

EPPPTV – Season 1 Episode 9 Transcript

Jazmine Huggins:

Hi, and welcome back to EPPP TV. We hope you had a relaxing break, were able to reset and are ready to dive right into 2021. We're really happy to be back and to bring you all the info you need about the Educational Pathways Pilot Program and the ways it can help you on your way to a rich and rewarding career.

Jazmine Huggins:

In this episode, we're going to take a quick look back at 2020 and what we learned about the EPPP last year. We are also going to meet Sunil Badami, who has one of the most interesting and diverse careers I've heard of and who will also impart some of his wisdom for us. We're also going to chat to former SBAT student, Arcadia Meldrum about how she's used her VET studies to really define her interests, and what direction she wanted to head in.

Jazmine Huggins:

First up, let's have a quick refresher on the EPPP and what we learned last year. We met some really interesting people and learned a bunch about vocational education and the amazing career pathways that it leads to. So let's rewind a bit and recap some of our highlights. The EPPP provides you with opportunities to explore lots of different career options or even get started on an apprenticeship or traineeship while you're still at school. The best part is that you're supported through the entire process with mentoring and career advice, to make sure that you are job ready and armed with practical skills.

Jazmine Huggins:

We've met a lot of inspirational students past and present living out their VET dreams in a range of industries and careers. From students who are completing school based apprenticeships and traineeships, to past students, who've used their VET studies to land fulfilling and exciting jobs.

Anna Podgorczyk:

My name's Anna Podgorczyk. I'm the social media and marketing coordinator. And I also run events for Ramada Hotel and Suites, Ballina. It involves a bit of everything. It changes day-to-day, which I love. It's pretty amazing that I get to do this every day.

Jazmine Huggins:

To our very own EPPP ambassadors who forged their own paths in VET.

Liam Muldoon:

My trades left me, or has me being, very financially secure, particularly during these difficult times, with COVID-19, we're classed as an essential role. So I haven't been short on work, I haven't applied for a job in a lot of years jobs come to me. So it's fantastic in that sense.

Jazmine Huggins:

And let's not forget Kelsey Commons, who wasn't enjoying school in the classroom learning environment but who through VET re-invigorated her love for learning.

Kelsey Cummons:

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Yeah, I was just really struggling, I felt disengaged. I was just not happy, I just wasn't showing up. My attendance started getting really bad.

Jazmine Huggins:

You have access to a great support network, no matter where you are on your career journey or what you want to do. Remember to talk to your teachers, careers advisors, transition advisors, and SBAT mentors.

Chelsea:

They really all help along the way, your deputies, your principles, as much as they might seem not approachable at the time. Once they figure out your path and what you're willing to do and what you want to do, it's really easy to just be like, "This is what I want from my life, this is why I'm interested in. Could you please help me achieve that?" And they'll be there and they'll help you. And that's awesome and relieving.

Jazmine Huggins:

Your family and friends are there to support you too. And they may even have connections with employers. Skills like communication, teamwork, taking initiative, time management, and problem-solving can give you the edge when finding a job.

Zac Ryan:

I think it's pretty rare that someone stays in their one career path for their entire life. So if we go back to those employability skills, teamwork, communication. They can be transferred to like all pretty much job opportunities. So yeah, I think it's important to develop those skills and that way you can apply them to whichever job you would end up in.

Jazmine Huggins:

If you're just coming out of school but don't have any work experience, these are the skills that you should include on your CV, because these are the ones that are highly prized by employers. Don't chase the money or do what other people think you should. Find something that you're good at and follow your interests. If you're not sure what that is, talk to people, do some research, or check out the digital careers toolbox, which is full of great advice on courses and careers.

Jazmine Huggins:

Work experience is another great option. And you could always consider a taster course like the robotics taster we learnt about last year.

Sorin:

In my robotics class we have been focusing primarily on programming these LEGO EV three bots, and also looking towards career paths and opportunities that we can take towards our robot making dream jobs.

Jazmine Huggins:

These days, thanks to an exciting new EPPP initiative there are even opportunities to complete pre apprenticeship and pre traineeship courses while you're still at school. The point is don't wait until

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you've finished school to start thinking about your career, get started while you're still at school and give yourself a head start. That's the beauty of doing an SBAT, you kickstart your career before you even finish high school.

