

# career links annual report 2014





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We are a community focused business, based in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. Operating since 2000, we provide programs and services which connect young people with business, education, community and families. We help to create links and opportunities for young people to be their best.

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# Our Vision



## **"Young People, Bright Futures"**

At the heart of Career Links is passion to improve career development and transition outcomes for young people. We achieve this through the creation of innovative programs and by working in partnership with our community. Key to our practice are strong relationships with stakeholders and supporters built on trust, integrity and compassion.





# What We Do



## SCHOOL BUSINESS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BROKERS

Career Links facilitate partnerships with Education, Business, Community and Families; to enrich learning experiences for young people, leading to improved levels of participation, engagement and attainment. These partnerships harness resources and build infrastructure to share responsibility for local young people's learning and development.

## STRUCTURED WORKPLACE LEARNING

Career Links provides advice and support to students, schools and employers for Vocational Education & Training work placement, as part of the HSC. Career Links has coordinated over 36,000 work placements in the areas of Automotive Trades, Building & Construction, Business Services, Electrical Trades, Entertainment, Hospitality, Information & Digital Technology, Metals and Engineering, Primary Industries, Retail Services and Tourism.

## CAREER LINKS GT

Career Links Group Training employs School Based Apprentices and Trainees (SBATs) and places them with host employers. We help our host employers save time and money by reducing employment risks and responsibilities. Our Apprentices and Trainees benefit from consistent support and quality employment and training.

## NEWCASTLE LAKE MACQUARIE CAREER & TRAINING EXPO

The Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career & Training Expo is an annual event managed by Career Links. It connects young people and members of the community with employers, education and training providers to help them make informed decisions about their future. The Expo provides employers and industry groups with an opportunity to attract future staff and work towards reducing skills shortages.







# Who We Are

## Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for developing our Strategic Plan, establishing goals, future directions and the monitoring of contracted service delivery. The Board is also responsible for governance, risk management, financial management and control.

Our Board of Directors for 2014:

Brian Rennie, Chairperson

Ian Wilson, Secretary

Glenda O'Brien, Treasurer

Murray Christie, Public Officer

Kathy Cox

Richard Rule

Liana Nadalin

Howard James

## Staff

The Board would like to thank the Career Links Staff for their achievements throughout 2014 and their ongoing commitment to the organisation's vision.

John Purcell

Robert Penglaze

Stephen McLauchlan

Deborah Greentree

Kerrie Parkinson

Michele Kowalski

Rhonda Finlay

Averil Loades

Helga Glas

Chris Hawkins

Lyn Falkiner

Amanda Richards

Ashlee Kelly

Anne Molloy

Nikki Garrard

# Message from the Chairperson

Career Links has experienced a very turbulent year in 2014. In part this was due to the change in contracts and changes in government direction and funding. This necessitated a major restructure and relocation of the Career Links offices. Additionally we saw the departure of the chairman Grant Black. We take this opportunity to thank Grant for his many years of diligent service to Career Links and extend our best wishes for his future endeavors.

Throughout 2014 the Staff at Career Links has been busy supporting the company vision of Young People, Bright Futures through the programs and services the business provides. Career Links strength and longevity lies in the staff, which are passionate about supporting the young people in our community, to achieve their best. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Staff at Career Links. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the General Manager John, who supports both the team and the Board of Directors.

These changes didn't affect our longest running program, Structured Workplace Learning (SWL). During 2014 Career Links has coordinated over 3200 work placement positions. This service supports Year 10, 11 and 12 Vocational Education & Training students as part of the mandatory course requirements for the HSC. Now in its 14th year of managing this service, Career Links is the critical linchpin in ensuring that students are matched to dynamic and interesting

work environments. Equally important to the success of this program are the strong relationships with employers and community nurtured by the SWL staff. Without these community minded businesses, young people would miss out on the invaluable experiences that work placement provides.

A highlight for 2014 was the annual Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career & Training Expo. This event has been managed by Career Links for the last 6 years and remains the premier showcase event of its kind in regional NSW. 3500 high schools students attended the Expo to meet with universities, TAFE, private RTOs, employers and community organisations. This event provides a unique occasion for young people and their families to gain the latest career and training advice and discover the diversity of opportunities available.

The challenge for 2015 is first, to consolidate our position and next to strategically extend our reach and empower our staff to take new ground while maintaining high customer services levels for our current client base thus fulfilling our aim of providing young people with bright futures.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board members; Ian, Kathy, Liana, Murray, Glenda, Howard and Richard. Each of them generously gives their time and support to this community organisation. Like me, they are proud of the fantastic staff and the achievements of Career Links.

