

# Aussie BRICKLAYER

Bricklayer & Apprentice  
Makes good business sense

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sept 2010

## Dan Murphy a Real Life Achiever!



Dan Murphy, founding director of Fugen, knows the importance of apprenticeships in bricklaying. Starting as an apprentice bricklayer, he did his training at Randwick TAFE. Dan quickly realised that the industry had a lot more to offer.

Dan studied a Building Foreman and Clerk of Works course three nights a week as well as completing the four year TAFE apprentice course.

During his apprenticeship, Dan started off doing a lot of odd jobs, including delivering the pays to the employees and by the last year of his apprenticeship, he was put in charge as foreman with five men working for him on a site in North Sydney.

In 1984, Dan and his brother Tim (who also started out as an apprentice bricklayer) were able to start their own construction company by borrowing \$5,000 from their mother. Dan believes he couldn't have done it without starting at the bottom and working up.

After a tough first six months, Fugen now employs 130 brickies and has completed prestigious brick projects such as the Sydney Aquatic Centre, Olympic Stadium and Sydney Casino.

Fugen has helped train 150 apprentices in building and bricklaying over the years and currently has 12 apprentices in NSW and Queensland.

Dan has some pertinent advice when it comes to young apprentices and says "Turn up every day, be on time and do an honest day's work".

Dan believes that apprentices are our future and schools and parents need to push trades as careers and not just a job to "fill the gap".

Some of Fugen's site and project managers have moved up in the company after completing their apprenticeships and are now a valuable part of the team. "To have an apprentice and see someone finish off their trade gives you a lot of satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment," Dan says.

**"Turn up every day, be on time and do an honest day's work."**

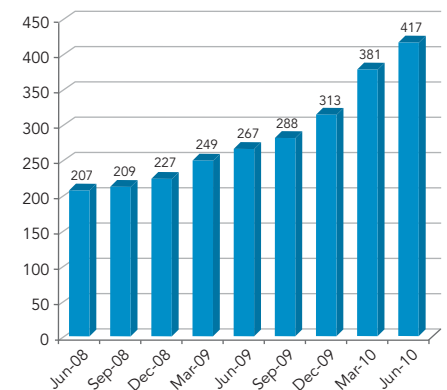
He says the reality is "We as employers need apprentices within our industry and the need becomes more critical every year. The average age of our workforce is 40, so in 20 years they will be ready for retirement if they last that long. We work hard on giving young people a go."

Dan has some real life tips for employers. He says a good apprentice can earn an employer twice his wages by year 2 or 3.

"Good reliable apprentices will learn and enable another tradesman to do more, hence earn you more. We usually have a tradesman with an apprentice in a mentoring role. Nine of our senior supervisors and foremen are tradespeople who have done full apprenticeships and are now running jobs worth well over \$1 million."

An active member and a past president of the Master Builders Association, Dan is a strong believer of giving something back to the industry. He paid tribute to his parents who had faith in Dan and Tim in those early days, and Tim his partner and brother who "has always been a driving force and helped us to achieve the next level in the business".

## Apprentice Numbers on The Increase



Apprentices supported by ABBTf in NSW doubled in the past two years and has grown by a third in just the last six months. This support is also driving the increase in enrolments at TAFE this year.

David Gill, ABBTf's NSW manager, said that while some of the lift in numbers would be due to improved construction activity, it is obvious stimulus programs such as the Building Education Revolution (BER) along with Kickstart and Brickstart incentives, have played a big part.

"ABBTf moved quickly to add the \$2,000 Brickstart incentive to the Federal Government's \$3,350 Kickstart. We have been actively promoting these special incentives through our newsletters, during on-site visits, our website, Career's Expos and media releases.

"Bricklaying employers have recognised that it is a wonderful opportunity to take on bricklaying apprentices in NSW with a total of \$15,350 available for each apprentice.

"We will have older bricklayers retiring over the next few years and more work needs to be done to keep numbers increasing. It is gratifying to see all the hard work and promotion of bricklaying as a trade paying off," he added.

## ABBTF Presents at NSW State TAFE Meeting

David Gill, ABBTF's NSW manager recently took the ABBTF message to TAFE bricklaying trainers at a bricklaying and industry validation meeting.

David outlined ABBTF's strategies to address the critical skills shortage in bricklaying:

- Promotion of the trade
- Step Out Programs for schools
- Support for pre-vocational training
- Subsidising bricklayers for employing new apprentices
- Mature aged financial support
- Support for up-skilling of existing workers
- Support apprentice travel and accommodation.

David advised there were 7,300 bricklayers in NSW, statistically 24% were older than 50 years and 47% were above 40 years of age. This highlights the need to commit to new apprentices.

"We welcome the opportunity to present ABBTF's credentials and programs to attract as many new bricklaying apprentices as possible into the trade. Our relationship with TAFE bricklaying trainers is critical to our success and we appreciate the great support we receive from everyone in the TAFE system.

"By working together we can ensure flexibility in training on site and in the classroom to benefit apprentices, employers and the industry," David said.

