

Aussie BRICKLAYER

Bricklayer & Apprentice
Makes good business sense

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

May 2010

Tony's Twin Sons Bricklaying with him after Completing Diplomas



Tony Degregoria has been in bricklaying for 28 years and operates his own company DG Group Pty Ltd. Now Tony is delighted to have his twin sons Daniel and Anthony working in the business with him.

It's not unusual to see families working together in bricklaying but David and Anthony have joined their father after completing their Diplomas in Building at the University of South Australia.

"The boys' used to work with me on weekends and school holidays whenever possible. Now Lorraine and Jim Baff, from FCTA, have completed recognition of the boys' prior learning, which is great, seeing they are so experienced in bricklaying. They went to university to get their Diplomas and to learn about project management and estimating," said Tony the proud father.

He is not hard on the boys but has always made sure they achieved a high standard of workmanship. "They have come back to gain better on-site knowledge and also help to run the business, at the same time learning all aspects of the building industry.

Tony's company has been involved with many commercial and multi-storey

projects including large quality housing, mainly for private clients.

Asked what attributes make a good bricklayer Tony said, "a brickie needs to have a good temperament, good communication and be able to work with both bricks and blocks as well as perform the work with pride," said Tony!

Tony had a couple of mentors when he started out in bricklaying but the best working relationship he had was working with Nick Bianco culminating in running the business for many years.

"A brickie needs to have a good temperament, good communication and perform the work with pride."

So what are their plans for the future? "They may start their own business, help to develop the family business or perhaps go on to project management. We want to expand the business as well as doing our own developing.

"We have already built a house each for ourselves with the experience we have gained over the years. I just want them to be very successful in the industry and with their lives." Tony continued.

When they are not bricklaying Daniel and Anthony play soccer on weekends as well as indoor cricket and attend the gym. Family duties also take up a lot of their spare time.

A nice footnote to the story is that Tony had never got around to gaining formal qualifications. FCTA have now put Tony through the Recognised Prior Learning process. Funding for this has been provided under the PPP Existing Workers Program which has been an outstanding success.

"We are applying for more funding as the course filled in no time, and there are so many competent bricklayers out there without a formal qualification," said Lorraine.

Deadlines for Claiming Subsidies

ABBTF apprentice subsidies to bricklayers have proved to be a great success in generating growth in apprentice numbers. However a number of employers are at risk of missing out on their subsidies by registering and claiming their apprentices too late.

Bricklayers directly employing apprentices should be aware of the following deadlines for claiming subsidies –

1. Registration of apprentices: **6 months** from the date of indenture or signing as a recommencement.
2. Claim for annual subsidy: **3 months** after completion of each year.

Avatar Star was a Brickie!

Sam Worthington, the star of the blockbuster movie Avatar, was a bricklayer. Sam, originally from WA, spent some time working on site as a bricklayer in Queensland. While bricklaying does provide a career path in construction and other industries, we never thought it would lead to Hollywood stardom.

ABBTF Support Drives Apprentice Growth

A great response from the bricklayers to the ABBTF support when starting a new apprentice has helped increase apprentice numbers in SA. Current subsidies total \$3,000 over three years.

The commitment from employers to hire and train the next generation of bricklayers is addressing the skill shortage in SA.

Support from CITB for apprentice employment has also been an important incentive to employ more apprentices.

The graph shows the increase in total enrolled apprentices and growth in ABBTF supported apprentices.



Why do Employers take on an Apprentice?

An extensive national survey of bricklayers last year, asked the reasons why employers take on apprentices?

The response was:

- Makes good business sense
- An apprentice is more likely to stay with an employer of the 3-4 years
- Because the employer was an apprentice once
- It costs less to employ an apprentice.

It was also interesting that 54% of bricklayers said they break-even or make money with an apprentice in the first year. Obviously the earlier the training happens, the more productive the apprentice becomes.

What makes for a good bricklayer?

- Quality of work done
- Someone who listens to the boss
- Being able to work within a team
- Ability to read plans
- Getting the job done on time.

The most successful bricklaying apprentices in trade school had an employer who:

- Encouraged more bricklaying vs. laboring
- Rotated the apprentice's role more often
- Had more than one apprentice.

WorldSkills for Brisbane 2010

The 2010 National WorldSkills competition was held in Brisbane at the Convention & Exhibition Centre in May.

Over 500 competitors from around Australia competed for Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in up to 50 different trade and skill categories.

The winner of the bricklaying competition was Lester Tibbles from New South Wales. Lester won the gold medal in a tight finish from Ben Barratt from Tasmania and Daniel Dovern from Wollongong. Lester gave credit to his boss, Bill Searle and Peter Moore, head teacher at Bathurst TAFE for his training and personal development. The standard of bricklaying was among the highest in recent years.

Lester can advance to the 41st International WorldSkills competition in London in 2011. In 2009 Nigel Croke won Bronze in the bricklaying competition at International WorldSkills competition in Canada.

The SA competitor at WorldSkills was Glenn Delaney who was featured in the November issue of the ABBTF newsletter. Glenn is employed by Master Builders Group Training and his host employer is Richard Hennings. Glenn was trained at TAFE SA under the guidance of Dallas Kelvin. Dallas also travelled to Brisbane to support Glenn in the competition.

Over 80,000 visitors attended the event. ABBTF assisted with the judging and supported competing apprentices.

"This was a big event showcasing the best of apprentices in many industries and the bricklaying competition was a keenly fought contest with some amazing brickwork to be seen. said Troy Everett, trainer and competition organiser.

"This is where you see the cream of Australia's bricklayers demonstrating their great technical skills," said Troy.

Bricklaying Apprentices Shine at HIA Awards

ABBTF sponsored the Bricklaying Category of the 2009 HIA - Stratco Apprentice and Trade Contractor Awards held in March this year.

The night was a great success and four bricklaying apprentices received their awards. ABBTF is delighted to support these important awards that recognise the achievements of the apprentices who are the future of the industry in South Australia.

The winners were:

1st Year	Lennard Kruger
2nd Year	Jay Gerardis
3rd Year	Jae Alisuskas
4th Year	Brendan Roberts



Lennard Kruger

Jay Gerardis



Jae Alisuskas

Brendan Roberts

Each one of the winning bricklaying apprentices are trained by FCTA.

Congratulations to all the winners of the bricklaying awards.

New Look For ABBTF

Our newsletter "Aussie Bricklayer" has been redesigned and renamed to focus on the bricklaying trade. Our aim is to lift the image of bricklaying, promote the benefits of training and make the industry aware that putting on an apprentice "makes good business sense". We hope you to continue to enjoy the articles in our newsletters to come.

