



DISCO
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DISCO Beat!

Partnering Schools, Linking with Business, Supporting Youth!

June / July
Edition - 2023

Mike's Column

DISCO Receives Recognition

Recently our organisation nominated for the Queensland Training Awards in the Southwest Region. The awards (<https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/qta>) recognise excellence and highlight individual and organisational achievement across a range of divisions. DISCO's nomination in the *Community Training Initiative of the Year* category required our organisation to define why we believed we were doing something special or significant. We highlighted our annual school leaver program for consideration. The nomination process was significant, but it also highlighted not only how successful the initiative has and continues to be.



When determining our reach, we were staggered to see that since its inception in the early 2000's the program had directly supported and assisted more than 50,000 young Queenslanders. This figure grows annually by close to 3,000 and as it has become a mainstay of our work, we simply get on with it and keep doing it. This recognition, as a 2023 finalist, reminds us all that we need to reflect more often on what we do, why we do it and what benefit it provides to our community.

Assisting Young Migrants to Grow

In the last edition of *DISCO Beat!* I advised all our readers about the launch of the Migrant and Refugee Youth Support Program (MaRYS). As the program has progressed, I have met many of our participants and recently undertook some interview skills training. It is refreshing to hear how lucky they feel about coming to Australia. So many of them are extremely positive and have aspirations (some of them a bit optimistic) to make something of themselves. Many want to run their own business and all of them are trying really hard to improve their English – both verbal and written. As they work toward achieving their qualification which is focussed on improving their work readiness, we are starting to place them with local employers. Many businesses are apprehensive due to some of the challenges they present with, but I would ask these businesses (many of whom are desperate for extra staff) to give these young people a go. We are very confident that once they start and learn your systems and processes that they will become excellent, reliable and potentially long-term employees.

Congratulations to our Graduates

As I write this column my teams are preparing for graduations at all of our sites. These young men and women commenced with us earlier in the year and have worked hard to obtain their *Certificate 2 in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways* through the Aurora Training Institute. Congratulations to all of our graduates as they have worked hard and seized opportunities to improve their futures. Many have obtained employment, and some have decided to continue to study. We look forward to hearing more about their success.



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TRAINING INSTITUTE

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Quote in the Corner

"Your braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think".

- A.A. Milne

Gatton Update

And... just like that another few months have passed!!!! Our Get Set for Work Semester 1 group have become extremely comfortable with each other and made themselves at home in the office.

We continued to welcome many guests each month with Sarina Russo, Busy At Work, Bootstraps, Downs Group Training and Youth Insearch, just to name a few, spending time to talk to our students. Although our semester 1 program is coming to an end, there is still lots happening in the office. Students have been obtaining their Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) and Responsible Services of Gaming (RSG) and are booked in to complete their White Card course. Graduation is just around the corner and will be held at the Gatton Shire Hall, we cannot wait to recognise the efforts of the nine young people who are currently completing the program. We have also been busy making contact with schools over the past few months. We were invited to attend the Faith Lutheran Careers Expo and the Laidley State High School Show Case evening where we met with other stakeholders, school students and possible new clients. We are looking forward to attending the Lockyer Jobs and Careers Expo later this month, where we will be encouraging past and present students to attend.

We have also been conducting interviews for our semester two intake and we are well on our way to having filled all of our available positions. We heard some great feedback during enquiries and the interviews as past clients and parents have been passing on their recommendations.

Dana, DISCO'S Youth Employment Support Program Officer continues to support her Lockyer Valley clients from our office every second Friday.

After a busy 6 months, we are sad to be saying goodbye to our semester one group however we are looking forward to a few weeks break to spring clean, reset, plan and start fresh with our semester two cohort.

We now have a waitlist for Get Set for Work next semester and will begin conducting intake assessments for the next program over the coming weeks. If you know a young person that may benefit from our Get Set for Work program, please contact us on (07) 5462 1400.

Kim Stevens and Jenna Perrett – Gatton team

Youth Employment Support - YES

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through the year already, and when reflecting on the past 6 months, I cannot stop smiling! The YES Program has seen many successes as young people from the Toowoomba, Gatton, and Dalby region's work hard in moving towards their goals and achieving success.

