

Celebrating Taranaki apprentices

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Complementing and guiding on-the-job learning

Industry training organisations (ITOs) and Western Institute of Technology in Taranaki (WITT) provide the theory and course components to complement the on-the-job training that apprentices receive from employers. And Taranaki Futures is the link that connects all these parties together.

Skills, Competenz and ServiceIQ are three of the largest ITOs working with apprentices in Taranaki as they learn while they earn.

Skills
"We work with a wide range of industries in the Taranaki, from the familiar electrical and plumbing apprenticeships to the brand new roofing, scaffolding and cranes apprenticeships," says Skills area account manager Katrina Mayo. "We also look after a number of business qualifications including real estate, contact centre, security, right up to a Diploma in Business."

A lot of people don't realise that ITOs are non-profit, Mayo says. "A lot of money gets poured back into our member industries through sponsorships, scholarships and program development. We work for our membership industries, not for shareholders."

"Good workplace training is good for business. It is credited for higher staff retention, less costly mistakes, raising business standards and increasing the talent pool for the region."

"Apprenticeships are also a great way to keep our young people in the region, learning and earning without ticking up student debt."

"I'm a firm believer that the best place to learn how to do the job is on the job. Learning from the experience of those around you and being able to relate the book work to real life situations."



Students on Taranaki Futures' Accelerator 2017 programme. A total of 90 students were placed in more than 50 businesses in Term 2 to improve the education to employment pathway. Photo: SUPPLIED

Competenz
Competenz works with more than 3500 companies and 26,000 apprentices and trainees throughout New Zealand, and has supported Taranaki businesses for more than 20 years.

The industry training organisation designs qualifications for 36 industries including manufacturing, engineering, forestry, transport, bakery, butchery, printing and textiles. "Our purpose is to help Kiwi industry grow skills, careers and business and we do this by delivering on-the-job training and designing workforce development solutions," says chief executive Fiona Kingsford.

"Our staff visit schools across the country to show students the career opportunities available and support teachers and careers advisors to build students' skills with relevant hands-on NCEA study through Gateway and other school-to-work programmes."

Competenz account managers regularly visit employers and their apprentices to ensure they are on track to succeed, she says. They also help find apprentices and support employees through their qualifications.

With the digital landscape influencing the way businesses operate, the world of work, education and learning is changing faster than many industries can keep up.

Kingsford explains that a new range of bite-sized, micro-learning, online course and hands-on workshops has been developed so learners can upskill quickly and businesses can remain competitive.

Competenz collaborates with employers to understand their needs and challenges, gaining insight to develop qualifications and resources, she says.

"We work hard to ensure our apprentices gain the skills they need to make a valuable contribution to the workforce. We're proud to recognise and

celebrate their achievements in Taranaki over the past 12 months."

ServiceIQ

ServiceIQ is New Zealand's official ITO for the tourism, travel, retail and retail supply chain, hospitality, aviation and museum service sectors, says the ITO's Taranaki sector adviser Tim Waite.

"Our experts set the national qualification standards, write and design on-job training programmes and the learning material that helps businesses develop and upskill talented people working in hundreds of different roles and at different levels right across our sectors."

"We offer a full range of short courses and on-job training programmes, from entry to management and diploma level. This includes apprenticeships for chefs, caterers and aviation engineers."

Among many benefits, ServiceIQ's flexible workplace training programmes enable businesses to upskill employees with the know-how they need to succeed and boost business performance, says Waite. "With ServiceIQ, it's possible to up-skill your talented employees for free when you have your own in-house assessor."

ServiceIQ training programmes are used by many of New Zealand's leading brands, he adds, to help their people learn the required skills, advance their knowledge and take on greater responsibility. They include businesses of all sizes from all sectors, all over the country.

Some of the companies for which ServiceIQ provides on-job qualification training programmes and apprenticeship programmes are: Air New Zealand, BP, Flight Centre, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Heritage Hotels, HobbittomTM Movie Set Tours, InterContinental Hotels, McDonald's, New Zealand Maritime Museum, Ngāi Tahu Tourism Agrodome, Noel Leeming, Mitre

10, Novotel Hotels, OfficeMax, Quest Apartments NZ, Resene Colour Shops, Te Papa Museum, The Rock Shop, Skyline New Zealand Queenstown and Rotorua, Taupō Bungy, The Warehouse, and Z Energy.

