

# VET in Schools good practice models

## John Forrest Secondary College

John Forrest Secondary College is a co-educational independent public school in Morley.

Established in 1961, the college's vision is to provide a supportive learning community committed to providing a challenging, diverse and inclusive curriculum which engages and motivates students to reach their potential and encourages excellence.

John Forrest Secondary College has been delivering Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs for at least 18 years.



### School profile

- Approximately 740 students
- Years 8–12
- Year 11 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs 42%
- Year 12 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs 74%

John Forrest Secondary College promotes excellence in all areas of learning. Its ethos is to care for the whole child, to provide an education that recognises and values diversity and to offer all students the opportunity to succeed. VET in Schools programs help the college to achieve this goal.

The college has integrated VET in Schools as a valuable pathway into its school culture. A range of VET in Schools programs are offered to extend the learning opportunities for students and allow the college to be inclusive and responsive to student needs.

The building of a state of the art Trade Training Centre (TTC) is an important initiative which has expanded opportunities for students. The VET in Schools programs offered through the TTC are two of the most successful programs offered by the college.

## Program background

In 2006, John Forrest Secondary College and MPA Skills identified the need for collaboration to address the skill shortages in the plumbing and painting trades. This led to the development of a partnership to enable training to be completed on the school site.

Building on this partnership, the TTC was established in late 2009 to provide training in a range of programs, including pre-apprenticeships in schools and school-based apprenticeships in Plumbing and Gasfitting and Painting and Decorating.

Students can currently undertake either a Certificate II in Plumbing and Gasfitting pre-apprenticeship or a Certificate II in Painting and Decorating pre-apprenticeship.

Entry into these programs is open to students from the metropolitan area, with priority given to students at John Forrest Secondary College and Mount Lawley Senior High School (SHS).

Although both pre-apprenticeships have been popular amongst boys, the Certificate II in Painting and Decorating has also been popular with girls. In 2012, 20% of the enrolments were girls and in 2013, 18%.

## Program partners

### *Trade Training Centre partners*

The TTC is a joint partnership between John Forrest Secondary College, Mount Lawley Senior High School and MPA Skills. The roles and responsibilities of the key partners are clearly defined in a Service Level Agreement between all parties.

John Forrest Secondary College's Principal has overall responsibility for the management of the TTC and is supported through the work of the TTC Committee.

The TTC Committee meets twice a semester, or more if required. It is composed of five members with representatives from MPA Skills, John Forrest Secondary College and Mount Lawley Senior High School. The committee is responsible for:

- the overall management and strategic direction of the TTC;
- overseeing the daily operation of the TTC, including maintenance of the centre and its equipment;
- approving policies and operational protocols;
- developing marketing strategies for the TTC; and
- determining when student recruitment and interviews commence.





The college maximises the use of the TTC by allowing other activities and events to be held there when it is not being used. The TTC has been used by:

- MPA Skills to run Try-a-Trade days;
- MPA Skills to run intensive training programs for their full time pre-apprenticeship students; and
- the Housing Institute of Australia (HIA) to deliver white card training to Year 10 John Forrest students.

A fee is payable by third parties for the use of the TTC and this provides an additional source of income for the college.

### *Industry partners*

MPA Skills is the training arm of the Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association of Australia (WA) and the Master Painters Association (WA). MPA Skills is an industry based and industry focused registered training organisation and group training organisation. MPA Skills is responsible for delivering the training for the pre-apprenticeship programs at the TTC as well as supplying and maintaining associated training material and resources.

MPA Skills employs a School Coordinator to liaise with schools in the program. The role of the School Coordinator includes:

- marketing and promoting all MPA Skills programs to schools;
- developing and distributing all marketing materials;
- contacting schools and advertising Try-a-Trade days and managing the enrolment numbers for the event;
- distributing the list of units of competencies and training programs to all schools that have student/s enrolled in the John Forrest Secondary College TTC program;
- following up with relevant schools on external<sup>1</sup> student absenteeism;
- following up with relevant schools on external student poor behaviour/performance;
- providing support and a contact point for the MPA Skills trainers delivering at the TTC; and
- being a contact person for school VET coordinators.

Work placements are key features of these programs. All students are encouraged to find their own work placement and this is done in liaison with MPA Skills. Once a student has found a work placement, MPA Skills will assess the capacity of the employer to provide a relevant industry standard work placement for the student. The student's school is responsible for administering the associated paperwork and ensuring that the student and host employer have the support needed to enable a relevant and valuable work placement.



<sup>1</sup>Non-John Forrest Secondary College Students.

### Other schools

Students from schools in the metropolitan area can apply to be part of the program. Successful students continue their studies at their current school and attend the TTC on the required days.

Schools whose students have been accepted into the program are required to sign a General Partnership Agreement with John Forrest Secondary College. This agreement sets out the roles and responsibilities of the partner schools.

Individual schools are responsible for:

- ensuring that their own students attend training and uphold the MPA Skills Code of Conduct;
- arranging any necessary travel arrangements;
- reporting their own student results to the School Curriculum and Standards Authority;
- advising the John Forrest Secondary College VET Coordinator and MPA Skills of any student health concerns, absences and course withdrawals; and
- duty of care arrangements for their students travelling to and from the TTC and while they are on their work placement.



### Program features

#### Course structure

Students enrolling in the program must be full time Year 11 or 12 students.

Students undertaking the Painting and Decorating pre-apprenticeship attend school four days a week and the TTC one day a week. Students undertaking the Plumbing and Gasfitting pre-apprenticeship currently attend school three days a week and the TTC two days a week.

Year 11 students who complete either pre-apprenticeship can apply for a full time or part time apprenticeship with MPA Skills or stay at school to complete their Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) in Year 12.

