

MEDIA RELEASE

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Year 11 student gets career head start with East Gippsland Water

A school-based traineeship is helping Bruthen teenager Josh Ward finish school while making a head-start in his future career.

The 17-year-old Bairnsdale Secondary College and Clontarf Academy student is completing paid on-the-job training with East Gippsland Water as part of a Cert II in Civil Construction.

Josh is part of the East Gippsland Water's Reuse Team where he is working in the field at irrigation farms and storage sites handling recycled water, helping with day-to-day operations and equipment maintenance under close supervision.

These traineeships provide an opportunity for students to learn practical skills and earn a qualification.

Josh acknowledges he wanted to leave school, but the support he has received from Clontarf to remain at school and the opportunity to work with East Gippsland Water has kept him there.

"They (Clontarf staff) support me and help me through school because sometimes it gets very hard," he said.

"I enjoy it (working at East Gippsland Water) a lot.

"I look forward each week to getting out of the classroom, doing practical stuff, and meeting different people," he said.

"It's good to get out of school so I don't have to be there five days a week."

East Gippsland Water's Executive Manager People and Culture, Pam Porter said the organisation's partnership with the Clontarf Foundation was important to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young men to begin rewarding careers.

"School-based apprenticeships are a great way for us to tap into the potential of our local youth and assist them to develop practical skills," she said.

"Josh is a valued member of our re-use team and we hope his traineeship sets him up for a successful future career."

Clontarf Bairnsdale Academy Director Paul "Turk" Carroll said several young locals had made their way through school while completing traineeships with East Gippsland Water.

"Josh has a great opportunity with East Gippsland Water," he said.

“Josh is a hands-on boy and this school-based traineeship allows him to work in a big organisation and see what it’s all about while completing his VCAL.

“East Gippsland Water is a great supporter of Clontarf and the school-based traineeships.”

For Skillinvest Apprenticeships Consultant Howard Stobo, the combination of traditional schooling and on-the-job training is the key to keeping some young men in school longer.

“School-based traineeships in general are ideal for kids who are struggling to find the relevance of school,” Mr Stobo said.

“For those kids who are struggling to stay motivated with their schooling, these traineeships are something to look forward to each week that they know certain days they will be out working.”

“For Josh specifically, he is a bit out of the box in that he has good communication skills, is reactive and responsive, and he is really enjoying the work.”

Josh isn’t sure where his traineeship will lead, but he hopes to explore options in the electrical field once he finishes year 12.

Josh’s traineeship is part of the State Government’s Head Start apprenticeships and traineeships program.



Caption: Bairnsdale Secondary College student and East Gippsland Water trainee Josh Ward and Operations and Maintenance Officer Tim Irish at the Metung Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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