



**DISCO**  
www.disco.org.au

# DISCO Beat

Partnering Schools, Linking with Business, Supporting Youth'

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## Mike's Column

### Broadening support for Youth

I'm always excited when we introduce a new program and in 2023 that's exactly what we have been able to do with the launch of the Migrant and Refugee Youth Support Program or MaRYS.

I acknowledge the support of the Queensland Government through the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative which has provided financial assistance to enable DISCO to assist 34 young migrant men and women to be helped by us in collaboration with our training partner the Aurora Training Institute.

Under the guidance of Coordinator Madeleine Thompson and trainee Manisa Izdeen, our clients will be assisted with a range of personal development skills, career development support and ultimately be assisted into employment where our 'in business' mentors will partner with organisations to assist the young person to settle in and become comfortable in an Australian workplace.

Ultimately, I know many of these young people will stand out as good, reliable and committed workers and I encourage businesses, young people and community stakeholders to contact us at DISCO if you would like to learn more about the program which will run out of our Head Office at 453 Ruthven St. Call us on 07 4638 3088 for more details.

### Contact with 2022 School Leaver Graduates

As I write my first column for 2023, we have commenced our school leaver support program by contacting many of the region's graduates. This involves the organisation ringing more than 2,000 school leavers who exited schools across Toowoomba, the Western Downs and the Lockyer Valley last year.

It is evident from the early contact that a large number of young people have found it much easier in 2023 to obtain work with many young people working 38 hours in various roles and a large number are studying at University, TAFE or a private training organisation. Many are holding down more than one job and working across a range of employment sectors.

I look forward to reviewing the overall statistics and I expect that we will see a steady stream of young people coming into our office to seek support to help them move forward successfully. These details can be passed onto all eligible schools, by contacting our office.

### 25 years +

We are currently developing some marketing to recognise DISCO's achievement of reaching 25 years in business. This is a milestone for any organisation and highlights the efforts of so many since the late 1990's when DISCO commenced operations. During this time, we have assisted more than half a million young people with many now parents themselves bringing their children in to be assisted by my 2023 team. This is a wonderful accomplishment and I acknowledge the community in general, all staff over the years and the many Management Committee representatives who have provided advice and guidance to enable us to grow and prosper.

**MaRYS**  
Migrant & Refugee  
Youth Support Program  
Phone Toll Free 1800 889 569

If you're aged between 15 and 24 and not born in Australia, or you were born to a migrant and refugee family in Australia, you could qualify for assistance under the MaRYS program.

Need career advice or support to get started in work?  
Looking for assistance to obtain employment?  
Prepared to study to improve your chances to obtain work?  
Want support on the job to learn your responsibilities and impress an employer?

The MaRYS program is designed to partner with you to support your employment journey.

DISCO is a specialist, youth services provider with links to registered training partners and a large number of local and regional employers. If you would like training and employment preparation support that is totally **FREE**, then make contact with DISCO to learn more about how the program can assist you to move forward.

Phone Toll Free 1800 889 569  
www.disco.org.au

"Partnering Schools, Linking with Business, Supporting Youth"

The Skilling Queenslanders for Work project is proudly funded by the Queensland Government.

**DISCO** 25 YEARS  
PARTNERING SCHOOLS,  
LINKING WITH BUSINESS,  
SUPPORTING YOUTH

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Mike Paton - CEO

## Quote in the Corner

"I'm a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down".

— **Abraham Lincoln**

## Gatton Update

We started the year with a full team once again and what a great team we have. We welcomed our newest team member Emma McGill. Emma is employed as our Business Trainee and is fitting in well. It has also been lovely having Dana, DISCO'S Youth Employment Support Program Coordinator, joining us in the office on a Friday where she continues to support her Lockyer Valley clients. We finished 2022 with a rather large wait list for our Get Set for Work program and we have started our program with 9 young people eager to start their journey with DISCO. We have seen some great friendships form and are extremely lucky to have such a nice group of young people. We have spent time down at the Lockyer Community Centre engaging in activities that they run throughout the year and we have enjoyed pancakes and coffee, along with doing some shopping - filling a bag of clothes each for \$2. We were extremely grateful to have received some hygiene packs kindly donated by Kim and Tracey, two members of the Gatton Police Station. The donation was distributed to our Get Set for Work clients during a hygiene lesson. The ladies have taken it upon themselves to put together some DV Crisis packs to assist vulnerable women and have now expanded their assistance to vulnerable children and men. All the items are paid for by Kim and Tracey, or donated by friends, family or community members. A big thank you to Kim and Tracey for the great work they're doing. One of our aims for this year is to have more guest speakers as part of our Get Set for Work program and we are off to a great start. We have had Paul and Georgia from Anglicare, Matt from MAS, David from Stanbroke, BEST Harvest trail and our first visits from the team at Aurora. We have had such a great start to our program in term one and we are excited and looking forward to what term two brings.