Year 12 students who complete either pre-apprenticeship can apply for a full time apprenticeship with MPA Skills or another employer.

Students participating in these programs are expected to finish Year 12.



### *Student entry requirements*

Entry into these programs is competitive. In 2012 John Forrest Secondary College received 42 applications from 18 schools, which resulted in 33 enrolments from 14 schools across the two programs.

Students must have a minimum of a C grade in Maths and English to be accepted into the program.

### *Student selection process*

John Forrest Secondary College has one student intake round per year, with applications received in Term 3. If there are still available places at the end of the intake process, the college will continue to accept students up to three weeks into the new school year.

Year 10 and 11 students wishing to enrol in the program must go through two stages of assessment.

In the first stage, students must complete an application form which includes information on the applicant's grades and course levels, and asks questions to gauge the applicant's interest in the program. Students are also required to submit their resume, most recent school report, copies of any VET qualifications and a character reference (provided by their school) as part of their application.

Applications are assessed by a panel consisting of the John Forrest Secondary College VET Coordinator (chair), Mount Lawley Senior High School Workplace Coordinator, MPA Skills School Coordinator and a plumber or painter from MPA Skills, depending on which industry area the student has chosen.

Students who are successful in the application stage are interviewed by the selection panel and sit an aptitude test.

The purpose of the interview is to learn more about the student – brief background, school behaviour and attendance, genuine interest in the field, personal goals and aspirations and to determine:

- the student's knowledge of the program and the career path;
- if the student is work ready, and, if the student has had work experience, what they thought of this and what they think employers expect in the workplace; and
- the student's ability to work as part of a team.



Interviews are usually held towards the end of Term 3. Students are given the interview questions approximately two weeks before the interview to help with their preparation.

The student will sit an aptitude test to assess their Maths and English levels on the same day. Students are not required to achieve a minimum standard in the aptitude test to be accepted into the program; the results are used by the panel to rank students in the selection process.

Only students who are successful in the interview phase and ranked highly are accepted into the program.

### *Student support*

John Forrest Secondary College monitors student progress during the year. Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the Student Services Support Officer and given extra assistance with course work, counselling, career advice and guidance. Any external students identified are referred back to the VET coordinator of the relevant school.

Students are encouraged and supported to complete their work placements and achieve their WACE. MPA Skills provide students with strong mentoring support, career advice and options in relation to the industry. Students can seek advice from MPA Skills on the process for undertaking an apprenticeship if they are offered a position by another company.

MPA Skills clearly state their expectations of students at the commencement of the course and students are expected to follow the MPA Skills Code of Conduct while undertaking training at the TTC.

Students who fail to follow the Code of Conduct or underperform meet with the MPA Skills trainer in the first instance, to discuss the situation. Depending on the nature of the issue or if the problem persists, the MPA Skills School Coordinator is contacted to inform the relevant VET coordinator and arrange a meeting with the parents.

John Forrest Secondary College reserves the right to remove students from the programs if they do not comply with the Code of Conduct after following the conflict resolution process.

### *Parental liaison*

John Forrest Secondary College and MPA Skills acknowledge the significance of parental support for the success of the TTC VET in Schools programs. Together they host a number of parent engagement events including:

- an MPA Skills morning tea for parents to meet staff and trainers; and
- parent and student information/enrolment evenings where MPA Skills staff are available to answer any queries.

MPA Skills also send participating students and their parents a progress report card three times a year.

Parents are encouraged to contact the college with any concerns and can provide formal feedback using the John Forrest Secondary College school survey.





## Program results

In 2012:

- 89% of students successfully completed the Certificate II Plumbing and Gasfitting pre-apprenticeship; and
- 73% of students successfully completed the Certificate II in Painting and Decorating pre-apprenticeship.

The John Forrest Secondary College TTC partnership has also received the following awards:

- State winners of the 2010 Schools First Impact Award;
- School Pathways to VET Award at the 2011 Australian Training Awards; and
- VET in Schools Excellence Award at the 2012 Western Australian Training Awards.

## Lessons learnt

- Never lose sight of your core business – providing education and training for students.
- Undertake self assessments and continue to develop programs to meet student needs.
- Flexible learning environments are needed in the twenty-first century.
- Education, Training and Industry Liaison Officers provide significant support.
- Research and identify new VET opportunities.
- Formal career development for staff is critical.
- If a process is not working change it.
- Keep records and a history of your journey.
- Celebrate success.



## Critical success factors

<b>Leadership, continuity and partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Principal has strong support and involvement in the VET in Schools programs delivered at the TTC.</li> <li>• Long term critical partnerships with defined roles and a transparent dispute resolution process.</li> <li>• Committee to support and provide advice on the TTC.</li> </ul>
<b>Student cohort and parent liaison</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student entry and selection process ensures that students selected are committed, work ready and have the capacity to successfully complete the program.</li> <li>• Regular progress reports keep parents involved and allow the early identification of students at risk.</li> </ul>
<b>Vision, place and configuration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The TTC offers programs that address skill shortages in Western Australia.</li> <li>• Seamless transition from school into training and employment.</li> <li>• MPA Skills provides strong mentoring support for the students.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timetabling is flexible to enable students to undertake work placements one or two days per week or in blocks.</li> <li>• Students can postpone assessments and exams to accommodate their VET in Schools requirements.</li> <li>• Students have access to course lessons and resources online through Moodle.</li> <li>• Students are given the option to change pathways at the end of Year 11.</li> </ul>
<b>Course content, structure and evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data is collected to track student completion rates – the school's average completion rate is compared to the national average to benchmark their performance.</li> <li>• Host employers provide feedback assessments on the work placement process.</li> </ul>

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