

VOL. 5 | AUGUST 2021

VPG VOICE

VPG
VOCATIONAL
PARTNERSHIPS
GROUP

“From a young age I was always passionate about cars, so I decided to take the next step and get a trade to become a mechanic. Without knowing how to start VPG showed me the way and helped me prepare before applying for jobs.”

Steve, Mechanic Apprentice

VPG is committed to maximising employment opportunities for young people and businesses alike right here in Far North Queensland. We invest in the wealth of talent within our local 15 to 24 year-olds to help them build skills, forge connections and become work ready.

Our youth employment specialists provide tailored recruitment solutions to best suit employers and young people. We also assist with navigating wage subsidies and incentives so businesses can get back to doing what they do best.

Young people are our future. With the right support, opportunities, resources and networks, we believe every young person can achieve success.

VPG. SETTING YOUNG PEOPLE UP FOR SUCCESS



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THE SWEETER SIDE OF RECRUITMENT

One of the world's most famous ice-cream brands, Ben & Jerry's, is set to open a store in Cairns in September. Heading the hiring blitz for young passionate Far Northerners is VPG.

Looking to fulfill up to 35 positions, VPG will work closely with a pool of motivated and talented young candidates to help them prepare for the recruitment process, and if successful, will receive ongoing support to ensure a smooth transition into the workplace.

An information session held at VPG will provide Franchisee Nick Lorentzen an opportunity to share with young people Ben & Jerry's vision and values and what they will be looking for in new recruits.

As a part of the new store fit out, VPG Participant Catherine (pictured) who works with the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) has been tasked with creating a mural which will represent Far North flora and her culture.

VPG Partnerships Officer Jacinta Perry said, "to have one of our young people also involved in the fit out of the venue is amazing and a true testament to the opportunities that CIAF and Ben & Jerry's offer our young community members,"

Through VPG pre-employment training programs, young people have undertaken skill building workshops, achieved licenses, qualifications and personal development goals specific to their chosen industry. They are ready for an opportunity to succeed in the workplace.

Local businesses looking to unleash their future workforce are encouraged to make contact with VPG to explore partnership opportunities.



YOUTH FORUM GIVES YOUNG PEOPLE IN YARRABAH AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD

VPG would like to extend a sincere gratitude to Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service Aboriginal Corporation for hosting a truly inspiring Youth Forum.

The event provided young people living in Yarrabah an opportunity to come together to discuss challenges, priorities, and matters that affect them in their community.

High attendance and levels of engagement were a true testament to the appreciation local youth had for the opportunity to have their voices heard.

VPG Youth Trainee Yarum Underwood who attended the event was thrilled with the turn out and the contributions made by the attendees.

"Our young community members shared some amazing ideas on building a better future for the community. Hearing what is important to them and what they feel is going to help improve their future is the first step in creating change. It was an empowering experience for everyone who attended - and now the fun begins where we can start making a plan on how we can implement their ideas," said Ms Underwood.

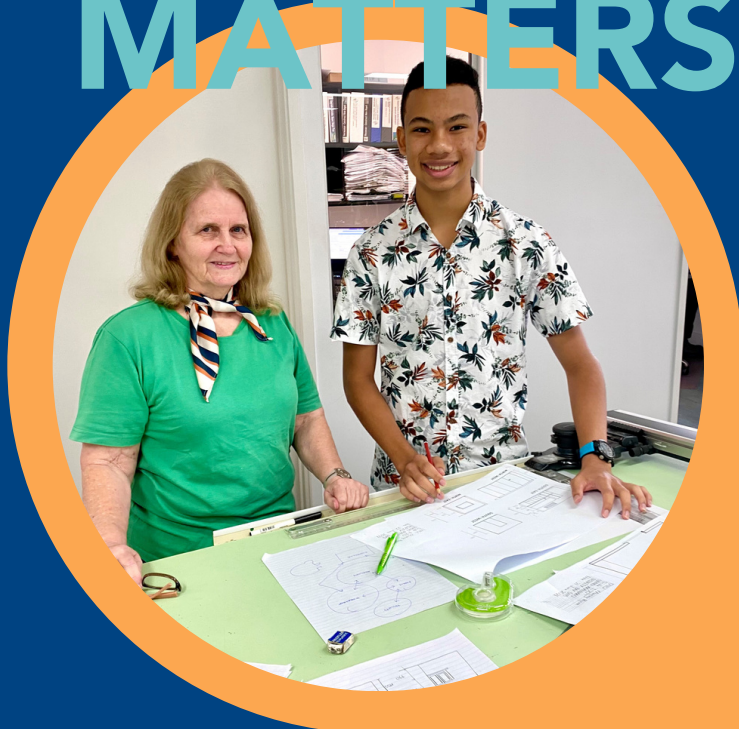
To help these ideas come to fruition, VPG looks forward to working in partnership with Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service Aboriginal Corporation, local youth and other key stakeholders to create positive action and change in the local community.



