

# Future built **piece by piece**

By **Josephine Gillespie**

**J**OSHUA Stemm grew up with an interest in pulling things apart to see how they worked.

It all started with a bicycle, then a motorcycle, until he was given the shell of a 1979 Holden at the age of 15 – rebuilding it piece by piece.

With this background, it makes sense that the 21-year-old went into the mechanical field.

Joshua now is a fully qualified mechanic at AP Eagers, with a string of awards to his name including being named Motor Trades Association of Queensland Apprentice of the Year at the Queensland Training Awards.

After a stint of work experience at the company, Joshua was offered an apprenticeship in 2003 after he had completed Year 12.

"I thought I'd go into it and give it a go," Joshua said. "It's a rapidly changing industry and I've learnt a lot.

"If you look at the guys who were working here 10 years ago when computer systems were first introduced, they've had a

lot to get used to.

"I've come right in the middle

so I can see why we've gone to computers and what we have now.

"If you look at the cars now, they often come with 32 computer programs which talk via two wires.

"The system can tell you where the problem is but it won't tell you what the problem is.

"That requires looking a little bit closer."

The dedicated young mechanic has been asked to promote apprenticeships to the next generation, speaking at high schools and trade expos.

Joshua said students should look beyond university as a career path to the variety of trades available.

"It's an alternative to going to university," he said.

"You don't have to go to university.

"Typically in trades, you can earn more because of the skills shortage.

"There's more money in trades than there used to be.

"It's not just people who couldn't finish school now.

learning must be offered in response to the growing demand for workers and the ageing population.

"There has never been a better time for mature-aged people to pursue recognition for

their existing skills and build on those skills with a nationally recognised qualification," he said.

Mr Jarick said the ongoing services provided to employers by Sarina Russo Apprenticeship

"There's a lot more you need to know.

"With trades you learn something new every day."

Sarina Russo Apprenticeship

Services general manager Kevin Jarick said the newly launched Australian Apprenticeship Support Service encouraged more people such as Joshua to take up an apprenticeship.

Mr Jarick said the service aimed to increase the number

of people choosing a trade career, in an effort to address the growing skills shortages and demand for skilled tradespeople.

"Skills are a key driver of economic growth and an Australian Apprenticeship is a first-rate career option which

will deliver professional, financial and personal rewards," Mr Jarick said.

He said a proactive approach to growing the apprenticeship market was needed to address the skill shortages.

Mr Jarick said structured training and on-the-job

Services were free of charge and included registering new Australian Apprentices, paying employer incentives and Australian Apprenticeship allowances and assisting with training options and paperwork.



**MECHANIC Joshua Stemm, left and Sarina Russo Apprenticeship Services' Kevin Jarick.**

**PICTURE: Pete Johnson**