Jazmine Huggins:

The economy has taken a bit of a hit over the last year as a result of COVID-19 and it's going to be a very long road to recovery. The good news is that we need people with skills and there'll be plenty of great opportunities for people with the right skills and training in the months and years ahead. As we've seen over eight episodes of EPPP TV, vocational education and training can lead to some pretty amazing careers.

Jazmine Huggins:

VET can also lead to further vocational and tertiary education. So no matter where you're headed, one thing is clear, skills training is a great place to start. Wow. We really had a busy year last year. Now let's meet, Sunil Badami and find out what he thinks about building a career and how he has got to where he is. Thanks for joining me today, Sunil. So you do so many different things. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Sunil Badami:

My job involves doing something I love, which is writing, talking, sharing ideas. So I do a lot of different things around writing. I mean, when I first started writing, I thought I would write a booker prize winning novel. And when that didn't happen, I found that I could use my skills in writing to work in advertising, media relations, teaching, a wide range of industries by using those essential skills.

Jazmine Huggins:

And how did you get to where you are today?

Sunil Badami:

Well, a lot of people like to stay in their lane, but I like to change lanes. And so I always like to try new things. If you're not afraid of taking risks, then you might find something new that you really like doing. And as I always say to my kids, it's better to regret something you did than something you never got to do. And as a result of that, I've been able to do a lot of interesting things.

Jazmine Huggins:

And how did your parents feel about these choices?

Sunil Badami:

Well, you know, I'm Indian. My parents are Indian, and so my Indian mum, all she ever wanted for me was to be a doctor who married a doctor and put our sons through medical school. With two daughters and a wife who isn't a doctor, I don't think I've quite lived up to her expectations. But having said that, the thing that gave me the greatest kind of confidence to do the things I wanted to do was the fact that even though my mum might have liked me to be a doctor, she always supported me in whatever I tried.

Jazmine Huggins:

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And what advice could you give to someone who might be watching this right now who wants to pursue a career in an industry that their parents might not be super supportive of?

Sunil Badami:

Well, the first thing I'd say is, is that you've only got one life, right? It's nobody else's but yours. And of course you want to please your parents, and of course you want the best for your kids, but do you really want them to be unhappy doing something you want them to do? For a kid who wants to do something that their parents might not want them to do? I'd say, just do it, take your parents along on the ride, tell them why you want to do it, tell them how important it is to you. Tell them how much it means to you. And I'm sure any parent who loves their child and wants the best for them at the top of that list, it's gonna be that they're happy.

Jazmine Huggins:

And I think a lot of students feel pressure to go to university and VET's seen as the poorer cousin. So what would you say to a student that's worried about that?

Sunil Badami:

If you look around this beautiful park. There's not just one kind of tree. If we look out over the harbour there's not just one kind of boat and there's not just one kind of person. There's not just one kind of intelligence. We've got academic intelligence, we've got emotional intelligence, we've got creative intelligence, mechanical intelligence. And if we didn't have people doing different things, well we couldn't live in a world where everybody was an accountant. Who would unblock our toilets, who would fix our wiring, who would paint our pictures?

Sunil Badami:

So what's interesting about the whole split between VT or VET and tertiary or higher education is this, at the end of the day what we are seeing now in universities is that the degrees are now becoming more vocational. People are looking to jobs, or to degrees as ways of getting jobs. It's not like you're just gonna work for 35 years in the same job for the rest of your life. There's so much opportunity out there. You're probably going to have maybe 15 or 16 different jobs in five or six different fields over a working life of 50 or 60 years.

Sunil Badami:

So what you study today is not necessarily gonna be the thing that you do at the end of your career. And that's why so many people especially as a result of the pandemic, are now retraining in VET to do something else.

Jazmine Huggins:

And a lot of students will be facing the question what you want to do when you leave school. So tell me a little bit about dream job clusters versus a dream job.

Sunil Badami:

The thing about job clusters is that they're kind of based on two things and all kind of education's kind of based on two things. One is based on, I guess, aptitudes, how well you can pick up a skill or learn a skill. And the other is on competency, which is how well you can apply that skill. Now aptitude is kinda like

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talents if you're good at writing, or you're good at painting, or you're good at with your hands or you're good at making models whatever. Well then you're gonna have a good attitude which means you're probably gonna have a good competency at it, at being able to apply that, right?