## HIA Apprentice Awards

This year's HIA Best Bricklaying Apprentice Award has been won by Jeffrey Dowell. He is a fourth year apprentice and is hosted by his dad Jeff Dowell Senior. Jeffrey is completing his off-site training at Western Sydney Institute, Nirimba.

Congratulations Jeffrey and Jeff. The HIA award was sponsored by ABBTF.



Jeffrey receiving his award from Wayne O'Brien, Manager, HIA Apprentices

## Introducing Michael D'Agostino



Michael D'Agostino has joined the ABBTF as a field officer. Michael was employed by the Brick Industry Group Training Company as an apprentice, and attended the Brick Industry Training School for his qualifications. He worked for several different contractors building both commercial and cottage work.

"I believe good values for a young apprentice are mainly a good attitude towards work, regular attendance and reliability," said Michael.

For the past three and a half years he has been training students in bricklaying at schools in NSW and the ACT for ABBTF.

"My new role involves matching prospective apprentices with employers, training students through pre-vocational training as well as Try-a-Trade and Career Expos.

"There is a lot of work out there, and the shortage of apprentices entering the trade leaves open a huge opportunity for the ones who successfully complete their trade in bricklaying," said Michael.



Michael at front centre with Step Out Program students at Hawker College, ACT

## ATO Benchmarks for Bricklayers

The Australian Tax Office has released a new range of small business benchmarks to promote a level playing field for bricklayers.

The performance benchmarks can help bricklayers to compare their business performance to bricklaying businesses of a similar size. This can assist businesses to see how they can improve their profitability.

Bricklayers can also use the new benchmarks to check that they are on the right path with their tax obligations, particularly in relation to cash income, with the opportunity to adjust things if required.

More information, including access to the small business benchmarks is available on the Tax Office website [www.ato.gov.au/businessbenchmarks](http://www.ato.gov.au/businessbenchmarks) or call 13 28 66.

## Apprentices on MBA Award Winning Project

Fugen Constructions has won the MBA 2010 Best Use of Bricks and Stone Award with their project, Marist Brothers Residence at Hunters Hill. The award is sponsored by Austral bricks.



Apprentices Andrew Evans and Darren Knight were part of the Fugen team on the project. The project gave them a great opportunity to learn and develop their skills. They can be proud of their efforts and can always look at the job with satisfaction and say "I Built That".

Andrew and Darren have now completed their training and gained their qualification in bricklaying. Both are important members of the Fugen group and Darren is now a site co-ordinator.

We congratulate Fugen on the award and their investment in training apprentices for the future.

# National REPORT



## Operating results for 2009/2010

During the year to June 2010 Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation (ABBTf) achieved the following:

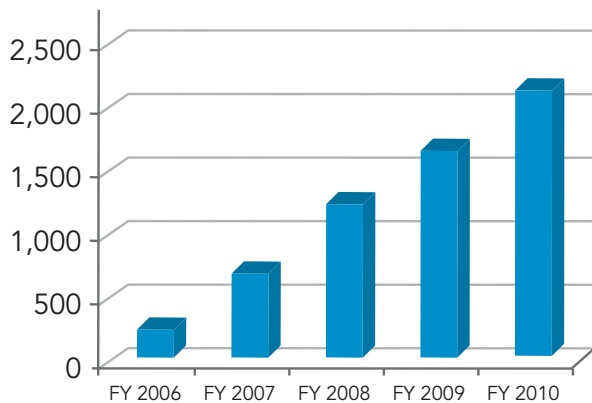
- Increased the number of supported apprentices by subsidies to their employers based on satisfactory training outcomes. The number has increased to 2,144 which is 34% higher than 2009.
- Introduction of new Brickstart bonus to employers in year one in some states as a short term promotion to boost apprentice commencements.
- Support for mature aged apprentices or their employers to overcome their financial disadvantage.
- More than 2,400 secondary students participated in ABBTf Step Out Programs to gain hands-on experience in bricklaying.
- Support for pre-entry training in bricklaying which saw 950 enrolments in preparation for an apprenticeship.
- Deployment of three field representatives across QLD, NSW and WA and two promotional Try a Trade vans to improve our coverage and influence with potential employers, school students and careers expos.
- Extension of the regional travel allowance to apprentices to more states to overcome the disadvantage of distance from training centres.
- Introduced financial support for existing workers to have their bricklaying skills assessed and recognised, to enable completion of gap training to achieve a qualification in bricklaying.
- Support and involvement in events at regional and national levels to promote high achievers and excellence in bricklaying including WorldSkills, Golden Trowel and Brick Masterclass.
- Initiate collaborative meetings of TAFE training personnel for validation of the new training package, resource sharing and receiving ABBTf and industry information.
- Creation of new marketing image and logo to focus on the separate targets of the potential apprentice and to the bricklayer as the employer.
- A new website to attract young people into bricklaying.
- Publication of 18 editions of newsletters which have been revamped to target bricklayers and industry stakeholders.
- Attendance at 134 career events and promotions to encourage young people into the trade.

