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

Eddie Campbell Promotes Bricklaying as a Special Skill

Eddie Campbell, Swan TAFE senior bricklaying lecturer, is a man on mission, keen to improve the standing of bricklaying and the perception of the trade in the community.

He has spent several years and many hours planning, organising delivering and judging the premier trade event on the calendar – WorldSkills. Eddie sees WorldSkills as one way of showing industry and the broader community that the VET sector is producing first rate bricklayers.



“Bricklayer training is no different to that of a pianist. He or she practices for hours on end to produce the best performance they can.

“People pay to see the show and if it is no good, they do not return and it effects the pianist’s reputation. This is no different to trade skill development and practice,” said Eddie.

“At the end of the day consumers pay very good money for housing and they have a right to demand the best quality workmanship for their home,” said Eddie.

Eddie Campbell learnt his trade as a bricklaying apprentice to his father, a builder. He is a registered builder, a qualified bricklayer and has a degree in Technical Teaching (TAFE).

He joined TAFE at the Leaderville campus, then moved to the Osborne Park facility before joining Swan TAFE, with a new training operation at Balga. They have the largest number of bricklaying apprentices in WA

Eddie believes firmly in flexible training and assessment. He conducts regular site visits to assess progress of his apprentices and to develop a relationship with the employer. He also promotes “self paced” training for the individual.

As you might expect, he sets a very high standard for his apprentices who will soon become tradesmen. He works closely with Dean Pearson of the ABBTF.

“Apart from on and off the site training, I believe apprentices need guidance and mentoring. I like to take an active interest in every apprentice entering the training facility,” Eddie said.

Eddie places a strong emphasis on personal fitness for his apprentices, which no doubt comes from his own personal interest in sport. He is a long serving member of Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club with a keen interest in surfboat rowing and played rugby for many years.

ABBTF Major Investment in WA Schools

In 2008 the ABBTF delivered more than 80 Step Out Programs in schools and training institutions around the state. These ranged as far north as Karratha, south as Esperance and east as Merredin. The majority, however, occur in the metro area for Years 10 – 11 students.

According to the ABBTF’s WA development manager, Dean Pearson, the Step Out Program is designed to be a hands-on taste of bricklaying where students literally have an opportunity to get outside the classroom and use their hands.

“In this process, students with good hand-eye coordination often surprise themselves and their teachers in just how good they are at laying bricks.

“Whilst visiting schools over the duration of running step outs, I have seen some fantastic projects, a real testament to the dedication of the students participating and those involved in the process – such as the trainers and school teachers,” said Dean.



Students at Karratha Secondary School with Ian Fitzgerald, Trainer – Regional Training Services

The program often dispels many myths about bricklaying and also gives parents information on the career path opportunities that come from the trade.

The success of the program is now being measured against improved bricklaying pre-apprenticeship enrolments in 2009 and VETiS participation.

If you are a teacher, careers advisor, community representative or parent and you would like more information, please contact the ABBTF on 1300 66 44 96.

WA Builders Support Apprentices

Bricklayer apprenticeship training ensures sustainability of skills in our trade. Having a good supply of tradesmen can have a direct bearing on the affordability of clay bricks in the West Australian housing market.



Supply of tradesmen at peak periods, in particular, will also reflect on the costs of installation through less delays and a higher standard of workmanship.

Many builders realise this and are supporting contractors and tradesman employing or hosting apprentices by offering preferential or ongoing work. The ABBTF applauds these builders!

WA Bricklayers Have Your Say

ABBTF is involved in an important national research project to improve the retention and completion of apprenticeships in bricklaying. The research will provide the Industry Skills Council under the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and ABBTF with vital information for framing future programs to address the skill shortage in bricklaying.

Bricklayers around the country will be asked what works and what doesn't work in training and employing apprentices. Ideas and feedback from bricklayers will be gathered over the next few months.

If you want to take part and have your say call ABBTF on 1300 66 44 96 or email deanp.abbtbf@bigpond.com

ABBTF Supports Trade Assessments

ABBTF supports trade assessments which enable bricklayers working in the industry to receive a qualification in Bricklaying/Blocklaying, via Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

In the past it has been difficult to convince tradesmen already working on site to obtain a qualification. However in recent times, with the slowdown in work, many are changing their minds. A "tradie" getting a trade qualification through RPL is as important as an apprentice completing and receiving their trade qualifications.

Recently as many as eleven bricklayers have undergone written, oral and practical assessments whereby they had to demonstrate their trade knowledge in bricklaying (some also produced third party or photographic evidence). ABBTF subsidise the RPL, covering 50% of the assessment costs.

Some recent examples include:

David Grbavac, of DJ Personnel, currently has 15 bricklayers of which four are apprentices. David started his apprenticeship in 1989 but failed to complete it. He has since been assessed and received his trade assessment/RPL through Regional Training Services.

José Sidonio De Abreu, of Portuguese origin, started as a brickie about nine years ago. With English as his second language he contracted to Plunkett Homes, a major Perth builder, who is also currently hosting a Skillhire apprentice. José's assessment was conducted through Challenger TAFE.



L-R Congratulations David and José on gaining valuable RPL's towards your Certificate IV in Bricklaying.

Tough Times Strategies

Over the last few months the ABBTF has received notification from employers that some bricklaying apprentices have been suspended due to "Lack of Work".

There are options available for both employers and apprentices and we recommend you contact your ApprentiCentre on 13 19 54 for further information to avoid apprentices giving up their apprenticeship altogether. Some options are:

- Apprentices can transfer to another employer or host.
- The apprentice can continue off-the-job block release training with the Registered Training Organisation on a full-time basis during the slow period.
- The apprentice may be able to take annual leave.
- Employers can apply for a temporary suspension or part-time arrangements of the apprenticeship.
- Recent announcement by the Federal Government will provide additional incentives to employers who take on an out of trade apprentice and to complete their training.
- Maintain open dialogue with your apprentice as there may be a solution just around the corner that one party has not considered.

For more information visit www.apprenticentre.wa.gov.au
Or call ABBTF on 1300 66 44 96.