**Brian Rennie**

**Career Links Chairman**





# General Manager

“Young people, Bright Futures’, this is Career Links commitment to our community. We work to ensure young people have the best possible opportunities to grow and mature, to support and develop their communities and to become future role models.

2014 has seen many changes to the organisation, mainly the discontinuation of the Partnership Brokerage program brought about by variations in Government funding. To ensure Career Links viability and the capacity to continue delivering exceptional services to schools, industry and community sweeping changes were required. Career Links undertook a restructure of the organisation which also included moving to new premises in Mayfield.

The Partnership Brokerage program formed partnerships with schools, employers, service providers, community organisations and government agencies. Many of these partnerships are now sustainable and continue to deliver a much needed service to support young people achieve positive educational and social outcomes. The Partnership Brokerage programs met or exceeded all targets during 2014.

Our Structured Workplace Learning team has coordinated over 3200 work placements for senior students in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie region. These work placements allow students to gain valuable hands on experience in a real industry environment. This can be a challenging program to deliver when working across all school sectors and multiple industry partners. The team at Career Links delivers the SWL

program smoothly and consistently year after year. This is testament to their professionalism and commitment to the program. Going forward SWL funding has been extended into 2015, with the assurance of a tender process late 2015.

The Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career and Training Expo was a huge success with 3,500 students attending. This was an increase in student numbers from 2013. The event also hosted over 110 exhibitors, major sponsors and supporting partners. This event gained positive feedback from all stakeholders and was a great success for the Youth of the Hunter Region.

Career Links GT offers vocational qualifications and employment options to school students while completing their senior school education. This is achieved by completing a School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SBAT) - a learn and earn option. This service can be extended to young people that have left school creating a more holistic service to young people across Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.

Career Links successfully gained a new program Links to Learning that will commence in 2015.

All of this outstanding work maintains a solid foundation that will ensure a very productive year ahead for Career Links. In 2015 we are looking forward to a year of great success, and planning is well advanced for bigger and better initiatives.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those that have offered their assistance to Career Links in 2014. Firstly, the schools of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie (in particular the Principals, Career Advisers, VET Coordinators and SBAT Coordinators), the Board of Studies, Regional VET Coordinators, State and Federal Government Program Managers, Local Government and other community service providers. Perhaps most importantly I would like to thank business and industry for their support and assisting young people make the transition from school to further education and employment.

Finally, I wish to thank our Board of Directors for their commitment to Career Links. As a voluntary group of people, they freely give their time to support Career Links. Of course it goes without saying that all of this hard work is not achievable without an excellent team. The Career Links Board and Management are grateful for the professionalism of the staff and appreciate their dedication to the ongoing success of Career Links.

**John Purcell**

**General Manager**





# 2014

## The Highlights



Recruited first SBAT



SBAT Info. Night



Career & Training Expo



Workplacement



Yakka Day

# School Community Business Partnership Brokers



Career Links is part of a national network of Partnership Brokers funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, to improve education and transition outcomes for all young people.

As Partnership Brokers for Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, Career Links adopts a strategic, whole of community approach to improving education and social outcomes. The Partnership Brokerage team aims to enrich

the learning experience for young people by developing partnerships among four key stakeholder groups:

- Education and training providers
- Business and industry
- Parents and families
- Community groups

The program is designed to improve participation levels, student engagement and Year 12 or equivalent attainment. The focus

is on those groups experiencing a high level of disadvantage including young people from a low socio economic background, Humanitarian Refugees and Indigenous students.

Career Links works with key stakeholders to identify the needs of our region, help partners to agree on how they can work together towards a common purpose, and support partnerships to achieve their goals.

**Partnership:** A sustainable relationship between two or more parties that is mutually beneficial and contributes to improved education and transition outcomes for young people.





# 2014 Partnerships

## Talk to an Aussie

The partnership is about language, culture and social connection. It aims to improve International University students' English language skills and give local students an opportunity to engage with people from a different culture. It is not about formal language tuition, but an opportunity to broaden understanding and confidence to speak and interact in a range of situations by both groups.

### Partners:

University of Newcastle: English Language and Foundation Studies Centre and DALE School Waratah.

### Outcomes:

- Engage High School and University students with people from different cultural backgrounds.
- Interaction with the University will inspire students to achieve academically.
- Students may broaden their expectations about possible careers and vocations.

