

Vocational learning benefits the community

By Rhody Gleeson

Hills students have been given a licence to drill as they take part in Heathfield High School's Doorways2Construction program.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) subject gives students the chance to learn trade skills while still at school and apply their new skillsets in real life community projects.

Students are currently working to renovate a room at the Aldgate Toy Library adding to the program's existing body of work including building a boat playground for the Heathfield Primary School and renovations at the Mt Lofty Girl Guides Hall.

Kieran Jaensch, who manages the Doorways2Construction program at Heathfield High School, said the Aldgate project had been one of the largest ever undertaken by the students.

"We have stripped the whole room including the carpets and put down floating floors, painted the room and installed new cabinets," Mr Jaensch said.

"It has been a really great learning experience for all involved."

The program currently has 52 students enrolled and Mr Jaensch said the success of



Crystal Stanbury from Birdwood, left, and Mitch Murphy of Nairne have been picking up important trade skills as part of Heathfield High School's Doorways2Construction program.

recent graduates was very encouraging.

"The program gives students a head start if they wish to pursue an apprenticeship after school," he said.

"Tradies look upon these skills

very favorably when trialling potential apprentices.

"Last year nine of our 12 Stage 2 students gained an apprenticeship after graduation."

Tradesman Phil Arthur has

been supervising the renovation at the Aldgate Toy Library and said such a large project meant everyone had the chance to gain experience across a wide range of areas.

"These students are really

on the fast track with this program," he said. "The size of this job means students have experienced it all from flooring to painting and more."

Birdwood High School Year 10 student Crystal Stanbury is one of two girls in the program and said she had thoroughly enjoyed learning new skills and would encourage other girls to consider taking part.

"It has been great, while there are only two girls in the program you don't get treated any differently," she said.

"We work hard just like anyone else and I have learned so much, it has really encouraged me to seek a carpentry apprenticeship after school."

Nairne's Mitch Murphy is currently completing Year 11 at Urrbrae Agricultural School and jumped at the chance to pick up the tools while still at school and do some good in the community.

"I have always wanted to do a trade since I was young and while we haven't done anything to do with refrigeration which is what I am most interested in, I've had the chance to try out a whole range of different skills which has been awesome," he said.

"It is also a great feeling knowing you are helping out the community and learning skills at the same time."