Sunil Badami:

And in terms of competency well you can only really work out how good you are or competent you are at doing something by actually doing it. I guess the first thing that will tell you whether you want to do something is that you wanna do it, that you're interested in it, that you like doing it, that you want to spend more time doing it. But if you're still unsure and you don't know whether you've got the skills or what skills you need to do the kind of jobs that you want, why not check out lifelauncher.nsw.gov.au. It's got all of those tools and more to help you find what you might think you might want to do for now. But at the end of the day it all comes down to doing what you love.

Jazmine Huggins:

And there are a lot of different clusters. What are some of the opportunities that you think we'll see over the next 5 to 10 years.

Sunil Badami:

The thing is that trying to predict what might be a useful job in the future is about as useful as trying to predict the weather at any given moment in time. If the weather in five years from now too. The most important thing to remember is that, we can only guess at what the jobs we might want in the future could be, for example, 15 years ago, would anyone think that you could get a job as a social media communications director? There wasn't even any such thing as social media or that you could be a mobile phone app developer. We didn't have smart phones 15 years ago.

Sunil Badami:

So it's pointless to try and predict what might be a good job that might come up in the next five years. We do know that some jobs will go, but having said that it doesn't mean that those jobs will just disappear. For example, there are still people that make horse shoes. There are still people that French polish or make sailboats. They do that because they have a unique selling point. They offer a service that people want. So when we look at, say, for example, people like Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook or Thomas Edison with the light bulb, they created new opportunities.

Sunil Badami:

So don't follow what you think might be a good job in five years, 'cause it could be something completely different. The most important thing is to do that thing that you love, because you'll probably do it better than something you don't love. And you'll be able to gain skills to do those new jobs as they come up.

Jazmine Huggins:

And to any 15 year old who might be watching this who doesn't necessarily know what they love to do and are trying to figure out where that passion is. What could you tell them? Is it okay for them to take their time?

Sunil Badami:

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If a 15 year old or a 16 year old or a 17 year old or a 27 year old came to me and said, "What should I do? I'm not sure what I want to do with my life." I'd say, "Who does?" Life changes all the time, life is change. And the first thing I'd say to you is just live your life be the best person you can be. And eventually you will find the best thing that's meant for you.

Sunil Badami:

Be like Thomas Edison keep trying. And one day that light bulb will go off, it won't be easy, especially now. It won't always be that you get the thing you wanna do first up. So do what you can. You've got a long life ahead of you and hopefully lots of amazing adventures and experiences in front of you. And as long as you're true to yourself and you do the thing you love or you love what you do, then you'll have a life worth living.

Jazmine Huggins:

Thank you Sunil I'm feeling inspired. It was so nice chatting with you.

Sunil Badami:

You're welcome.

Jazmine Huggins:

That was such an inspiring chat. I love the idea of building on your skills and thinking about how they can be applied to different careers. It's such an exciting way to look at different opportunities. Our next guest is Acadia Meldrum. Acadia was awarded the school-based apprentice or trainee of the year at the 2019 New South Wales Training Awards. We're going to find out about that experience and where she's headed now. Hi, Arcadia. Thanks so much for joining us today. I understand that you've had a bunch of experience in school-based traineeships and VET courses. So can you tell me a little bit about that?

Arcadia Meldrum:

Yeah, so in Year 11 and 12, so I can't believe that was in 2018, I actually got the opportunity to study a Certificate III in tourism and events and a Certificate III in business.

Jazmine Huggins:

Were your parents supportive about the whole thing, or how did they feel?

Arcadia Meldrum:

So at the start. It's really funny now that I look back on it 'cause my parents are big advocates for VET now, but at the start they weren't, they made this big opinion that it was for kids that were disengaged and didn't wanna learn and it wasn't gonna help in the future. But when they went out there and saw what vocational education was they knew it was exactly for me. They knew I was a hands-on learner. And they knew each certificate that I was going to complete was going to help me in my future and my future goals.

Jazmine Huggins:

It's awesome that you got your parents on board after they got the chance to see it all.

Arcadia Meldrum:

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It's hard for parents to go from what they know and not the normality to then going to something completely different where it is a completely different learning style.

Jazmine Huggins:

And you completed a Cert III in tourism and events. Is that right?

Arcadia Meldrum:

Yes.

Jazmine Huggins:

What led you to get that qualification?

