



DISCO
www.disco.org.au

DISCO Beat!

'Partnering Schools, Linking with Business, Supporting Youth'

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Mike's Column

Regional Collaboration

I have always been impressed how our region works in partnership with other stakeholders and probably assumed the way we operate was the 'norm'. Recently, after visiting some other Queensland communities, I have noticed how many groups and associations operate quite independently from others. The sharing of resources and collaboration seems to be more frowned upon than embraced. There is a focus on protecting what they have rather than connecting with others to work out the best way forward and support each other. Our approach has always been one of collaboration and I think we always benefit from sharing and connecting with others rather than the opposite. Here are a couple of examples...

Recently our James St site in Toowoomba was visited by the Toowoomba Regional Council Youth Leaders. The Youth Leaders Program is a volunteer platform for young people aged 14 to 24 to become involved with Toowoomba Regional Council. The program allows young people from across the region to learn about their local communities' groups, events, activities and youth services. At DISCO we welcome young men and women into our service so they can see what we do and in the case of this visit explain how our Get Set for Work program in Toowoomba operates. This enables these young men and women to advocate for us and share the message that we are keen to help.

To learn more about the program visit: <https://www.tr.qld.gov.au/community-business/community-support/youth/12122-youth-leaders-program-apply-now>



Another example of regional collaboration is our developing partnership with Golden West Apprenticeships. Recently I met with their CEO Camille Johnson to discuss how we could partner to assist them to fill their vacancies & link our clients to some of these opportunities. This trial will then led to further investigation of their registered clients to see what DISCO can do to activate people who may be registered with Golden West.

This occurs because sometimes potential clients register with Golden West when work in their specific interest area is unavailable or they may not necessarily be work ready and need assistance with resume development or possibly interview skills. Consequently, this is where DISCO comes in because we can work with these individuals to improve their employability and increase their chances of success at an interview.

2022/23 Annual Report

Currently I'm finalising the Annual Report for 2022/23 which will shortly be available. This document provides a great summary of the business over the last 12 months and highlights some wonderful achievements including our 2022 DISCO Sovereign winners who have been showcased to acknowledge the wonderful work they have done supporting the organisation. If you would like a copy these will be available on our website or via our Head Office at 453 Ruthven St Toowoomba on or after the 9th of October.

Mike Paton - CEO

Quote in the Corner

'There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age' - **Sophia Loren**

Gatton Update

It is hard to believe we are nearing the end of the year. We lost our trainee at the start of the semester, and while we were sad to see Emma go, we wish her all the best with her future endeavours. We are in the process again of finding the right fit to join our Gatton DISCO family.

We started our final GSfW group in July with 7 students with only a few weeks now until graduation.

We have been extremely busy working through our units so have not yet had the opportunity to welcome many guest speakers, however this will take place in the coming weeks. We have been able to connect with BEST Harvest Labour which enabled our current students to sign up for current job vacancies. We were also invited to the Community Centre's National Homeless week where we met with other service providers and received free health checks. We continue to complete industry focus lessons and weekly work readiness modules learning and gaining the necessary skills to enter the workforce.

During the semester we have also focused on personal development including career interests, hygiene, emotions, goal setting and learning styles.

We recently completed our 12 weeks post program support for our past 9 participants from the semester one group. This post-program support has resulted in high levels of work and study outcomes for the group. It has been extremely rewarding watching how far each of the past students has come and how much they have grown.



We visited the Lockyer Jobs Expo & spoke with stakeholders & potential employers. We also attended the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries Agri Business event which allowed us to meet with other groups & learn a little more about opportunities in the Lockyer Valley.

We have locked in our School Leaver presentations to Gr12 students & we look forward to continue to work with the local schools for the remainder of the year.

We will begin conducting intake assessments for next year's program in the coming months. If you know a young person that may benefit from our 2024 Get Set for Work program, please contact us on 07 5462 1400.

Kim Stevens and Jenna Perrett – Gatton team

Youth Employment Support - YES

It has been a very busy 2023 and as we move towards the tail end of the year, it is a good moment to reflect on what we have achieved thus far in the YES Program.

We have had a smooth year registering 100 young people who have been eager and motivated to gain support in identifying their career goals. This motivation is exactly what has laid the foundations for the participants' success as they commit to their support plans, apply the knowledge and use the advice provided. I have witnessed all the young people who have entered the program grow as they developed newfound confidence in their abilities beginning a new chapter of their lives post-secondary school. It has been amazing to be a part of their journey's and none of the results the YES program achieves would be possible without the commitment, motivation, and courage that each and every young person has demonstrated. As a result, many of these participants who have gained employment or commenced study are thoroughly enjoying the process as they move closer towards their next set of goals. Amazing!