*"The Uni students are from all over the world. They love meeting local students like this."*

**Robyn Gentemann**  
ELICOS Student Activities

*"My students are getting so much out of the program"*

**Zoltan Vinzce - DALE School**

## Hospitality Inspiration

The aim of the Hospitality Inspiration Partnership is to

- Increase interest of young people in hospitality careers .
- Address uptake of Chef Apprenticeships .
- Increase skill and interest levels of students by skilled chef's coming into the classroom to inspire young people .
- Increase parent interest in career planning by involving them in information sessions .
- Provide work experience/ work placement opportunities for young people .

### Partners:

HTN - Hospitality Training Network, Callaghan College Wallsend, Waratah Hospitality Teachers and Callaghan College TTC & Industry Liaison Officer

### Outcomes:

- School retention and engagement in hospitality career pathways.

## Young People Bright Futures Video Production

This partnership aims to encourage and engage young people in creative and artistic activities. The partnership draws together schools, business, community and families in a range of activities to produce films and documentaries that are relevant to the Youth of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. It has produced a number of short films including a drama showing the potential effects of cyber bullying, a short documentary for NAIDOC week and a documentary interview with teen specialist psychologist, Robert Redford.

### Partners:

Newcastle Gilbert and Sullivan Players, Hunter Sports High School, Whitebridge High School, Screen Hunter Central Coast and has been financially supported by Lake Macquarie City Council.

### Outcomes:

- Keeping students engaged at school and interested in their education.







## Mental Health in Schools

The partnership aims to support wellbeing in school communities and improve educational and social outcomes for young people.

### Partners:

Kotara High School, Newcastle High School, St Pius X High School  
ARAFMI, Headspace Newcastle, Hunter Institute of Mental Health, Hunter New England Health, Lifeline and Salvation Army

### Outcomes:

In 2014, the partnership will help staff in schools to better connect with Mental Health service providers. It will also support professional development and learning opportunities to raise awareness of mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness within the community.

*"Filmmaking for young people holds up a mirror to their lives."*

Melvin James - Independent Film Maker.



*"It is a pleasure to work with so many talented young people."*

Tianci Yang

Award winning Chinese documentary film maker.



*"Bringing filmmaking skills into schools is beneficial to students in so many ways."*

Annette Huber

Screen Hunter Central Coast.



## Get Up & Go

The Get Up & Go partnership involves schools, community, parents and industry in creating a long term community mentoring, education and work experience program for students in Year 9 and 10.

### Partners:

Lake Macquarie High School, Morisset High School, Toronto High School, Mentors for Our Schools Inc. and State Training Services.

### Outcomes:

- The key outcomes of this partnership are school retention and supported work experience.
- The partnership is designed to foster a strategic, whole of community approach to improving education and transition outcomes for young people.



*"Depression is one of the most common health issues for young people in Australia."*

Headspace



*"Young adults aged 18 to 24 have the highest prevalence of mental disorders of any age group."*

Australian Bureau of Statistics  
2007

# 2014 Partnerships

## Activities in the Shed

This partnership focuses on the integration of young people with the aging community, in particular older men living in the Anglican Care, Aged Care facilities. It is based around the concept of hands-on activities that can be carried out by the young people and the older folk in a "Men's Shed" environment at the Aged Care facility.

The young people have the opportunity to involve themselves with a part of their community they may not otherwise be in contact with. The older residents benefit from the contact with young people who are also supervised and mentored by Aged Care students from TAFE and staff from Anglican Care.

The partnership is an integration of a number of vocational, social and community goals.

### Partners:

Hunter TAFE, Anglican Care  
Lake Macquarie High School and  
DALE School.

### Outcomes:

- This partnership creates opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.
- Builds a direct connection between TAFE and the workplace experience.

- Caters for different learning styles through the variety of activities provided.
- Mentoring opportunities.
- It involves young people with their community and shows them potential career paths as well as broadening their understanding of the community they live in.



# 2014 Partners



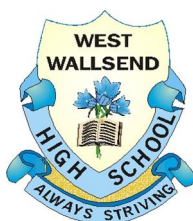
## Schools

## Community

## Business



Australian Men's Shed Association  
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER





# Structured Workplace Learning

Our Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) team liaise with school and employers to provide students studying a vocational subject as part of their HSC, with one week (unpaid) work placement in a relevant industry environment.

Since 2000, Career Links has co-ordinated work placement for the NSW Department of Education, Catholic Schools Office, Association of Independent Schools and Hunter TAFE. The SWL team works closely with VET Co-ordinators to ensure that all students have the opportunity to experience the work environment.

In 2014 the SWL team delivered over 3100 work placements in the areas of Automotive, Metal and Engineering, Retail, Tourism, Construction, Electrotechnology, Financial Services, Primary Industries, Hospitality, Business Services, Information & Digital Technology, Entertainment and Human Services.