**Kim Hoare - Gatton Site Manager**



**DISCO is proudly supported by the Queensland Government.**



**Queensland Government**

## YES Program

It is hard to believe 2023 is already tearing by and it never ceases to amaze me how quick the year goes. The YES Program has started off strongly with many young people reaching out early to get support to achieve their employment goals.

Through the YES Program, young people have been provided with the opportunity to identify their career goals and develop their job searching skills and confidence. This is achieved through the collaborative nature of the one-on-one support which assists young people to develop or enhance their professional resume and cover letter writing skills, interview preparation, and career planning abilities. Additionally, YES participant's thus far have emphasised the importance of building their teamwork, communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills, which are all vital to possess in the modern employment market. This is done through the provision of information and engaging in short activities to help practice and develop these skills in a variety of contexts, both personal and professional.

The individualised nature of the program looks at young people's overall development and what they need support around to achieve their goals which has resulted in great outcomes for the 2023 YES participants to date.

The YES Program is expected to continue to grow post our annual School Leaver Program calls that we conduct at the end of March. I am meeting with many new and motivated young people who are ready to take the next step towards their career, which is absolutely incredible and inspiring in itself. This has also allowed me to become more present in various communities including the Dalby, Gatton and Oakey regions, and even allowed me the opportunity to connect with a variety of schools and businesses to assist YES participants now and in the future.

If you, or someone you know, would benefit from assistance please don't hesitate to contact me via mobile on 0457 871 530 or via email at [dana@disco.org.au](mailto:dana@disco.org.au).

**Dana Sallway – YES Coordinator**



## Dalby Doings

Welcome to 2023! I would like to welcome back Lara Smith in the role of Get Set for Work Co-ordinator for our 2023 program. Lara is being supported to deliver the program by Delaney Holder in the role of a Youth Support Officer. Delaney and Lara formed a formidable pair in delivering last year's program and the new program they have put together for this year looks just as good.

Our first Get Set for Work Program for 2023 commenced on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February with 10 participants. These young people are participating in career development, personal development, trade days and healthy lifestyles workshops whilst also completing a *Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways*. This program will finish on June the 22<sup>nd</sup> with our next program for the year commencing in July. We are already receiving referrals for our next program.

Dana Sallway works in the Dalby office one day a week on the Ready for Work program, supporting 15-24-year-olds. The program assists young people to transition into the workforce by providing them with the practical skills they need to successfully find work. Ready for Work is a short program (up to 6-8 sessions duration) targeting young job seekers that lack the skills and/or knowledge to find employment.

If employed through our Get Set for Work or Ready for Work programs, we can support the employers in ensuring the young person becomes a valuable member of their team. We are also able to advise employers of possible funding incentives available (and who they can contact to discuss eligibility requirements) to help with the costs of training these young people. If you have any questions regarding any of our programs, please do not hesitate to contact the Dalby office on 4662 2147.

**Le-Anne Callaghan**

**Southwest Qld Area Manager and Dalby Site Manager**

## Preparing to Obtain Work - Tip

Did you know that many employers check your references **BEFORE** they decide if they are going to interview you? It's true!

This new trend started in the USA, and it has arrived in Australia. So why do this? Well, employers are very time poor with so many businesses desperately looking for staff. This change in strategy is about finding out from your referee **first** if you are worth speaking to. Many of the questions revolve around what you have done and why they consider you a good person. They do this because if they like what they hear they may decide that you are worth meeting and interviewing. So, our tip is pre warn your referees early **just in case**, so they are ready to talk positively about you the moment you send your resume to a potential employer. So, keep this important tip in mind so you don't miss out on an opportunity!

## James Street News

The James Street team had a good Christmas break and came back to work ready to give the site a refresh. We've updated blinds, repainted the concrete flooring downstairs, installed security cameras, purchased new beanbag covers and washed down all walls ready for 2023.

We finished 2022 with 83% of our young people gaining employment, engaging in further study or returning to school which is a fantastic achievement for all. We are so proud of all our young people and their efforts and love hearing about their ongoing successes.