Arcadia Meldrum:

I actually got the opportunity in Year 11 to start a school based apprenticeship, which is pretty insane. So I think that definitely pushed me to fall more in love with that subject. So I actually worked at Rydges in Port Macquarie to do event management, which was totally not what I originally thought when I went there. I didn't even think it was an opportunity. And then getting that traineeship and getting that experience really pushed me to choose that subject and really love that subject.

Jazmine Huggins:

And when you worked at Rydges in Port Macquarie, what was it that you were doing there? What was your actual job?

Arcadia Meldrum:

So I ran a lot of events from business to corporate events, to weddings, to charity fundraisers. We did a lot of charity fundraisers, which were pretty unreal. So we had a couple of balls, we had dancing with the stars for the Cancer Council Foundation. So I did a lot of events like that. So I did a lot of the pack up, the running of the event, so any of the jobs that needed to be done, looking after a lot of the people at the event. So like the hosts, or the people that were involved with running it. And I also did a lot of the pack down as well. So that was what, a little bit was involved and booking the events online, which was pretty cool. So I got to do a lot of that stuff in that job role.

Jazmine Huggins:

What were some of the skills that you feel like you learnt from being there?

Arcadia Meldrum:

Being able to adapt in that environment like adaptability. A lot of people probably think, "Oh, that's not really important," but it is because every event, every situation I was thrown into was different. Nothing was ever the same. And I think for me, that was really, really important. 'Cause I like to have a challenge every day and it to be different all the time instead of the same thing. So that was definitely one skill that I learned. And I think communication because I was working with people that were so much older than me being able to communicate at their level was really, really important. And them being able to have an understanding of what they're actually saying and what I need to do to fix situations. And so I think those two skills were really important.

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Jazmine Huggins:

That's so great because they're such transferable skills as well. So I've seen that you've gone on to do your Cert III in business and Cert III in sport and rec. So you'd be able to use those skills there. What made you go on and study those things as well? 'Cause they're a bit of a leap.

Arcadia Meldrum:

I've always had a love of sporting events. And after I finished that Rydges Port Macquarie, I actually got the opportunity to go back to the school that I went to for year 11 and 12 and work as a teacher's assistant in sport. So that's where I got the opportunity to study the Cert III in sport and recreation, and that job involved a lot of organizing sporting events to the kids. So I got the opportunity to do that and assist in a lot of the classes where it was, I had to plan a lesson for the kids and then run through and help teach them. So those kind of two passions that I have of sport and events, and I was able to kind of mix them with both of those certificates.

Jazmine Huggins:

Yeah, would you say that doing the SBAT in school helped you decide what avenue you wanted to take as a career?

Arcadia Meldrum:

I actually thought I wanted to be a police officer. And now that I look back on it, I think to myself, "Oh gosh, I don't think I'd be able to do that." I wanted to study law at one stage, but definitely by doing those three or those two SBATs at school, you get to have a knowledge of what you do and don't like, and definitely just by doing a VET course in general, with the opportunity to getting to do work placement, you get to trial a lot of things before you sit somewhere permanently, which is super, super lucky with vocational education.

Jazmine Huggins:

Absolutely. And what are you hoping to do once you've finished all of your studies?

Arcadia Meldrum:

So, I'm hoping to get into any sport event from running a hockey tournament, to running a footy tournament, anything where I can use all these skills and all my degree to run a sporting event would be ideal. My big future goal is definitely to work in the Olympics, which would be insane to think. So hopefully when that rolls back around, I can either get a little bit of work placement in there or just dive in and get any experience I can. So that's definitely my dream goal that I can take from all my studies.

Jazmine Huggins:

For any students listening, what's some advice that you could give to them?

Arcadia Meldrum:

My big advice that I wish someone had told me three years ago was to try everything. Even if you're scared, even if you're worried, try it, give it a go, the worst thing that could happen is that you suck, but I suck at a lot of things and I still end up actually enjoying doing it anyway. So definitely just try everything, any opportunity that you get, any experience that you get definitely try it and give it a go.

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Jazmine Huggins:

That's such great advice. Thanks so much for joining us, Arcadia and good luck in the next steps of your journey.

Arcadia Meldrum:

Thank you, thank you so much for having me.

Jazmine Huggins:

That was such a great chat with Arcadia and I really loved everything that she said about trying everything. And that's something that you can really do with the EPPP. Well, that wraps up another episode of EPPP TV. We wish you all a great start into 2021, and we'll see you next time.