The SWL team is continually developing relationships with new employers. In 2014 over 260 new employers have signed up to support young people complete this mandatory work placement.

The success of this program is directly related to the commitment of local employers. For many students this work placement is their first experience in a workplace. We appreciate the ongoing support and the positive impact they are making on young people's career decisions.



## Trade Secret Christmas Casual

This year Career Links have worked closely with Trade Secret to develop a training program for Retail students. The students participated in a 35 hour structured work placement program where they learnt about all aspects of Retail including; sales, customer service, merchandising and safety etc. At the end of the program students had the opportunity to gain employment as a Christmas Casual. 9 students participated in the program and some students gained paid part-time work.

## Mattara Festival

The Mattara Festival is one of Newcastle's biggest annual events featuring an array of entertainment, food, art and music activities in the September school holidays. This year 17 students from Tourism, Entertainment and Retail subjects assisted with the organisation of the festival and completed their mandatory work placement hours. This was a perfect opportunity for the students to gain first-hand experience at an actual event and support the local community deliver this fantastic festival.



*"Over the last 12 months I have worked closely with Career Links and had the opportunity to host students for work placement and work experience. I have had great success and feel very privileged to give students an insight into the retail world. I look forward to working closely with Career Links in the future."*

**Julia McCrohon: Store Manager**  
Trade Secret Kotara

*"Just wanted to say thank you for all your help and support with the students and their placements over the past couple of years. I have really appreciated your efforts and the professional, efficient way you deal with issues and solve problems."*

**Deborah Carlson: Teacher  
Hunter School of the  
Performing Arts**

*"Career Links is always approachable and keen to assist with any issues that we have. After working in several other schools and having to organise work placement, I would have to say that this has been the easiest and most enjoyable group to work with."*

**Clint Johns**

**Teacher - Callaghan College  
Jesmond Campus**

*"The work carried out by Career Links is a vital and integral part of making our VET courses at Swansea High School so successful for our students. Career Links have developed a streamlined and efficient method for conducting the mandatory workplace component of these courses. Career Links staff is always friendly, efficient and professional when dealing with the students and staff."*

**Robert Silkman  
Teacher - Swansea High  
School**





# Yakka Day



Yakka Day is a hands-on career information event, aimed to assist young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and community. It provides a unique opportunity to bring communities together from Lake Macquarie and link cultural identity with education, employment and social outcomes. Yakka Day promotes career choices, education pathways and employment opportunities for school students from Year 5 - 12; as well as young people who are disengaged from education from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities. The event also provides cultural identity activities such as music, dance, traditional language and bush tucker.

The event is intended to engage young people and families in career decision making. Approximately 300 Indigenous students and family members attended Yakka Day in 2014. The Yakka Day committee consists of a majority of Indigenous representatives from education, community and business sectors.

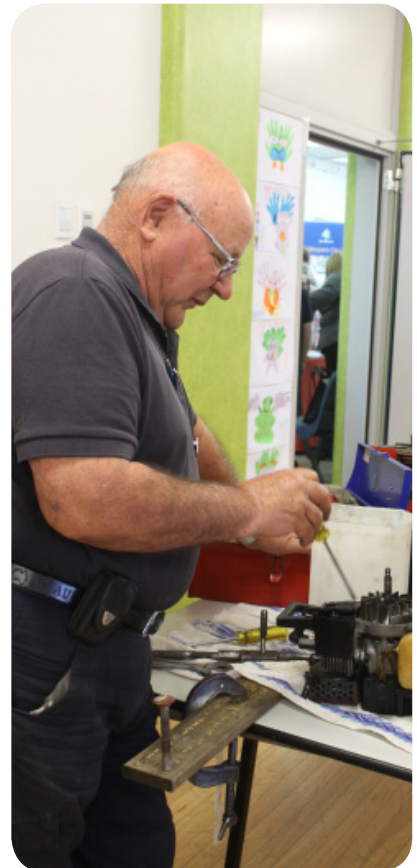


This membership strongly influences the design of the event and ensures that cultural identity and career aspiration building form the foundations of the experience for young people. In addition, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are heavily represented as exhibitors and presenters, providing role models to inspire at this exclusive event.

Yakka Day further strengthens the message to the community, of the importance of retaining cultural identity and at the same time striving to achieve your very best in life. The event helps to break down barriers and build relationships with the broader community, which will encourage the next generation to work hard and build a strong future.

This program also works in favour of employers as they can .....