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WORK EXPERIENCE AND WHY IT MATTERS



Employer Champion Jane Hanan, Director at Clarke & Prince, Architects, is a devoted and passionate advocate for the work experience program, providing young people with valuable placement opportunities each year.

"When I was young, I had the opportunity to do work experience in an architectural office. I always knew I had a passion and interest in architecture, and the opportunity allowed me to build an industry network and establish lifelong contacts."

Jane believes it is an important opportunity that allows young people to explore career pathways and make informed decisions about their future.

"I also had work experience in retail, carpentry, sheet metal work and window manufacturing – all incredibly valuable experiences," said Ms Hanan.

"Work experience provides young people with exposure to different industries, increasing their knowledge and opening their eyes to opportunities outside their horizons.

"It teaches them useful skills which they can apply throughout the rest of their lives," said Ms Hanan.

Each year in Cairns over 1,000 students and school leavers participate in work experience. Local businesses who can provide young people with access to work experience opportunities are encouraged to contact VPG to learn more about the program.

NETWORKING & NIBBLES

VPG Cairns is opening its doors to school services personnel for an afternoon of networking and nibbles.

This is an opportunity to come together and explore ways we can help young people in our community thrive.

WHEN: THURS 2 SEPT, 4.30PM-6PM

WHERE: VPG CAIRNS, 98 ANDERSON ST

For more information or to RSVP email info@vpginc.com.au



FNO EMPLOYERS

Can you provide a young person with a work experience opportunity?

If so, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Emma Takai:
07 4032 1677
emma@vpginc.com.au



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EXPLORING EDUCATION PATHWAYS

At 16 years of age, Kiesha made the decision to explore education opportunities outside of school. Dreaming of becoming a veterinary nurse, Keisha wanted to complete a Certificate III in Animal Studies, with a course entry requirement of being 18 years or older.

Seeking an interim opportunity to build skills, further her studies and work towards her goal, Ravenshoe State School referred Keisha to VPG for support building skills and exploring alternative education opportunities.

Providing a safe and welcoming space to thrive, VPG offered a learning environment adapted to Keisha's specific skills and capabilities. She was supported to develop and strengthen her social skills, giving her the confidence to start pursuing her education and employment opportunities.

Through VPG's youth transition programs, Keisha has completed study in rural operations to build her skills and launch her career in animal studies. She is now currently pursuing work experience opportunities with local veterinary surgeries across the Tablelands in hope to gain industry experience in animal care.

VPG Youth Development Coach, Gisella Joslin has been working alongside Keisha to support and encourage her on her education journey, giving her well-deserved praise on her efforts and achievements.

"Keisha is an amazing young person who we have had the opportunity to see flourish. Her confidence and communication skills have grown, and she has taken every opportunity in her stride. We are incredibly proud of how far she has come," said Ms. Joslin.

VPG would like to congratulate Keisha on her achievements and success. Well done.

NAIDOC WEEK



HEAL COUNTRY!

NAIDOC Week 2021 celebrations at VPG were proudly led by our First Nations Leadership Team.

Over the course of the week our Leaders shared their personal stories, history, connection to country and what this years' NAIDOC theme means to them. This opportunity highlighted to us the vital role story-telling plays in keeping culture, customs and communities connected, now and for future generations.

The week of festivities continued with activities held across all centres, providing an opportunity for young people to celebrate through art, food and connection.

A special thank you goes out to the Yarrabah community for inviting VPG to attend their annual celebration. It was an amazing opportunity to connect with the locals, share good food and celebrate with art, dance and music.

