

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, May 16, 2014

Ref: C14/1

Program brings young professionals back to the region

SWAN Hill businesses are beating regional skills shortages with the help of a cadetship program.

Five businesses, three of them accounting firms, have taken on six students under the Young Professionals Provincial Cadetships Program.

In Swan Hill today, Member for Swan Hill Peter Walsh praised the work of the Murray Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network in matching the employers and students during the past six months.

MMLLEN acting executive officer Alan Davies said employers in a number of sectors had experienced difficulty attracting professionals to the region.

These included business, health and community services.

“The cadetships are a key program for promoting opportunities in local industries and employment opportunities for young people to consider,” he said.

“They can look at these as potential career choices once they’ve completed their studies.

“The cadetship program is a valuable part of connecting young people with local industries experiencing skills shortages, especially in the professions.”

PDF Accounting’s Janine Daniels said the cadetship had offered her small business valuable access to tertiary students nearing graduation.

“It’s been difficult for a long time to fill vacancies, because we’re one of the smaller firms and graduates who do come back to Swan Hill tend to gravitate towards the larger firms,” she said.

“Once kids leave for Bendigo and Melbourne and taste the lifestyle, they usually don’t want to come back here. They might look at coming back when they have a family and realise the cost of living in cities, but otherwise it’s very hard to persuade them to come back.”

Swan Hill Physiotherapy and Sports Clinic owner Gerard Moloney signed up for two cadets.

The first, Jacob Moloney, has completed his work commitment and is back at university.

“He’s in his third of four years studying physiotherapy and then, when he’s finished, the option’s open for him to come back and take up employment here if he chooses,” Mr Moloney said.

“I’m looking to employ a new graduate.

“It is difficult to get staff - not only graduates to work here, but also to stay on. Sometimes you’ll get them to work for 12 months but then they’ll want to move on. Swan Hill seems to be ‘a bit out of the way’ for people who don’t know the country, while us locals think that three hours’ drive is not far.”

Second-year physiotherapy student Katie Hepburn will complete her cadetship with Mr Moloney later this year.

Ms Hepburn said it provided a wonderful opportunity to expand her skills and learn more about her chosen career.

"I chose physiotherapy because I was interested in sport, health and fitness," she said.

"I thought it would be a good career where I would be able to help other people."

Anthony Smith undertook a school-based traineeship with GMG Accounting, working there one day a week for two years, and then worked in the business full-time for a year.

He's now in his second year of an accounting and international business degree at La Trobe University Bendigo.

As well as the financial boost, Anthony said he was finding it easier to understand a lot of the accounting techniques and management concepts because he could relate it to work.

Anthony said he hoped to finish his three-year course and work, possibly at GMG for a few years.

"Once people move away from Swan Hill to go to uni, depending on family, it can be difficult to be motivated to go back to a smaller town," he said.

"Larger towns have a lot more job opportunities and facilities, but I don't mind Swan Hill. I reckon it's a great little town."

The six cadets are:

- Anthony Smith - Accounting Cadetship at GMG Accounting
- Katie Hepburn - Physiotherapy Cadetship at Swan Hill Physio & Sports Clinic
- Daniel Pacher - Electrical Engineering Cadetship at Lower Murray Water
- Jacob Moloney - Physiotherapy Cadetship at Swan Hill Physio & Sports Clinic
- Tori Gorringer - Accountant Cadetship at Logan & Hall Accountants and Advisors
- Chloe Lee Burrell - Accountant Cadetship at PDF Accounting

The YPPC program offers grants to students who move away from regional areas to study at university or TAFE.

In exchange the students undertake a paid cadetship of six weeks' full-time or 12 weeks' part-time work, in fields related to their study, in regional Victoria.

Employers also receive grants to support the costs of employing a student.

The cadetships can operate over one year or two years and are valued at \$4250-\$8500.

Employers and cadets who would like to participate in the Murray Mallee LLEN program should phone Sue Grumley on (03) 5033 2017.

For more information about the Young Professionals Provincial Cadetships Program go to www.rdv.vic.gov.au

(Ends)

MEDIA: For further details call MMLLEN acting executive officer Alan Davies on (03) 5033 2017 or MMLLEN chairman Ron Stanton on 0408 124538.

Notes:

MMLLEN is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for the area of north-west Victoria covered by Swan Hill Rural City (excluding Robinvale), Gannawarra Shire (excluding Cohuna), and Sea Lake in the Buloke Shire.

MMLLEN works to establish partnerships with local education and training providers, businesses and industries, community groups, parents and families to help young people aged 10 to 19 get involved in study, training or work, stay committed and succeed in their chosen careers.

Further information about MMLLEN is available at the website <http://www.mmlen.com.au/>