- Preview potential staff
- Identify and retain local talent and broaden the industry skills base
- Be promoted as an organisation supporting local young people
- Increase awareness of their business
- Create opportunities for staff to develop supervisory and leadership skills
- Develop communication skills and build confidence in young people.





# Career and Training Links



It has been another successful year for the Career & Training Links with lots of positive feedback from grateful schools and parents. This subscription service is a highly sought after initiative of Career Links.

The Career & Training Links provides a weekly electronic newsletter full of career and training links suitable for young people in the local region, i.e.

- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Volunteering
- Scholarships
- School Based Apprenticeships/ Traineeships
- Casual Jobs
- Career Expos
- Full-Time Employment
- University Open Days
- Information Sessions
- Training opportunities
- HSC Preparation Workshops

We thank the following schools for supporting this valuable service:

Belmont High School, Callaghan College - Jesmond, Charlton Christian College, Department of Juvenile Justice, Glendale Technology High School, Hunter Christian School, Hunter School of the Performing Arts, Hunter Sports High School, Kotara High School, Lake Macquarie High School, Macquarie College, Morisset High School, Newcastle High School, St Mary's High School, San Clemente High School, St Pius X High School, St Paul's High School, Saint Francis Xavier's College, St Philip's Christian College, Swansea High School, Toronto High School, Warners Bay High School, West Wallsend High School and Whitebridge High School.

*"Thank you for all the work you do during the year. I really appreciate it!"*

**Career Adviser**

*"Yes, Hunter Sports High is happy to continue to reap the benefits of the CTL for 2015"*

**Career Adviser**

*"The CTL is invaluable for me to help my child. You always find the jobs that I can't find!"*

**Parent**



# Career Links GT

Career Links Group Training (GT) specialises in employing both full time and School Based Apprentices and Trainees (SBATs) placing them with host employers across the region.

SBATs can kick start student's careers, by combining their HSC with a nationally recognised industry qualification and paid part-time employment. Students gain valuable workplace skills and knowledge of their career of choice.

Young people who have completed vocational training as part of their HSC studies already have employability skills. These students are often held in high regard by employers seeking full time apprentices and trainees.

In 2014, Career Links GT have continued to build relationships with schools and local industry. The School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships Information Night in June, generated a great deal of positive feedback and discussion about the benefits of studying and working before they leave school.

Career Links GT has been in operation for 2 years and has strong relationships with a range of industries and employers across the region. We are always looking for new employers interested in supporting the career development of local youth. All positions available are advertised on the Career Links website.



## Student Profile

**Name** Hannah Brien

**Year** Year 11

**VET Course** Hospitality and Tourism & Events

**Host Employer** Mercure Lake Macquarie Rafferty's Resort

### *Why did you decide to become an SBAT?*

- To achieve extra qualifications before I leave school
- Guaranteed paid part-time work with the possibility of extra work

### *What do you enjoy about being an SBAT?*

- It is a really good work environment everyone is friendly.
- I am always learning new things
- It has helped with my study by providing me with hands on experience

## Employer Profile

**Name** Kendall Brooks

**Position** Director of Sales

**Employer** Mercure Lake Macquarie Rafferty's Resort

### *Why did you decide to host an SBAT?*

- We had thought about employing a trainee but had not proceeded with following this up. Then Hannah Brien came on work placement on two different occasions. We found her to be enthusiastic about the industry, and she asked if a traineeship position was possible. We jumped at it.

### *What have been the benefits for your business in hosting an SBAT?*

- We can employ and train someone to fit in with our resort in the hope of developing a long term employment relationship and a career for the young person.
- We like to nurture the people that are keen on developing a career in our industry.
- It helps us to develop someone that is skilled in multiple areas of the resort and who can work in these various departments.

# 2014 Career & Training Expo

over 3500  
students

The Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career & Training Expo is an annual event proudly presented by Career Links, on behalf of the Hunter Valley Career Adviser Network.

This year the Expo was held on 22 May 2014 at the Newcastle Jockey Club.

The event was open to local school groups between 9am - 4pm and parents and the general public from 1 - 4pm (Entry \$5).

The Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career & Training Expo is the largest event of its kind in the region.

The 2014 event showcased over 110 exhibitors; including major universities, leading training providers, employers and community organisations from across the region and interstate.

The objective of the event is to promote education, training and career pathways.



32 local  
high schools

over 110  
exhibitors

#### Student Quote:

"The careers expo definitely helped me make a clearer decision on what I want to do."

#### Exhibitor Feedback:

"Everything was great on the day. We had a great position which showed by the high amount of enquiries we received on the day."

## Major Sponsors



## Supporting Partners

**USQ** UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND  
fulfilling lives





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