

Jazmine Huggins:

Hello, and welcome to another episode of EPPP TV. I'm your host, Jazmine Huggins, and I'll be guiding you through the many ways that vocational education and training or VET is playing a huge role in helping people like you learn useful skills and find awesome careers.

In this episode we'll look at the exciting ways that you can tailor your VET program to something that you're really passionate about. We'll show you how to get support in making those tough career decisions, as well as the different kinds of services available to get you there. Lastly, we'll take a look at an SBAT student who went on to work full-time in an industry that he loves.

Of course, we'll debunk some of those myths that you might've heard about VET along the way. There's lots of opportunity waiting there for you. So let's get right into it with our first guest, Bonnie. Bonnie is a passionate and competitive surfer who's interested in working in events. Let's see how Bonnie and her boss Darryn were able to turn her passion for surfing into an exciting careers pathway.

Bonnie:

Hi, I'm Bonnie. I'm from Woolgoolga High School and I've been doing the cert three in events and tourism. I decided to do the traineeship, because it fits in well with my competitive surfing and school.

Darryn:

Hey, my names Darryn Quigley. I'm the owner, operator of Solitary Islands Surf School here on the Coff's coast. What inspired me to take on Bonnie as a trainee is, for the young people growing up that are good at sport, it's always nice to give them that other option and a skill set besides their surfing career. When she gets older, if surf career doesn't work yet, she's also got a backup plan.

Bonnie:

I know that he runs this surf school and I've always wanted to do something like this along the lines of surfing as well. Mr. Rutledge said that I could be doing this as well at school. I was pretty keen on that. I was like, "Oh my God, that's so cool. That's perfect. That's literally what I want to be doing." So when this all worked out, I was really excited.

Darryn:

Yeah. I have five other school-based employees. They go to school, they work before and after school on weekends and school holidays. We give them the relevant training in getting all their surf coaching qualifications. The skills I look for are passion for the ocean and surfing, a good personality. I look for good talkers so they can communicate well with the kids and just willingness. Bonnie's best skill set is her determination and commitment to what she sets her mind to. She's very passionate. She's talked about her willingness to want to get involved with surf events in the future.

Bonnie:

I decided to do event in tourism, because when I'm older I want to work with Surfing New South Wales in events for surf competitions or even any other competitions. So I thought that fit in really well with what I need to know for doing that when I'm older.

Darryn:

I guess the biggest skill set is to be present and to be able to plan things. With events, with surf schools, having a good plan for your days, understanding what you're doing for the day. Not just going out in the

water and pushing people on the waves, but having a good understanding of how things are set up each day and even more so weeks in advance.

Bonnie:

Anything I want to be doing, I want to be surfing, even if I don't make it as a pro surfer. I want to be a judge or running events and stuff like that.

Jazmine Huggins:

It's great to see people have the opportunity to turn their passions into lifelong careers. I'm sure Bonnie's going to go far in both surfing and her events training. But if you're like most of us, you might not know exactly what you want to do or what you're passionate about yet and that's okay. If you're still working out your career pathway, go ahead and talk to your school's careers advisor, they're full of great information and can help you make the decision that's right for you. There are a number of support services aimed at helping Connect students with traineeships and apprenticeships as part of the EPPP. Let's meet Margaret from Connect Northern Rivers, a great service to support students.

Margaret Hughes:

So my name is Margaret Hughes and I'm the programs manager for Connects Northern Rivers. Connect supports students by taking the time to really understand how they're traveling currently. Any things that are making it difficult for them to engage with school and also work with them to think through where they're headed and what they need to be able to get there. So we help students identify areas of interest, what their personal strengths are, and then we help connect them to experiences that help them to see what the possibilities are in that area. One of the programs we're doing is this pilot program, which is working with young people who either have low attendance who are at risk of disengaging from school. With those young people, we work with them to address any barriers to attendance, or perhaps support them into a TAFE pathway, apprenticeships. Sometimes what we're looking at is things that are going on outside of the school walls that may be making it difficult for that young person to engage.

