

Training Boost at Wollongong

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A large group of 41 students has been enrolled into Certificate III Bricklaying / Blocklaying at TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute. Approximately 80% have previously completed a “Step Out Program” taster course, funded by the ABBTF, during the last three years.

The pre-apprenticeship course includes all Stage I and Stage II competencies as well as an on-site work placement component (approx six hours per week). The primary objective of the course is to obtain apprenticeships in bricklaying /blocklaying.

Illawarra Institute has invested a lot of resources towards this course and its success will be assessed, based on the number of students gaining apprenticeships.

This is a full time course which runs for the whole year. Typical attendance pattern includes four days per week plus one day a week of on the job training (work placement with a licensed sub-contractor).

According to George Dragovic of Illawarra TAFE, three students have gained employment already, including one in bricklaying. We still have 38 attending the course, which provides them with a great opportunity to gain the skills while looking for an apprenticeship. They can then go to an employer job ready.

“Successful completion of the course will give the students a comprehensive range of competencies including laying masonry walls and corners as well as multi thickness walls and piers, installing flashings, read and interpret plans, cavity brick construction and a whole lot more,” said George.

David Gill (ABBTF) and Illawarra Institute Bricklaying Section are working together by continuously canvassing individual employers and large employer groups for on the job work experience and possible employment or apprenticeships. ABBTF is also running public awareness commercials through posters, local press and radio, which increases awareness and promotes bricklaying as a viable trade.

“Responses from the local sub-contractors and employment groups have been very positive. Most prefer apprentices with some industry experience and this course is made to measure. “Several employers said that they would put on an apprentice from this course early next year, providing they have sufficient work. “There are several rising stars within this group of students and time will tell how well they succeed in the industry. Anyone of them would be an asset to potential employers. All they need is an opportunity to prove themselves”, George concluded.