

# Enjoying all the comradery

GOING to work on your first day at a new job is nerve-racking enough for most people, yet for two teenage girls off to work on a jobsite with lots of other school-based tradies, the experience has been nothing short of fantastic.

Cheyenne Rayner is 17 years old and is a year 12 student at Mt Gravatt State High School.

Keen to start a career in construction, she is part of the project in Sadlier's Crossing to renovate a 1930's home and bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, while giving future tradies a head start in their careers and is one of many young women keen to get a career in the industry after school.

The partnership between Apprenticeships Queensland and TAFE Queensland, the home in Herbert Street is currently undergoing a massive renovation, with work progressing well. It is hoped the house will be finished by early next year.

The new home is currently a three-bedroom, one-bathroom home. On completion, it will have two levels and will have an extra three bedrooms downstairs along with a big rumpus room, and the project is on track to be finished by the end of the year.

Fourteen school-based apprentices are out of the classroom and are learning all about their trade which many hope will lead them straight into a full-time job when they graduate.

In total 54 students will get real time experience on the project.

"One of my teachers is the co-ordinator and organised an interview for me," Cheyenne said. "Originally the plan was to just do some work experience but when I heard more about the Certificate I in Construction I was keen to give it a go.

"I had heard about this project, and the scope to do different things is huge. One week I could be painting, the next I could be doing carpentry. I was originally planning to join the army but after some setbacks I've gone with my second option which was this.

"At school I'm doing engineering skills, furniture skills and building and construction. For me, they are all something different to try."

Cheyenne says that the experience has been nothing but positive.

"It's been a very welcoming environment, and I'm learning so much. You pick up so many skills when you're here on the job."

Claice McKellar is another young woman who knows what she wants to do with her life. The fifteen-year-old is in year 10 at Centenary State High School and says that the mix of males to females at her school in manual arts is split down the middle.

She is representative of an industry that is changing, and one where women are up to the



tasks.

"My school gave me the opportunity to come here and do a Certificate I in Construction, and this is my first day," she said.

"They knew after doing interviews that I was keen on construction. To be honest, I'm not really keen on academic stuff, I like to be a hands-on person. Eventually I would like to be a natural therapist, but now I'm happy to be working in this industry.

"I'm going to be doing painting and anything I can get my hands on. My friends think it's good, they weren't surprised that I put my hand up, I've always enjoyed doing manual arts at school, lots of girls at my school do it, the mix is about 50/50. I'm keen to do carpentry, and my

parents think this is a great opportunity for me."

Cheyenne added that she thinks anyone thinking about the industry should look into it.

"I'd say to anyone out there give it go, I was a bit nervous coming to the worksite, thinking I wouldn't be accepted but it was the complete opposite, it's been such a welcoming environment," she said.

Head of Senior School at Mt Gravatt State High School Sandra Wilson says that she's noticed the change in attitudes towards the industry in her 25 years of teaching.

"We have a number of girls who are interested in working as a tradie, it hasn't been a big change but something I've noticed changing over time, and the interest is there,"

Ms Wilson said.

"The feedback I've had is that they enjoy being outside, they love the work and none have had any concerns working in what they expected would be a 'blokey' environment.

"As long as the funding is available to support students doing these apprenticeships it will continue to give them the opportunity to get into a trade, and connect them with the right businesses. The interest and ability is there, we just have to make sure it matches with the industry."

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