So dealing with loss, dealing with housing instability. So where we come in is to address some of those non-school barriers, and also to be able to put the time in to identify employers, help with the application process, go to the workplace and support young people. Things are changing constantly. A lot of the skills that that young people can pick up in any workplace will serve them in the future. We just had a group of young people go to the University Center for Rural Health and do a project, it's called a berry program where they got to use the sort of virtual reality technology that surgeons are using to actually perform procedures in rural communities where the surgeons can't get out there. That's not something I would have even imagined when I was a young person. So there are all sorts of things that are developing and you all have the skills and the knowledge and the experience just because of what you've been exposed to in your life so far, to really be able to seize those opportunities.

Jazmine Huggins:

Knowing what you'd like to do or how you can go about it can be really daunting, so it's fabulous that there's a range of support out there. If you think Connect would be a good resource for you, have a chat to your careers advisor. Next, let's meet Harveer. Working with Connect, Harveer earned an apprenticeship with the NRMA, which he eventually turned into a full-time gig. Let's find out how he did it.

Harveer:

My names Harveer Bar, doing a mechanic apprenticeship down at Woolgoolga at NRMA Auto Service. Well, my apprenticeship started with going through school, talked to my careers advisor to get through there. I heard about that and then I had a one week work placement here. So yeah, I went. Then after that I went back to school and then it was school holidays a couple of weeks later, and I was still working down at Woolworths and the days I wasn't working down there, I'd come down here to help them out. So I gained more of an advantage to get the job. In that first trial work I was a bit nervous and then I got the hang of it and got in there and got it done. The apprenticeship has gave me confidence to work on my own and figure things out myself. The pilot program helped me a lot to get this jobs and to boost my confidence of getting there, talking up, getting my resume out in time and go on to see people.

They also helped me out with stuff like my boots and all that once I got the job, so to support me along the way. Before the apprenticeship, I was a bit lost. Well, I was going to school, leaving school early, just to wag my mates and go home. But ever since I got this job, it's boost my confidence. I'm out and about. It's gave me the confidence to get my license.

Work here Monday to Friday and Monday's a 8:00 start to 5:30. Every other day is 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. I'll get here in the morning about 7:00, 7:30, start sweeping up, get prepared for the day and get my tools out. Go see the boss, see what I need to do and what tools I need and what cars I need to bring in. What cars I need to move out from the night before. Favourite thing to do here is probably services at the moment, because I'm more confident on it now and know what to do. Service involves checking the lights, topping up all the waters, coolant, brake fluid, and doing tire pressures, replacing tires if they need and just changing oil, replacing oil. Oh, love it. It's heaps good, coming to work, just makes me happy. Yeah. So I'll wake up, I'm like, "Yeah." I know I'm going to safe spot with mates and basically family.

Jazmine Huggins:

It's really great to hear how an apprenticeship opportunity can turn into a full-time gig like it did for Harveer. But what about when your traineeship or apprenticeship doesn't lead to full-time work with the same employer. Let's hear from Sunil Badami and bust the myth that VET graduates find it hard to get work.

Dr. Sunil Badami:

There's never been a better time to go into vocational training. The fact is, is that with the coronavirus pandemic and the closure of international borders, the government hasn't been able to import 4-5-7 visas or international workers doing various particular skills or trades. That means there's a really amazing opportunity for Australians and Australian learners and workers to be able to take those opportunities in construction, in electrical, in plumbing, in infrastructure. So if you're willing to kind of do those jobs, you're going to be able to get your pick of them.

Jazmine Huggins:

Well, that's it for this episode of EPPP TV and what an exciting one it was. Remember that it's okay not to know what you want to do yet and there's certainly no rush. By just starting the conversation, you might discover an opportunity that could open the door to many exciting possibilities for your future. There's a lot of services out there to support you. So go ahead, chat to your careers advisor or your school's SBAT mentor and set yourself up on a journey to success.