To be able to achieve such success, the YES participants have engaged in a range of activities that support their development. These include engaging in a range of psychosocial activities where they identify their strengths, interests and areas of employment that may best suit who they are as a person. Once they identify a pathway, participants' work hard to develop their resume and cover letter writing skills for job applications, enhancing their interviewing and cold canvassing abilities and engage in extra training to enhance their employability. Some of these training opportunities have included attaining their RSA and RSG qualifications, first aid and CPR certificates and their learner's and provisional licences to improve their employability.

Additionally, we have finalised bookings & commenced our annual School Leaver Program presentations across the Dalby, Gatton and Toowoomba regions. This has been a great opportunity for us to meet the graduating students & has been even more exciting to meet some of the young people who I may get to work with in 2024 through the YES Program.

If you, or someone you know, needs assistance to take the next step towards their career, 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 proudly supported by the
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Queensland Government



Left school and need to find a job?

Need to update your skills
but don't know where to go?

YES - DISCO can help!

Can you believe that we are in September already? However, I do love that the weather is warming up. Firstly, I would like to welcome Katie Brown to the Dalby team as our trainee youth worker supporting Lara in the Get Set for Work program. Katie had already commenced her training in Community Services so had shown her passion to work in this field. Since joining our team, she has proven herself to be a very capable young lady and an excellent role model to our young people with the ability to build a quick rapport and earn respect from them.

Our second program for 2023 began on the 17th of July with eight young people in the program. A ninth joined the program a little later. We never know how a group are going to connect with each other and it has been interesting watching their individual personality traits develop as this program has progressed.

Our young people have displayed poor mental health over the last few weeks due to ongoing circumstances in their personal lives, so we have been focussing on mindfulness activities & completing a lot of our regular activities outside in the sun (weather permitting) to enhance their mood. We have also incorporated more sports and group walks (along the beautiful Myall Creek) into the program to show them the effect of exercise on mental health. The group also participated well in some mindfulness activities creating macrame keyrings & wall hangings to take home.

We have hosted multiple guest speakers who spoke to our participants about their personal careers and what services that they can provide. Kim Tubbs from Lifeline spoke about addictions which also includes gaming (which is something a large number of our current cohort face which affects their sleep and subsequently their mental health). Mark Thomas from Drug Arm travelled from Toowoomba to have an education session on drugs, their effects and the support that is available. We also had Kimberley Kruger from Golden West Apprenticeships come in to educate our young people about apprenticeships and the role of a Group Training Organisation.

The Dalby GSFW group has signed up to the local community Blue Tree Project. This is an initiative bought to Dalby due to the large number of local suicides in the Dalby area in 2023. The Blue Tree Project is a charity helping change the way we talk about mental health. The blue trees are now spotted all over Australia and other parts of the world. Our group of young people have created our Blue Tree and attached a lot of 3D printed ears to the tree with fishing line to express that DISCO always has a willing ear "we're all ears". Our tree was on display at the local R U Okay day event and will be on display at the front of the building during the month of October.

The 2023 School Leaver presentations have also started and Dalby and surrounding high schools are participating again.

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



Semester one participants concluded the program with a wonderful graduation to celebrate their amazing achievements in the Get Set for Work Program. We had 16 very happy young people receive their *Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways* and some received White Cards, First Aid Certificates, Tenancy Skills Certificates, Work Readiness certificates. Four achievement awards were given out for those outstanding efforts in the group which were so well deserved.

As one group ends another one starts here at DISCO. We welcomed our semester two group, with 19 young people keen to begin their DISCO journey. Our first term was packed full of learning however we soon figured out early that this group needs time outdoors. Once all our work is complete for the week, you will usually find us out and about enjoying sport or exploring a park Wednesday afternoon.

Everyone is on track to complete their Certificate II qualification and are looking at what other short courses they can complete while at DSICO.

We have had some great presenters this term and got to enjoy a tour through the new Kobi House. RTO Equipment hosted an industry tour and showcased all their equipment and employment opportunities that were available in their company. The tour was so professional and welcoming of our cohort, which we were so grateful for.

Our group of 19 have great attendance and are very much looking forward to their graduation which is set for the 29th of November.