WITT

WITT runs training courses for the region's ITO (industry training organisation) apprentices, providing a service which removes the need for companies to send staff out of the province for training, says WITT faculty leader Angela Ferguson.

"Witt holds night and block courses for all levels of Taranaki apprentices and is now training up 50 automotive Mito apprentices, 26 electrical SkillsOrg apprentices and 60 engineering Competenz apprentices."

Aside from the formal teaching, Ferguson says Witt also supports other ITOs by providing a free space for carpentry and plumbing/drainlaying/gasfitting/roofing apprentices to meet with an ITO representative from training organisations BCITO and SkillsOrg.

At weekly night classes, those apprentices can get tutorial support with their paperwork. "Apprentices are taught on the job and are required to complete a large amount of self-directed paperwork. The weekly sessions encourages and supports them."

Witt also hosts the EWRB (Electrical Workers Registration Board) regulations examinations for the region in June and November each year. A total of 28 electricians this year sat the June theory examination and 31 sat the regulations examination.

In the lead up to each of these exams, Witt holds week-long exam preparation courses.



Taranaki Futures

Taranaki Futures works in the gap between education and employment, says general manager Warwick Foy. "This gap exists because the worlds of education and employment are constantly evolving, so it is often hard for educators and employers to understand how their worlds can most effectively work together."

Thirty per cent of high school students go to university, but 99 per cent of people eventually go to work, Warwick points out. "We need to work with schools, education providers and the Ministry of Education to move the emphasis away from content and assessment to work readiness, job-seeker skills, health and safety, mental health and financial literacy."

TF goals define how that can improve.

■ To advocate for equality between academic and employment based pathways.

■ To inspire employers to think about, and articulate, the type of workforce they will need for their futures.

■ To support educators and employers to develop new ways of highlighting available pathways to young people.

■ Support educators to develop initiatives that ensure young people are work ready.

■ Support employers to develop their understanding of young employees so they can be more effective.

■ Ensure all young people are effectively engaged beyond high school education.

Apprenticeship pathways for Jurnee, Joel

Mike Shaw

Apprentices in Taranaki have a wide variety of business environments in which to learn their trade, from working alongside an owner-tradesman to a role within a large company team.

Those ends of the spectrum are represented by the two apprentice profiles here - Jurnee Corrigan, who is employed by New Plymouth plumber-drainlayer Dom Cooksley-Gruys; and Joel Campbell, who is one of seven apprentices learning their trade at Fonterra in Hawera.

Jurnee Corrigan is in her final year of her four-year plumbing and gasfitting apprenticeship and working with Dom in his Pipe Dreams Plumbing and Drainlaying business. She's loving what she does, but that appreciation wasn't exactly there when she began her trade.

"The job found me," she explains. "I didn't think anything of it at the start ... just a job. But I fell in love with it."

The nature of the work won her over. "I'm a real physical, hands-on person ... not an office-type-job person. I enjoy the constant hard work, and being outside."

Variety of work and skills makes her job very satisfying, she says. "A lot of work goes into plumbing. Some people see it as 'just a plumber', someone playing with poo all day. But there's so much more to it that it's not funny."

A block course in Wellington this past week illustrated the variety ... learning about ventilation. "I'm doing things now that I'd not thought a plumber would do ... we fill the gaps in the other trades. I'd never really thought about ventilation until it was handed the study guide."

That variety means her work is different all the time. "It's not day-to-day doing the same thing."

At the start, she thought she might have had comments like 'You're a girl and this isn't a girl's job'. "But I got treated as one of the boys ... just a person doing a job. And I'm happy with that."

Jurnee started her apprenticeship in Hawera initially, but subsequently transferred that to Dom's Pipe Dreams business when she wanted to move north to New Plymouth. She can see the opportunity eventually of travelling overseas and working there as a plumber to gain further experience.

"Having a trade under your belt is one of



Plumbing apprentice Jurnee Corrigan.

the biggest things. And as an apprentice, you work and learn at the same time ... that's the best way to go."

While Jurnee was never interested in university studies, she gets her share of formal education as part of her apprenticeship. "There's a lot of theory and study involved ... I sit papers three times a year ... but it's a do-able amount and the rest of the time I'm working, doing things out in the big wide world and getting paid for it."

Dom had the advantage of knowing Jurnee's work ethic before she began working for him. "We both represented New Zealand at karate and she did work experience with me before starting her apprenticeship."

He is emphatic about the value of an apprentice in a business. "Apprentices are key to any trade business. They are awesome - especially the young, keen ones."