What an incredible week of celebrations it was. VPG would like to extend a heartfelt thankyou to our First Nations Leadership Team for their efforts and contributions to the service we deliver our community.



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COLLABORATING FRESH IDEAS WITH YOUNG INDIGENOUS LEADERS

VPG participants from Cairns and Innisfail joined our First Nations Leadership team to discuss new ways in which VPG as an organisation can strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people.

Some amazing ideas were shared which we look forward to implementing in the future. Watch this space.

YOUTH RECRUITMENT BOOM

Local entrepreneur, Daniel Freebody owner of Car Wash Café, Northern Detailers and Meldrum's Pies recruits five VPG participants to support business boom.

Working in partnership with VPG, Mr Freebody relies on the recruitment service to secure motivated talent prepared for the workforce.

"Working conditions at the carwash can be quite labour intensive, and VPG is able to refer really good candidates who understand what is expected from them before they get here, making the recruitment process simple and easy," said Mr Freebody.

VPG Career and Transitions Officer Wendy Sike supported Mr Freebody through the hiring blitz to identify suitable candidates.

"Every job vacancy has requirements and having worked closely with Daniel to understand the working conditions, I am able to match a young persons' strengths and aspirations with what the business is looking for," said Ms Sike.

The new recruits have successfully transitioned into employment with Carwash Cafe, and will continue to receive ongoing post-placement support to maximise employment success in the workplace.



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IGNITING A NEWFOUND PASSION



Playing rugby league at a professional level, James endured extensive injuries driving him to reflect on his career aspirations and explore alternative employment pathways through VPG's Transition to Work (TtW) program.

With career counselling, James identified an interest in getting a trade and was supported with all aspects of his job search journey.

Living in a Innisfail, James was connected and updated with local vacancies via a digital jobs board distributed by VPG detailing opportunities that aligned to his aspirations.

Advertised was a labourer position with local construction company, Sinton Constructions, and James was encouraged to apply. Successful in his application, he was offered a one-day work trial where his skills and talents were quickly recognised, resulting in secured employment.

Marc Sinton, the employer, accessed support from VPG to navigate wage subsidies and incentives attached to James' employment, and within two weeks, James was offered a carpentry apprenticeship.

Receiving on-the-job training, James is learning new skills and gaining valuable industry knowledge and experience. Marc has praised James' reliability, work ethic and positive attitude and hopes that he will sustain long term employment with the company beyond his apprenticeship years.

Participating in TtW has inspired employment aspirations outside James' football ambitions, providing an opportunity to create and achieve a fulfilling future.

"Doing this line of work and knowing I can do it for the rest of my life, with a good pay check, is a future for me," said VPG Participant James.



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LEARNER DRIVER PROGRAM SET TO MAXIMISE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

VPG is getting young people behind the wheel and into work.

Recognising the increasing demand for employees to hold a driver license, VPG has joined forces with Cairns Truck Schools to deliver a Learner Driver Program providing young jobseekers access to funded driving lessons.

VPG Partnerships Officer Jacinta Perry said the program is opening employment opportunities for local youth.

"The Learner Driver Program provides jobseekers engaged in VPG's youth transition programs an opportunity to access supervised driving lessons so they can work towards achieving their provisional licence.

"To date we have supported 55 young people with over 275 hours of funded lessons, and as a result our participants are successfully securing job opportunities that require a licence, or that would remain inaccessible without independent travel by car," said Ms Perry.

Providing young people opportunities within the automotive industry, Managing Director at Cairns Diesel Services, Travis Briffa, said the program allowed him to secure motivated talent who can fulfil their recruitment needs.

"We were recruiting for an entry level position suited to a young person looking to gain mechanical experience, and obviously having a driver license in this line of work is a must," said Mr Briffa.

"VPG put forward some great candidates, and we chose 19-year-old Darnell based on his attitude and willingness to learn.

"Darnell was working towards his P's and knowing VPG was going to continue supporting him with lessons once he started with us, was reassuring and gave us the confidence in our staffing choice.

"Young people have to start somewhere, and this opportunity definitely helped Darnell get his foot in the door," said Mr Briffa.

For more information, contact Jacinta Perry on 07 4032 1677 or jacinta@vpginc.com.au.



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CREATING OPPORTUNITIES