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Newsletter of **ABBTF**
AUSTRALIAN BRICK & BLOCKLAYING
TRAINING FOUNDATION LIMITED

Training Boost at Wollongong

A large group of 41 students has been enrolled into Certificate III Bricklaying / Blocklaying at TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute. Approximately 80% have previously completed a "Step Out Program" taster course, funded by the ABBTF, during the last three years.

The pre-apprenticeship course includes all Stage I and Stage II competencies as well as an on-site work placement component (approx six hours per week). The primary objective of the course is to obtain apprenticeships in bricklaying /blocklaying.

Illawarra Institute has invested a lot of resources towards this course and its success will be assessed, based on the number of students gaining apprenticeships.

This is a full time course which runs for the whole year. Typical attendance pattern includes four days per week plus one day a week of on the job training (work placement with a licensed sub-contractor).

According to George Dragovic of Illawarra TAFE, three students have gained employment already, including one in bricklaying. We still have 38 attending the course, which provides them with a great opportunity to gain the skills while looking for an apprenticeship. They can then go to an employer job ready.



James Milligan in training as part of the pre-apprenticeship group at Wollongong

"Successful completion of the course will give the students a comprehensive range of competencies including laying masonry walls and corners as well as multi thickness walls and piers, installing flashings, read and interpret plans, cavity brick construction and a whole lot more," said George.

David Gill (ABBTF) and Illawarra Institute Bricklaying Section are working together by continuously canvassing individual employers and large employer groups for on the job work experience and

possible employment or apprenticeships. ABBTF is also running public awareness commercials through posters, local press and radio, which increases awareness and promotes bricklaying as a viable trade.

"Responses from the local sub-contractors and employment groups have been very positive. Most prefer apprentices with some industry experience and this course is made to measure. "Several employers said that they would put on an apprentice from this course early next year, providing they have sufficient work.

"There are several rising stars within this group of students and time will tell how well they succeed in the industry. Anyone of them would be an asset to potential employers. All they need is an opportunity to prove themselves", George concluded.

Like Father, Like Brothers, Like Daughter

Sheree Harkness comes from a family of bricklayers. Her dad



Phil and her two brothers, Job and Joel, are bricklayers. (Mum has also helped the family, from time to time, as a labourer). Sheree tried working in a hair dressing salon at one stage, but felt out of place. "I like all the normal girl things but when it comes to working, I like to be outdoors".

"I started my apprenticeship with dad and it just went from there. I did my TAFE training at Wollongong. I didn't receive any special treatment from anyone."

Having finished her apprenticeship last September, she usually works on her own as Dolly Bird Bricklaying but at times she also works for her dad. She has been working on a job in the Southern Highlands and one day, with the help of a young, work experience female, laid 450 blocks in a day.

"You feel like you have really achieved something. You can stand back and look at what you have completed at the end of the day and see your work. I have a sort of competition with myself, where I might set myself a particular target to achieve the next day".

Sheree has helped with ABBTF Step Out Programs. She sees the work of the ABBTF as an excellent way to promote the trade and help to recruit apprentices to replace older bricklayers, who will retire in the next few years.

Would she encourage more women bricklayers? "Certainly, it would give me some more competition and if you like the outdoors and a trade where you can take pride in your work, go for it!"

Troy Barrett – GTES Employee of the Year

Troy Barrett, a third year bricklaying apprentice, was named GTES Employee of The Year for 2008 at a presentation night in Wagga. David Gill, ABBTF's NSW development manager, presented the prestigious award to Troy.

Troy is employed as an apprentice by local firm Bruce Kennedy Bricklaying and has demonstrated the ideal traits that an apprentice should have.

"In selecting the GTES Employee of the Year we took into account the apprentice's TAFE results, host employer comments and the result of our judging review. Troy was very impressive, he showed us all the characteristics you would look for in someone who is a standout," said Employee of the Year judge and GTES chairman, Julie Elphick.

GTES is a group training company supporting host employers with ABBTF subsidies for bricklaying apprentices.



Troy Barrett – Employee of the Year, Julie Elphick – GTES Chairman and Troy's host employer, Bruce Kennedy – Bruce Kennedy Bricklaying.

Masonry Contractors Association

The Masonry Contractors Association (MCA), formed to give the bricklaying trade a voice in the market place in NSW, has a membership of around 60. Members represent roughly 12% of all work completed in NSW.

Since 1997 the MCA has held the annual Awards for Bricklaying Excellence, where completed work is judged across seven different categories.

The MCA believes there is no trade like bricklaying. Only a bricklayer can stand back and marvel of the beauty of his work. This is our industry and this is what we must save, to pass on a legacy to future generations.

Many small teams would benefit from attending our meetings or joining our association. They perceive incorrectly that we exist only for the large commercial teams. We point out that every large company in our association started off on the same basis of one trowel, one trowel only with a vision! So to all the small contractors who think this, we say our goals are the same.

At the MCA we can give advice seven days a week on all issues relating to our unique industry, from best safe work practices, to workers compensation requirements, security of payment or a host of issues that arise day to day.

We value our association with the ABBTF and stand as a major contributor to their endeavours. After all without apprentices there is no future. Should you wish to know more about the MCA you can call John White on 0418 632 225, seven days a week.



Bricklaying Forum Held at Parramatta

Bricklayers, TAFE trainers, builders and industry people participated in a special forum at Parramatta, in March, as part of a national bricklaying research project.

Forum participants, under the direction of Tim Powers and Jude Walker of the Altegis Group were split into three groups to conduct an analysis on bricklaying.

The groups raised key issues to identify barriers and drivers in bricklaying apprenticeships. The feedback is part of the national research project.

Each group came up with the main issues and the positive (driving forces) and negative (restraining forces) issues they felt were affecting apprenticeships and the bricklaying industry. These were then collated and voted upon by the entire group to come up with the key issues.

Nigel Croke in Training for Worldskills

Nigel Croke, Australia's bricklaying representative at this year's Worldskills international competition in Calgary, Canada later this year, is continuing his intensive training for the big event.



He recently travelled to Ireland, with trainer Troy Everett, to compete against the local bricklayers where the project was a massive shamrock where the clovers were suspended by cantilevered bars and a Canadian flag with a tiled maple leaf in the centre.