Through the YES Program, participants have taken the opportunity to gain support in identifying their career and employment goals to which have laid the foundations for their success in the program. Through the collaborative nature of the one-on-one and individualised support the program provides, young people have been engaging in activities that assist the development of their job searching skills, both online and face-to-face and their interviewing abilities. Additionally, the program has supported participant's in achieving short course qualifications such as their RSA and RSG's, first aid and CPR, and their learner's licences. Short course qualifications, licences and newly developed job searching skills have all attributed to the newly established confidence in participant's abilities which have resulted in the achievement of their goals within the first half of the year. Just WOW!

This year has also seen our annual School Leaver Program succeed again with more than 60% of the YES Program participant's stemming from this initiative. The amazing team I had supporting me during the School Leaver calls did an amazing job in engaging with over 3,000 students across the Toowoomba, Dalby and Gatton regions to then bring them in for me to offer support, where it was required. In the meantime, I am in the process of finalising bookings for local schools in Toowoomba, whilst the Gatton and Dalby teams manage the schools in their regions.

Finally, I have been provided with the opportunity to attend local career expo's and attend meetings with local businesses and training organisations such as SWQ, Good Samaritan College and the recent Career and Skills Expo held at The Goods Shed. These opportunities have allowed me to network with local stakeholders and develop effective referral pathways for young people seeking assistance finding work and developing their career prospects.

If you, or someone you know, requires assistance to take the next step to get their career underway, please don't hesitate to contact me via mobile on 0457 871 530 or, alternatively, via email at dana@disco.org.au.

Dana Sallway – YES Coordinator



DISCO is supported by the Queensland Government.



Queensland Government



As we near the halfway mark in 2023 we are in the process of winding up our first Get Set for Work program for the year. At the beginning of the program, we registered ten young people in the program. These ten young people are two weeks away from finishing the program and have already completed their *Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways*.

During the program they have participated in career development workshops which included: career interest testing, industry tours, completed their resume and a professional cover letter and participated in mock interviews. Personal development workshops have included: goal setting, bullying, mindfulness, personality testing, hygiene, healthy lifestyles (including games of soccer, table tennis, cricket, basketball), craft (macrame) positive relationships and communication to name a few. Life skills workshops have included some wonderful cooking sessions (shepherd's pie, potato bake, Anzac biscuits, pizza, spaghetti bolognese and nacho's), time management, budgeting and cash handling. Our guest speakers have included Golden West and Busy At Work (discussing apprenticeships), Defence Force, Lives Lived Well (addictions and anxiety), Drug Arm, Tenancy Skills Qld and many more. We incorporated some hands-on workshops into the program giving the participants an opportunity to freshen up their outdoor space by painting the outdoor settings & planting & maintaining herb pots. This was a perfect opportunity to offer them a "taster" of both the painting & horticulture industries.

We are very excited that in the past month, six of our young people have already secured employment. It has been a jam-packed program including a Movie World reward trip on June 20th and our Graduation on the 22nd of June.

Our second program is due to commence on Monday the 17th of July. We have ten funded places in our Dalby program & currently have fifteen young people who have expressed interest to attend an interview in the school holidays. It will be a hard decision by staff to decide who will benefit the most from the program.

We will be losing Delaney Holder (our Youth Support Officer) who is finishing with DISCO at the end of our semester one program. Lara and I are currently in the process of recruiting for this position and look forward to adapting our semester two program to utilise the new skills that this person will bring to the team.

Dana continues to visit the Dalby office working with our Youth Employment Support clients on a weekly basis.

If you have any questions regarding any of our programs, please do not hesitate to contact the Dalby office on 4662 2147.



This semester has been a busy one, lots of boys in this group keeping us on our toes! Most are on track to complete their *Certificate II Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways*, which is a huge achievement. Whilst some have struggled getting through their unit's, others are contemplating further studies after they enjoyed a tour of the Aurora Training Institute this month.

Amanda from Downs Group Training visited our site to discuss courses available, starting in July which interested a few participants. Tony, one of our local Police Officers, came in for a chat with the group who responded well. He discussed youth crime which is in the spotlight with the media and also spoke about the issue of domestic violence. He also shared with us his career journey and why he still enjoys his job.

The participants were very immersed in our presenter from Drug Arm who has had a very intense past. He spoke of his past addictions, trauma and his recovery which led him to help others overcome their drug addictions. He spoke of the harm and the real issues with using drugs in today's world.

Our participants completed a two-day Tenancy Skills course which will help them to become competent tenants in the future. The course included budgeting which opened up the discussion to cars when the trainer took the group outside to have a closer look at her Tesla.

