pty Ltd

Within weeks of completing high school, Almira was working on a dairy farm and discovering a love for practical hands-on work. Almira commenced a Certificate IV in Agriculture at South Regional TAFE and employed at Kerridge Farm. The program was delivered by Western Dairy training officers in partnership

with South Regional TAFE staff.

Working on a farm provided a number of unique and challenging situations for Almira, from opening her front door to discover a herd of cattle in her garden, to helping sick and injured animals.

Having previously completed a Certificate III in Agriculture (Dairy Production) through a traineeship and having completed agriculture studies whilst still at school. Almira has become a champion and advocate for the sector. She regularly highlights the benefits of farm-based traineeships and dynamic agriculture careers at industry functions and promotional events.

National Skills Week 2025 acknowledges the support provided by the Australian Government, and its major partner, ReadyTech.

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Notes to editors:

About National Skills Week 2025

National Skills Week is an annual initiative in Australia, scheduled for 25–31 August 2025, aimed at promoting the value and diversity of Vocational Education and Training (VET). Organised by SkillsOne Television and supported by Australian, State, and Territory Governments, it serves as a platform to highlight career pathways through apprenticeships, traineeships, and other VET programs.

National Skills Week is designed to:

- **Raise Awareness:** Enhance public understanding of the benefits and opportunities within the VET sector.
- **Challenge Perceptions:** Dispel outdated myths about VET and showcase its relevance in today's economy.

- Highlight Career Pathways: Demonstrate the diverse career options available through VET, including apprenticeships, full qualifications, micro-credentials, and pathways to higher education.
- Address Skills Shortages: Focus on emerging skills needs and industry trends to support workforce development.

The 2025 theme, “Explore ALL the Options,” encourages individuals to consider a wide range of educational and career pathways, emphasizing opportunities in regional and remote areas, as well as various training formats.

Through over 500 events nationwide, National Skills Week aims to inspire participation in VET, contributing to a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets Australia's evolving economic needs.

For more information or to get involved, visit the official website: nationalskillsweek.com.au.