Our first group for 2023 is underway with 16 young people. The group is made up of some very active boys. This is keeping us very busy, and we have had to make sure we have incorporated activities to burn off some of that built up energy.

We have begun hosting different presenters in the program such as Kobi House, MAS Career Consultations and Catholic Care. We also loved having Emily Robinson conduct an Indigenous Art workshop with our group.

Our James Street team has been working together for nearly a year and have recently welcomed a school-based trainee, Deng Bol Malek, to the team who works Wednesday's, while completing year 11 at Saint Joseph's College Toowoomba and also his *Certificate III in Community Service* through Aurora Training Institute. Deng is already a valued member of the team who is very liked by our young people.

Our team is busy finishing off our first term with our first group and meeting many new faces in preparation for semester two which is very exciting. We are all looking forward to our Easter Holiday break to reset and recharge for a great term two.

**Jasmine Palm**

**James Street & Get Set for Work Coordinator**



Welcome to DISCO's Migrant and Refugee Youth Support Program (MaRYS)! Since the commencement of the program, we have continued to welcome motivated, driven and eager clients into the program each week. The current cohort of participants have commenced their *Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways* and have demonstrated their determination, problem solving skills and ability to work as a team to help each other out to understand the questions being asked. It has been wonderful to see participants feeling comfortable to share ideas, answers and working with one-another. Along with completing their course work, we have taken time to get to know each other along with completing goal setting activities, identifying our strengths and skills as well as understanding how to write a resume. As part of Harmony Week, we learnt new phrases in other languages which was a lot of fun and brought the cohort closer together.

The MaRYS Program has also recently completed our staffing team with Manisa, our Community Services Trainee, and Safa from Samaa Links, who will be providing mentoring and employment support to our participants.

I look forward to seeing what our small and mighty team can achieve together throughout the year and we are all looking forward to helping our clients learn, grow and achieve their personal and career goals.

**Madeleine Thompson**

**Migrant and Refugee Youth Support Program Coordinator**

## Joke in the Corner

Our teacher asked us what our favorite animal was, and I said, "Fried chicken." She said I wasn't funny, but she couldn't have been right, because everyone else in the class laughed.

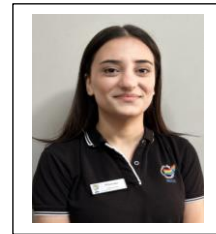
My parents told me to always be truthful and honest, and I am. Fried chicken is my favorite animal. I told my dad what happened, and he said my teacher was probably a member of PETA. He said they love animals very much. I do, too. Especially chicken, pork and beef. Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal's office. I told him what happened, and he laughed, too. Then he told me not to do it again.

The next day in class my teacher asked me what my favorite live animal was. I told her it was chicken. She asked me why, just like she'd asked the other children. So, I told her it was because you could make them into fried chicken. She sent me back to the principal's office again. He laughed and told me not to do it again. I don't understand. My parents taught me to be honest, but my teacher doesn't like it when I am.

Today, my teacher asked us to tell her what famous person we admire most.

I told her... "Colonel Sanders."

Guess where I am now?



Hi everyone! My name is Manisa, and I am the Community Services Trainee in the MaRYS program. I am from Iraq, and I came to Australia with my family in 2017. This was a big adjustment going from living in a small camp with no school or employment opportunities, to now living in a house, completing Grade 12 and now being employed full-time in a wonderful community like Toowoomba.

I started my first job at a fish and chip shop, and I went from there to Masala Hut. I started working full-time as Front of House and Customer Service officer working night shifts. I was in this role for 6 months. I came across the opportunity to be a trainee for the new MaRYS program at DISCO and I was very excited about this opportunity. During my interview with DISCO, I saw how passionate they are about helping people, which is what is important to me and what I enjoy. I am blessed to work with such nice people. I hope that I can continue working with DISCO and give them back as much value and help that they have given me.

**Manisa Izdeen - Community Services Trainee  
Migrant & Refugee Youth Support Program (MaRYS)**

## Your Career Website

The National Careers Institute has developed the Your Career website to help young people and caregivers to navigate the complex task of narrowing down potential vocations that might be suitable for a young person.

You can explore industries and potential occupations and be guided by responding to a series of specific questions. These questions help you narrow down vocation options all the way through to actual vacancies in the communities in which you live so can apply immediately if you would like to meet a potential employer.

Want to learn more? Visit the website at: <https://www.yourcareer.gov.au/>