Some of our workshops have included, interview preparation, cooking, stress and healthy ways to deal with it, industry focus lessons on construction, health and medicine. Our final month of the program we will be applying for jobs, participating in mock interviews with Busy At Work, completing all training units and some participants will be completing their First Aid Training and Construction White Card.

Call us if you would like more info on Get Set for Work program in Toowoomba – 07 46329065

Jasmine Palm - James St & Get Set for Work Coordinator



Le-Anne Callaghan
Southwest Qld Area Manager & Dalby Site Manager



Migrant & Refugee Youth Support Program

Since our last edition of *DISCO Beat!*, the MaRYS program has continued to grow & change to meet the needs of our clients. We currently have the pleasure of working with hardworking, motivated & resilient clients who have completed a range of employability and personal development activities over the past few months. This has included; career interest testing, skills & values identification, goal setting, resume & cover letter writing, job searching, interview preparation & activities to practice & build English language skills to name a few.

We have also had the pleasure of Services Australia attending the program to present information on Financial Literacy which we all thoroughly enjoyed and found helpful. Our current participants have given us positive feedback about the program, specifically on how helpful the activities have been to understand the workforce and how to get a job along with providing a positive environment to practice their English skills and make new friends. We have clients who are well on their way to completing their *Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways* and excitingly have participants who have already gained employment.

Our clients are receiving group and individual support to ensure each client is getting the most out of the program to help them achieve their goals. Our clients are beginning to meet with Safa Edriss from Samaa Links for additional employment support to assist them to gain employment in their desired industry. This will be through applying for advertised jobs directly and cold calling businesses in Toowoomba to tap into the hidden job market. It has been an incredible journey to date, and I am excited for what is yet to come for the program. The MaRYS program still has places available, so if you or someone you know is interested in joining the program, please phone me on 0447 836 973.

Madeleine Thompson – MaRYS Program Coordinator

Cold Calling Tips

Cold calling is when you contact an employer without waiting for a job to be advertised. It's 'cold' because you don't have a 'warm' introduction. The employer isn't advertising a job and you don't know anyone at the business. You're using your own initiative to ask about job openings and showing a potential employer how motivated you are.

You could cold call; over the telephone, by email or visit in person. Although email may seem like a quicker or less stressful option, it's also easier for people to ignore or delete. When you call on the phone, there's more chance you'll end up speaking to someone who makes hiring decisions and when you're speaking to an actual person, you can find out lots of useful information. You can ask about the best way to get a job with them. You can also ask what they look for in their staff. Sometimes just showing up in person is the best approach, it's your opportunity to shine! Show that you are different from the others and prove that you really do want to find employment. Share with them how much you know about their business!

Here's some cold calling tips for job seekers to help prepare you before taking the plunge. Get out there because lots of businesses are recruiting right now and want you! Want to learn more? Visit: <https://etcltd.com.au/cold-calling-for-jobs->



Staff Profile – Emma McGill

My name is Emma, and I am the Business Trainee at DISCO based in Gattton. I have worked at DISCO for just under 4 months now. I started my first job at 15 at a local Subway store and worked there until I was in year 12 so I could then focus more on my studies. When I graduated year 12 from Faith Lutheran College, I wasn't too sure what I wanted to go onto next. What I did know was I didn't want to jump straight into university, so I was going to need to find a full-time job. I applied for a few jobs online using resources such as Seek and Indeed and attended multiple job interviews, but I just didn't get a great vibe from any of them. I then started to remember all the amazing guest speakers that came to Faith while I was in year 12, one that really stood out to me was DISCO with Mike Paton giving an incredible speech about how DISCO is like 'insurance' for school leavers. I jumped on to the DISCO website and signed up to join the YES program where the amazing Dana helped me with things such as my resume and cover letters. During my appointments I also got to meet the Gattton DISCO staff, the lovely Kim and Jenna. One day after my appointment with Dana I received a call from her asking if I would ever consider working for DISCO as a Business Trainee, I was thrilled with the idea as every time I attended my appointments, I got a warm and welcoming feeling from the staff. A few weeks later I started my job and in my short time at DISCO I have met so many amazing people and am so blessed to get to work alongside a team that feels more like a family each day. I hope to continue working with youth as I find it so rewarding seeing so many young people come in and achieve their goals and grow as a person.

Joke in the Corner

A child asked his father, "How were people born?" So, his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on."

The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now." The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!" His father replied, "No, your Mum was talking about her side of the family."

