

# DOORWAYS TO SUCCESS

A South Australian VET program is offering students numerous career pathways

**S**OUTH Australia's premier Vocational Education and Training (VET) program has been giving students access to opportunities within the construction sector for the past two decades.

Established by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) in partnership with the Department for Education, Doorways 2 Construction (D2C) enables students to gain exposure to the construction sector, to understand the different vocations within the industry and help them to become job ready. The program is typically offered as a Certificate I or II - Construction in Year 11, and a partial Certificate III D2C Plus in Year 12 in partnership with the Department for Industry and Skills, involving work placement, site visits, career talks and more.

Since its conception, more than 10,000 students have participated in the D2C program, with 3000 of these continuing on to full-time apprenticeships within the industry.

"It's been a really good result for the industry and a great result for the students," says Marie Paterson, CITB CEO. "Rather than learning in just a simulated environment, students are working side-by-side with real tradespeople on an actual construction site

during their work placement and gaining a real understanding of the industry."

Like many in industry, Paterson is keen to see trades given more prominence within schools. "Apprenticeships and traineeships have probably just not had the same kudos that university qualifications have had in the past," she says. "A trade is a great way to start your career and can lead to anything you want to do. Within the construction industry, there are career opportunities in carpentry, electrical, plumbing, tiling, bricklaying, civil construction, painting and decorating, wall fixing, roof plumbing ... We have people who have gone through Doorways programs and gone on to start their own businesses or work in multinational and senior management roles."

D2C graduate Joshua Spence is one of the program's many success stories. The 18-year-old discovered D2C in Year 11. "I've always been pretty hands-on so I thought this would be the right program for me," Spence says. Upon completing D2C in Year 12, Spence was offered a four-year carpentry apprenticeship. Almost one year in, he is confident his apprenticeship is setting him up for future success. "The apprenticeship is giving me the skills I'll need to have my own businesses eventually," he says.

## REAP THE REWARDS

For those embarking on a career in construction, the rewards can be considerable.

"There are many success stories about people going on to have great businesses, building wonderful careers or using their trade as a stepping-stone to something else," Master Builders South Australia (MBASA)

Chief Executive Officer Ian Markos says.

Regularly overlooked are the financial rewards to be had.

"A university graduate will earn \$50,000, or you can get a trade for four years and come out and earn \$20-\$30,000 more than that straight away," Markos says.



**BUILDING A FUTURE:** Joshua Spence, a former D2C student at Gleeson College and now carpentry apprentice, has hopes of launching his own business. Picture: MIKE BURTON