Operating Results	2009/10 No.s	2008/09 No.s	Financial Results	2009/10 \$000's	2008/09 \$000's
Apprentices Supported by ABBTf	2,144	1,628	Revenue	7,074	6,635
Mature Apprentices Supported	61	79	Total Expenditure	9,251	6,477
Apprentices in Training	2,776	2,641	Operating Surplus	(2,177)	158
Step Out Program Students	2,424	3,027	Training Reserve	2,247	4,424
App Regional Travel Support	30	0	App Subsidies to Employers	6,420	3,533
Pre-Apprenticeship Enrolments	950	635	Training Support	270	316
TAFE Colleges and RTO's	52	50	Step Out Program	730	747
Group Training Organisations	67	70	Promotion	742	790
Careers Events Attended	134	124	Development	650	649
Newsletter Mailing List	50,000	44,000	Administration	439	442

The full Statutory Annual Report will be available on the website or hardcopy on request.

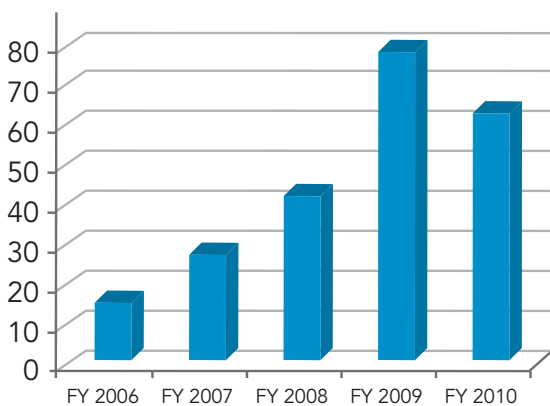
## National Operating Results for 2009-2010

### Supported Apprentices



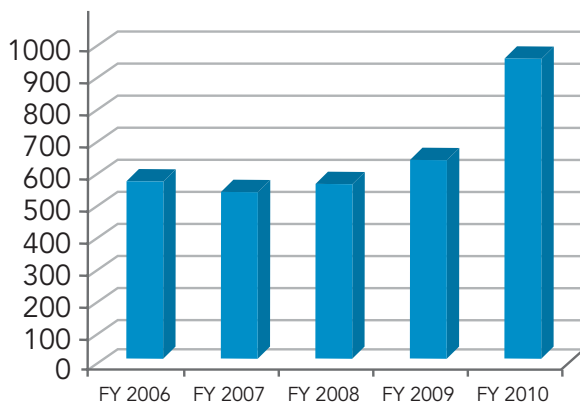
The strong growth in the number of subsidised apprentices has continued in the year to June 2010. ABBTF support has helped employers train and retain their apprentices.

### Mature Age Support



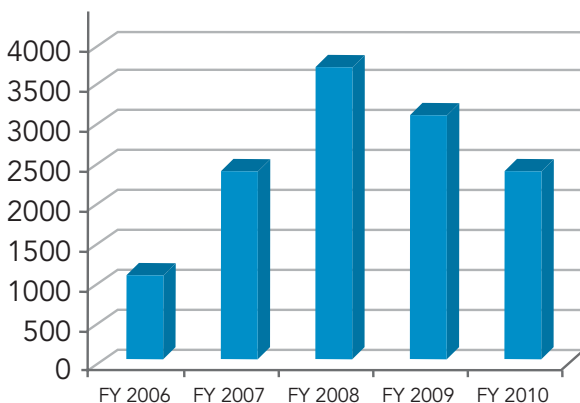
ABBTF supports apprentices over the age of 21 (23 in Victoria) with payments to overcome the financial disadvantage of apprentices in this older age group.

### Pre-Entry Support



ABBTF support has helped encourage young people to complete bricklayer training in pre-apprenticeship or pre-vocational courses to make them work ready to start an apprenticeship.

### Step Out Programs



The ABBTF Step Out Program has been a strong influence on career choices in construction. The one week hands-on taster has varied across regions to a shorter try-a-trade at careers events. More than 11,500 students have completed the schools bricklaying program over the past four years.

## New Benefits to Apprentices

The recent re-election of the Labor Government will create additional benefits to apprentices as promised in the election campaign.

Apprentices in occupations with skill shortages, including bricklaying, will be offered a \$1,700 tax exempt bonus to buy tools, service their ute or pay their registration and insurance, under a \$334.2 million plan announced by Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

With the new arrangements, apprentices stand to gain a total of \$5,500, tax exempt, over the course of their training.

Research suggests that the income apprentices earn, particularly in the early years of an apprenticeship, is a contributing factor in poor rates of retention and completion.

ABBTF welcomes the new benefits as 24% of apprentices drop out in the first 12 months in NSW.

## Two Apprentices are Better Value than One



A number of contractors are getting the benefits of signing up two new apprentices rather than use a labourer.

Two apprentices can be rotated on the job to cover mixing mud, moving bricks and time on the trowel. Time off the job at TAFE can also be offset by alternative timing away.

Great incentives from ABBTF and the Government of up to \$15,350 for each apprentice, along with lower employment costs, make this a very cost effective arrangement.

Of course, your labourer can be signed up as your second apprentice.

And your gang gets double the skills at the same time – "Makes Good Business Sense".