James Street continues to get great referrals and again has reached all their numbers this year. We have many names on the waiting list for 2024 and before we know it, we will be calling them to arrange intake interviews.

If you would like to make a referral to the Toowoomba Get Set for Work 2024 Program, please call 07 46329065.

Migrant & Refugee Support Program

We cannot believe we are already well and truly in the second half of the year! It has been an exciting time in the MaRYS program as we continue to welcome new clients, along with seeing our current clients achieving their goals. We are continuing to support our clients to complete their *Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways*, along with completing activities to help our clients practice their English communication skills, understanding workplace culture and expectations in Australia, in-depth job interview preparation and other career development activities.

Since the last DISCO Beat! article, we have seen a number of our students complete their *Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways*. It has been wonderful to be a part of celebrating our client's success in achieving their accredited training. Our clients have also been working incredibly hard to gain employment by applying for jobs online, handing applications in person and cold calling businesses to access the hidden job market. We have seen a number of our clients gain employment and are incredibly proud of them and the effort they put into their job searching. We are also so proud of the resilience and determination of those clients who are still actively job searching.

Our team also had the opportunity to attend the Chamber of Commerce Business Connect Networking event and Launch of their Cultural Awareness Handbook. We look forward to continuing to work with the businesses of Toowoomba to support our clients into employment with this amazing resource.

The MaRYS program still has limited spots available for 2023. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the program, please call the office on 4638 3088 to discuss potential eligibility.

Resume DO's and DON'T'S

DON'T use multi-coloured text or too many different font sizes. Italics, underlining, shading, graphics and vertical/horizontal lines or boxes are also best avoided.

DO keep your resume length to a minimum – two or three pages is ideal. Print in black ink, on one side of each sheet of A4 size paper, and choose fonts like Verdana, Arial, Calibri or Times. Include lots of white space & break up your text where possible using subheadings & bullet points to aid scanning. Short, sharp chunks of text work best.

DON'T include personal details such as your date of birth, marital status or photo (unless you are applying for a job where these are relevant).

DO use testimonials from previous employers. Consider adding them to your resume as hyperlinks, linking them to an employer testimonial on your LinkedIn profile or website (if you have one).

DON'T forget to tailor your resume for the job application. The more precisely you address each of the criteria for the job, demonstrating how you fit and satisfy the criteria, the greater your chances of making the shortlist.

DO proofread the document carefully & spell check and check again. Employers look carefully at how applicants prepare and present their resume.



Staff Profile – Katie Brown

Hi, my name is Katie. I am currently the Community Service's Trainee at DISCO Dalby. I have been living in Dalby for just over 6 years now. I originally came from Goondiwindi, which is my hometown. Growing up with the experiences I've had and the challenges I've faced; it became evidently clear to me during my teens that I wanted to help youth. I religiously aspired to be the person I wanted to be whilst growing up and I was determined to make that happen regardless of the barriers I faced. I just knew if I could have accessed that listening ear or a person I could vent to growing up, things may have seemed a little less dim. Thus began my journey into accomplishing my dreams. Throughout the last two years of high school, I had a part-time job at Coles where I would work after school and on weekends. I graduated from year 12 at Dalby State High School in 2021. I realised I had no means or method in how exactly I was going to accomplish anything. I remember continuously looking through jobs online for months and never finding anything that connected with me.

At the start of 2022, I joined the Transition to Work program where Kirsten supported me. Reflecting on my life, I realised I wasn't in the place I wanted to be. I started looking at online courses for youth or community-based training. This led me to complete a *Certificate III in Community Services*. I was ecstatic when I completed my certificate! but I didn't know what was next for me.

I gave DISCO a ring & was placed within the YES program with Dana & I connected with her on a deep level. I submitted my resume and cover letter online that Dana and I worked on & within a short while I was offered an interview for a vacant position at DISCO. I was so nervous, but I knew that this is the career I had been working towards. A few days passed and I took a phone call from Lara offering me the job.

Since working at DISCO for 3 months now, it's nothing like I imagined, I didn't know what to expect but it's been amazing. I have been blessed to meet so many lovely kind-hearted people whilst making connections and building a strong connection with clients. I feel the future looks very bright for me!

Joke in the Corner



This morning on the way to work I rear ended a car at some lights whilst not really paying attention. Anyway the fella who was driving got out ..and he was a dwarf! He said "I'm not happy"....

I said, "Well which one are you then?"