

career links annual report 2015



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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.

How to contact us

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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



LINKS TO LEARNING

Links to Learning is a Community Grants Program and is provided free to students. The aim of Links to Learning is to improve education, employment and life outcomes for students who are disengaged from learning and/or at risk of leaving school early.

INDIGENOUS ADVANCEMENT STRATEGY

The Yakka Introduction to Work project, will support Indigenous students from Year 7 to 12, with potential career options and assist them developing a career plan.

Read to Me focuses on educating young parents and carers about literacy practices they can implement in the home environment to assist their children's literacy development and achievement.

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 2015:

Brian Rennie, Chairperson

Ian Wilson, Secretary

Glenda O'Brien, Treasurer

Murray Christie, Public Officer

Kathy Cox

Richard Rule

Lyndelle Neville

Staff

The Board would like to thank the Career Links Staff for their achievements throughout 2015 and their ongoing commitment to the organisation's vision.

John Purcell

Averil Loades

Helga Glas

Chris Hawkins

Ashlee Kelly

Ruth Hurrell

Stephen Schmidt

Message from the Chairperson

Career Links has had a exciting and challenging year. The office has now been established in downtown Mayfield. We commenced three new programs Links to Learning, Yakka project and Read to Me. We have seen the addition of a new staff member in Stephen Schmidt

Throughout 2015 the Staff at Career Links has been busy supporting the company vision of Young People, Bright Futures through their 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.

This was an important year for the Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) program as we tendered for the new contract and were successful in gaining it for four years. During 2015 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 15th 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 2015 was the annual Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career & Training Expo. This event has been managed by Career Links for the last 7 years and remains the premier showcase event of its kind in regional NSW. 3700 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 2016 is to consolidate our position and 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, Lyndelle, Murray, Glenda and Richard. Each of them generously gives their time and support to this community organisation. Like myself, they are proud of the fantastic staff and the achievements of Career Links.

Brian Rennie Career Links Chairman



Report

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 become role models themselves.

2015 has seen many changes to the organisation. Moving offices proved to be a positive step for the organisation as the new location promotes a professional image for the company. Changes have also occurred within our work culture - moving from an office based service delivery to an integrated mobile/office service model it delivers an improved customer focus operation. To achieve this outcome, we have moved our processes to cloud based with the security of the server and the mobility of our computers, places Career Links at the forefront of technology and innovation within our sector.

The year also gave us the opportunity to tender for the Structured Workplace Learning program for the next four years. By its nature the outcome of a tendering process is never guaranteed and for that reason is a stressful time for all. The commitment of the staff during this uncertain time is commendable.

During the year our programs have met or exceeded their targets.

Our Structured Workplace Learning team coordinated 3438 senior students into workplaces. The team at Career Links delivers this program with seemingly ease even though it requires meticulous planning and diplomacy with our stakeholders. The achieved

outcomes are a testament to the staff's professionalism and commitment to the program.

The 2015 Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career and Training Expo was a great success with over 3,700 students attending, 110 exhibitor stands, two major sponsors and four supporting partners. Excellent feedback was received from Schools and exhibitors with comments stating that the event was the best to date. The positive feedback highlighted the organisation of the student flow as a contributing factor to its success. Approximately 20% of exhibitors indicated they had given out all their pamphlets, this is a rare occurrence.

Two new programs were awarded to career Links that commenced in 2015, the Links to Learning and the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

Links to Learning commenced in February and completed in December. 29 students registered for the program, they are students that had been identified as at risk of leaving school early. At the end of 2015 school year 28 remained at school and one had gained full time employment. DoE has taken up the option for Career Links to continue to deliver the program in 2016.

Indigenous Advancement Strategy commenced mid-year and is funded for 2.5 years. There are two funded programs to be delivered - Read to Me and Yakka Introduction to Work.

The first 6 months' targets were met - Read to Me mentored 34 parents, engaged 45 children and handed out 405 culturally appropriate books over a period of 9 weeks. The Yakka Introduction to Work Program is progressing to schedule since commencement in July 2015 with 28 students participating in the program in 2015.

Career Links has a solid foundation to continue its rejuvenation program and to continue to seek and develop growth opportunities. In 2016 we are looking forward to a year of successes, and planning for the future of the organisation.

Finally, I wish to thank our Board of Directors for their commitment to Career Links your support of management and staff is a contributing factor to Career Links success. I also would like to thank the staff, they are professional and dedicated to their duties, Career Links and the Youth in this region.

John Purcell General Manager



2015



Group Training



Links to Learning



Career & Training Expo



Workplacement



Indigenous Advancement Strategy

Links to Learning

The Links to Learning Community Grants Program is administered by the NSW Department of Education. The Department provided funding to Career Links as a not-for-profit, non-government community based organisation. To deliver targeted projects to school students in Year 10 & 11. Our participating schools West Wallsend High, Glendale Technology High, Cardiff High, Lake Macquarie High, Toronto High & Morisset High

School identified students who were disengaged from learning and/or at most risk of leaving school early without completing the compulsory years of schooling and referred them to Career Links for the project. Each delivery of the project spanned two school terms. Attendance was two days per week. As part of the project the students attended one day a week at TAFE completing a Cert 1 Access to Work & Training.

