

# Helping hone skills that last for a lifetime

Dianna loves seeing apprentices thrive on site

WORKING with students who are keen on a construction or building career is an everyday job for Dianna Hockins, who loves the fact that she is in many ways, changing lives.

As the school liaison coordinator for Apprenticeships Queensland, it is Dianna's job to work with schools across the Ipswich region and organise the hands that will make a difference to the house that is going to stand for decades to come in Herbert Street, Sadlier's Crossing.

As part of the Building Futures Program, Apprenticeships Queensland have partnered with TAFE Queensland and many schools, to offer hands-on, real time experience working on a home renovation.

The home is currently a three-bedroom, one-bathroom home, but by the end of the year it will have two levels along with will have an extra three bedrooms downstairs along with a big rumpus room.

Fourteen school-based apprentices are out of the classroom and under Dianna's wing, learning their trade which in many cases can lead to a full-time job when they graduate.

In total 54 students will get real time experience on the project this year, and already attention is turning to the next intake of eager young tradies.

"The program has been running since February last year and I work closely with the schools to source the students, fit the criteria then work with the schools through the program," Ms Hockins said.

"Most of the students are very keen to get involved, but it can be a mixed basket. Some start and realise that maybe being a tradie isn't for them, but overall the majority have a good outlook and take on the responsibility of on-site learning."

Dianna said the program had a very good success rate for getting students into full time work.

"It's all about ticking the boxes and, over the last year or so, we've had pretty much all but two of the students go on to a full-time role as a tradie.

"We hope this year all of the students will get

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full time jobs. It all depends on industry support, as many don't understand how well it can work for them. Part of my job is about educating people in the industry and showing how a school-based apprentice can benefit their business.

"Many schools have really grasped onto this program, but we are always open to more enquiries from schools and the industry, I encourage them to get in touch with me."

Ipswich remains the fastest growing city in the country, and with homes going up all over the region, the demand for full time staff working in the construction industry has never been greater.

"I think there will be a shift, its more about skills today, especially in a real-life situation. Grades are just as important as skills, and walking out the school gates with skills under your belt gives them a great start to a lifelong career.

"It's vital for Ipswich to get these students through, with the growth in Ipswich we need people in the construction industry now and into the future.

"Not everybody is an OP student, and there is big demand for these skills," she added.

"They have such great support on the site, Jamie is an excellent trainer, and we can be there to help them on their pathway to a career that will last a lifetime."

Dianna said there was another intake to come this year.

"We going to be looking for 30 students to put their hands up," she said.

*You can follow the progress of the house in upcoming issues of the QT's Real Estate Guide every month, which is FREE with your paper every Saturday.*



Dianna Hockins is Apprenticeships Queensland's school liaison coordinator.

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- Gain valuable employability skills e.g. work ethic, reliability, attitude and enthusiasm; trained by tradespeople.

To find out more about the Building Futures Program contact Di Hockins on [Dianna@appqld.com.au](mailto:Dianna@appqld.com.au)