All one-man-band businesses should realise how much they can achieve by training someone up to how they want a

project done, he adds. "It's very satisfying, training someone all the way through."

Having an apprentice has been a godsend, he adds. "There's only one of me and the extra set of hands is amazing. Jurnee has been working for me for almost a year and the amount of extra work done since she came on board is outstanding."

Working on new houses and renovations this past year has complemented Jurnee's previous experience with maintenance and gas work, he says. "She's now at the point she can pump out a whole new house from start to finish, including all the drainage, by herself."

While more women are now entering traditional trades, Dom says he has met just one other female plumber. "But in 2017, people realise that girls can do anything. It's 100 per cent individual ability!"

Joel Campbell is following a family tradition with his mechanical engineering apprenticeship at Fonterra, near Hawera. "My family used to own an engineering



Mechanical engineering apprentice Joel Campbell.

shop in Hawera," Joel explains. The Campbell and Purser Engineering business began in his grandfather's time, and Joel used to work there as a youth.

That didn't mean he automatically focused on engineering as a career choice. "I was looking to be a carpenter, but my father said 'No, you don't want to be a carpenter'. So I tried engineering through Gateway at school."

That put him on the metal pathway rather than wood. "I quite enjoyed it," he admits, "or I wouldn't be doing it now."

The combination of hands-on work and theory appealed to him. "There's a lot more theory than people realise ... you have to stop and think about all that the job involves and it's satisfying when you get it right."

Joel has obviously been getting things right. At the recent ETC Apprentice of the Year awards, he won the award for best junior apprentice in the Mechanical Engineering - Maintenance, Fitting and Machining category, was third in the Competenz eLearning Trainee of the Year

category and won the Year 1 New Zealand Apprentice Award.

The Gateway programme provided him with work experience at several different companies - a little like try before you buy. "Gateway is a bigger help than people realise ... for one day a week you get hands-on work that helps you get an apprenticeship."

Joel's work is focused on the maintenance programme at Fonterra, but includes skills such as welding and working on many different types of machinery. "Fonterra has a wide range of machinery that we work on ... and different machinery needs different skills."

That work provides the basis for a lot of career choices, he says. He's not sure where he might end up down the years, but recognises the value of his apprenticeship. "With a trade certificate, you can go anywhere in New Zealand or the world."

There's a link to Joel's family engineering background in his Fonterra supervisor, maintenance manager Brian Purser. Brian's family were the other half of the firm of Campbell and Purser.

Brian also notes the value of the Gateway programme in schools. "We've had good success through Gateway and a number of students have become apprentices out of Gateway and gone on to be leading tradesmen."

His role overseeing the apprentices at Fonterra is not just a work responsibility, it's personal to him as well. "I've always trained apprentices ... they are the future of the industry."

Finding quality tradespeople is not as easy as it used to be, he says, but is important. "We have an ageing workforce because of the drop in apprentices after the Global Financial Crisis."

Fonterra presently employs seven apprentices, he says, although there would usually be four learning the mechanical trade and four learning electrical. That's an ongoing process for the business. "As the fourth years roll out into the workforce, the first years come on."

The apprentices form part of the succession package for the Fonterra workforce and gain experience at all three South Taranaki plants - Whareroa, Collingwood St and Kapuni. "We shuttle them around the plants to add to their skills and experience."

ETCs top apprentice



Jack Christiansen, a Vector electrical apprentice, was named ETC Apprentice of the Year for 2017 at Engineering Taranaki Consortium's annual awards evening recently. Jack was also the winner of the Mechanical Engineering - Maintenance, Fitting & Machining Senior category.

And more

South Taranaki's Youth to Work Awards were also announced recently and among those apprentices recognised were the following current ITO learners.

Aimee Duffus is a 19-year-old electrical apprentice with Chris Perrett Electrical Solutions Limited in Hawera. Aimee was placed second in the Young Achiever Award for the 16-19 year age group.

Jacob Caskey was placed third in the 16-19 year age group. He is completing his first year of a plumbing and gasfitting apprenticeship with employer Evergreen Plumbing in Hawera. His training provider ATT also nominated him for 'Most Outstanding Performer' for a first year apprentice and out of 79 eligible apprentices, Jacob won the award.

Josh Evershed is doing his apprenticeship in Automotive Heavy Engineering - Agricultural Equipment with Power Farming Taranaki in Hawera and placed second in the Young Achiever Wward 20-24 years.



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