On the second day Career Links provided Career Development activities and training. Students completed their First Aid Certificate and Whitecard training. We had a broad range of Industry visitors and outings to a variety of Businesses. The students participation was commendable and at the completion of the project we provided a Graduation Ceremony.

Links to Learning Projects are to reflect a strong working relationship between not for profit non-government organisations and secondary school or groups of these schools.



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 2015 the SWL team delivered over 3400 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 2015 over 200 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.

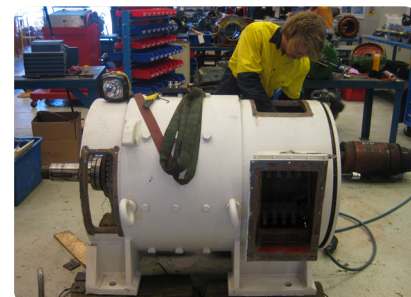


Varley Engineering

Career Links created a partnership with Varley Engineering at Tomago to host four Engineering student at one time. During the students week of work placement the students would be exposed to five different disciplines of the manufacturing industry.

This opportunity was offered monthly to four students from a variety of local high schools.

On some occasions students were offered apprenticeships in the Manufacturing industry.



Civic Theatre

Each year students studying Entertainment, are offered the opportunity to complete their 35 hours of Work Placement through the Civic Theatre.

At the beginning of their course students, with their teachers, attend a comprehensive 2-hour Induction at the Civic, which enables them to apply on-line through the Career Links website for placements at the theatre.

Each show Civic offers 5 student placements, 3 Ushers and one each in Box Office and at Stage Door. Students studying Entertainment are from local Public and Catholic schools, and TAFE; Hunter School of the Performing Arts, Warners Bay High, St Francis Xavier College and Newcastle TAFE.

This is a very successful partnership between Career Links and The Civic Theatre and a valuable experience for the students studying Entertainment.

"Just wanted to say thank you for all your help and support with the students and their placements over the past couple of year."

I have really appreciated your efforts and the professional, efficient way you deal with and solve problems."

Deborah Carlson: Teacher

"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

"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



Indigenous Advancement Strategy



The Read to me program commenced in at the beginning of the third term of the 2015 school year. Three volunteers from the education faculty at the university have already mentored 34 parents, read to 45 children and handed out 405 culturally appropriate books over a period of 9 weeks. These volunteers have been working with families attending playgroups in the Windale, Edgeworth and Raymond Terrace areas. Raymond Terrace playgroup has also had a session with Jonathon Lille a Gathang speaker and Windale has had a language Session with Jaqui Allen an Awabakal speaker. The parents and children were thrilled to hear both Jonathon and Jaqui which was evident in their response on the day. The playgroup leaders have reported that the Read to Me volunteers have had a positive impact on the parents and children they have been mentoring. It has been noted that both parents and children are more confident in reading books in a more appropriate way when reading to toddlers and young children.



The YAKKA program:

Hunter Sports High has 160 Aboriginal students ranging from year 7-12; around 20 of these students have been identified by Career Links for intensive Personal Learning Plan support for 2016. Cardiff High also has around 170 Aboriginal students attending from far Western areas of NSW such as Bourke, Brewarreria, Dubbo, and Lightning Ridge.

The development and implementation of a detailed personal learning plan, and meeting with the students parents/ carers has paid dividends already with two (2) students. The first student developed strategies to assist him in gaining enough self-confidence and determination to complete year 12. He is the first member of his family to achieve his HSC. The Yakka coordinator guided him into casual work in the building industry which may lead to apprenticeship in carpentry.

The second student went through the same process and has been encouraged to apply to the Iproud police program.



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, 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, 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, Cardiff High School and Whitebridge High School.

"Thank you for all the work you do during the year. we have had multiple students gain employment due to this service "

Career Adviser

"Yes we happy to continue to reap the benefits of the CTL for 2016"

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 2015, Career Links GT have continued to build relationships with schools and local industry.

Career Links GT has been in operation for 3 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 Finlay Newberry

Year Year 11

VET Course Construction

Host Employer CBE services

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 training by providing me with hands on experience

Employer Profile

Name Wayne Carstens

Position Owner

Employer CBE Services

Why did you decide to host an SBAT?

- We had thought about employing a apprentice but had not proceeded with following this up. Then Finlay came on work placement. We found him to be enthusiastic about the industry, and Career Links GT asked if a apprenticeship 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 company 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.

2015 Career & Training Expo

over 3700 students

33 local high schools

over 115 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."

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 21 May 2015 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 2015 event showcased over 115 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.



Major Sponsors



Supporting Partners





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