

NSW Training Awards 2026

Be Recognised

Western Sydney
& Blue Mountains



Digital Program

28 May 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Dharug people of the Eora Nation who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this event is being held. We would like to pay our respect to the Elders both past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People present this evening.



Title: Ceremonies

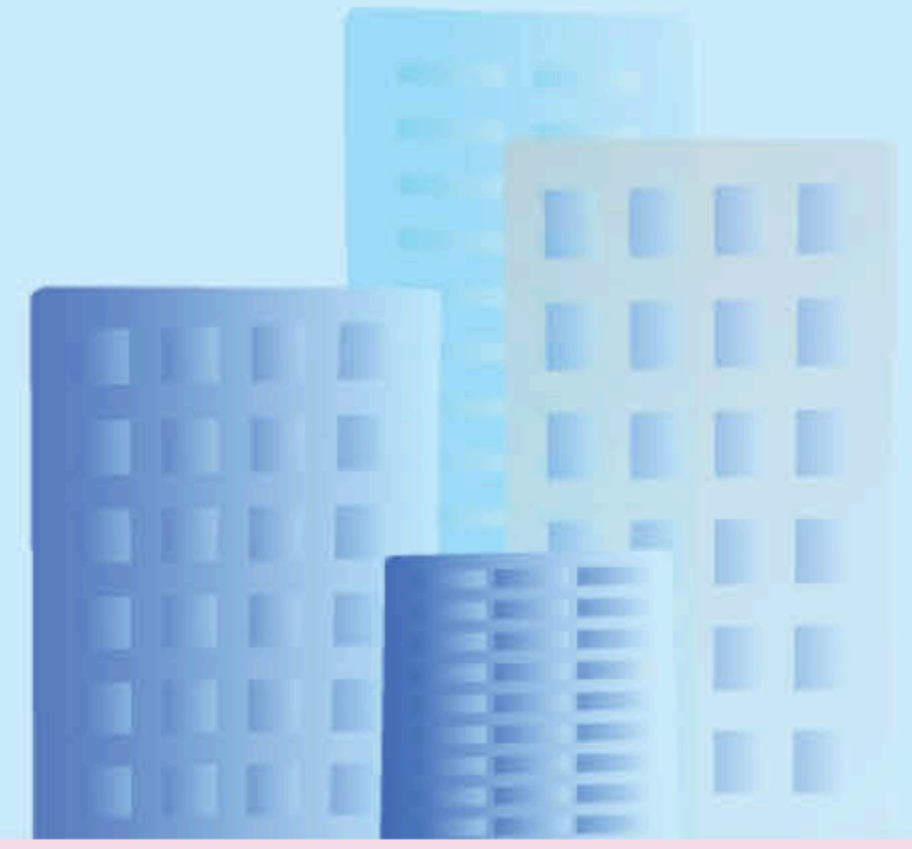
Artist: WUPA Artist - Craig Layer

The main circle in the centre represents the Jobs Together Program and like an important meeting place draws others to it. The circles attached to it are other support mechanisms associated with the program such as our communities and Aboriginal mentors.

The three symbols above and below the main circle represent our elders and their cultural knowledge and how important it is that Aboriginal culture be central to the success of the Jobs Together Program.

The three dotted lines going into and coming out from the circles represents both the journey taken by Aboriginal people as they endeavour to find education and employment pathways as well as being a threefold cord that is hard to break and symbolises the strength that comes from having Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal working collaboratively together.

Thank you to our 2026 State Sponsors



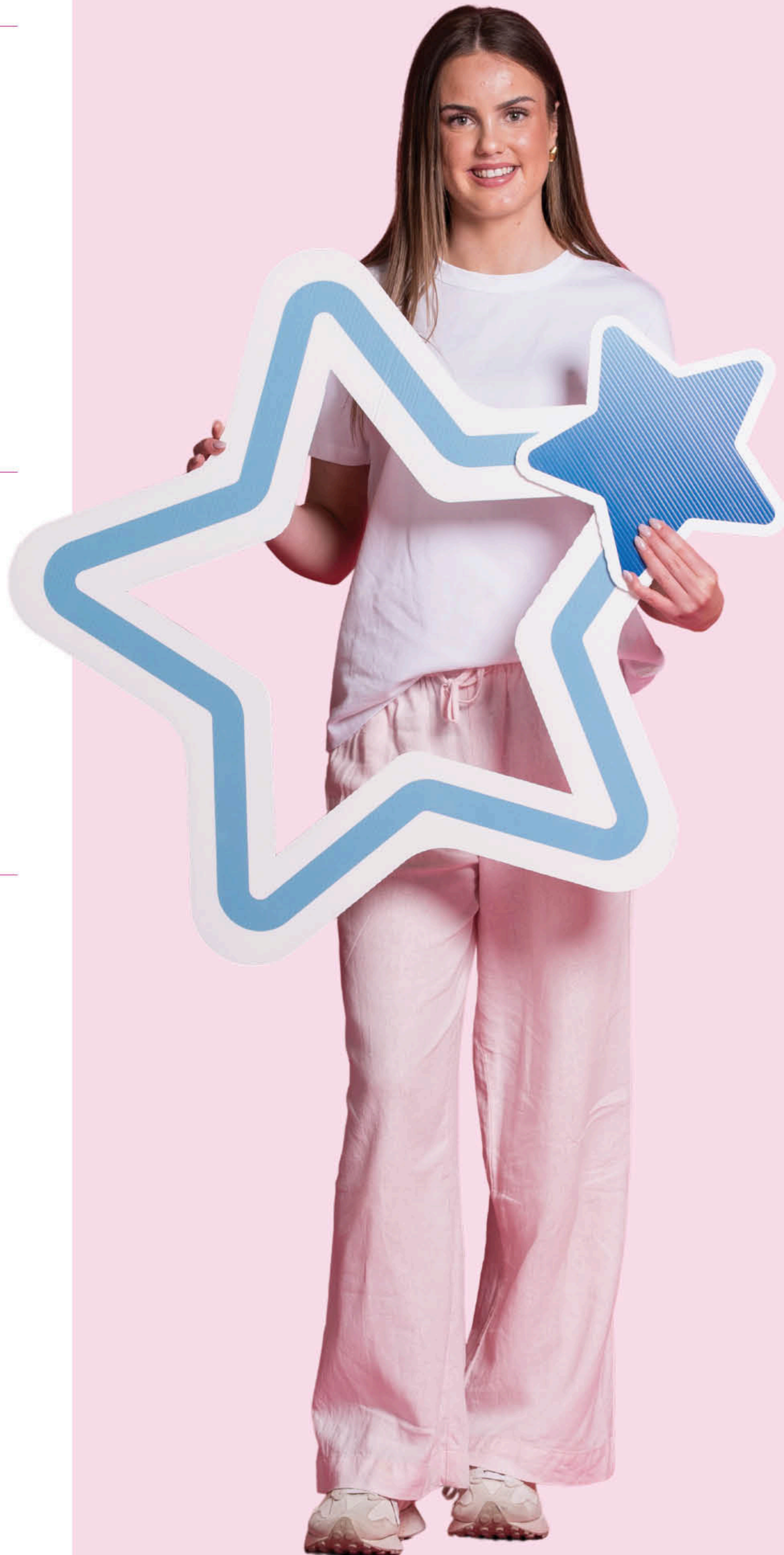
Diamond Sponsor



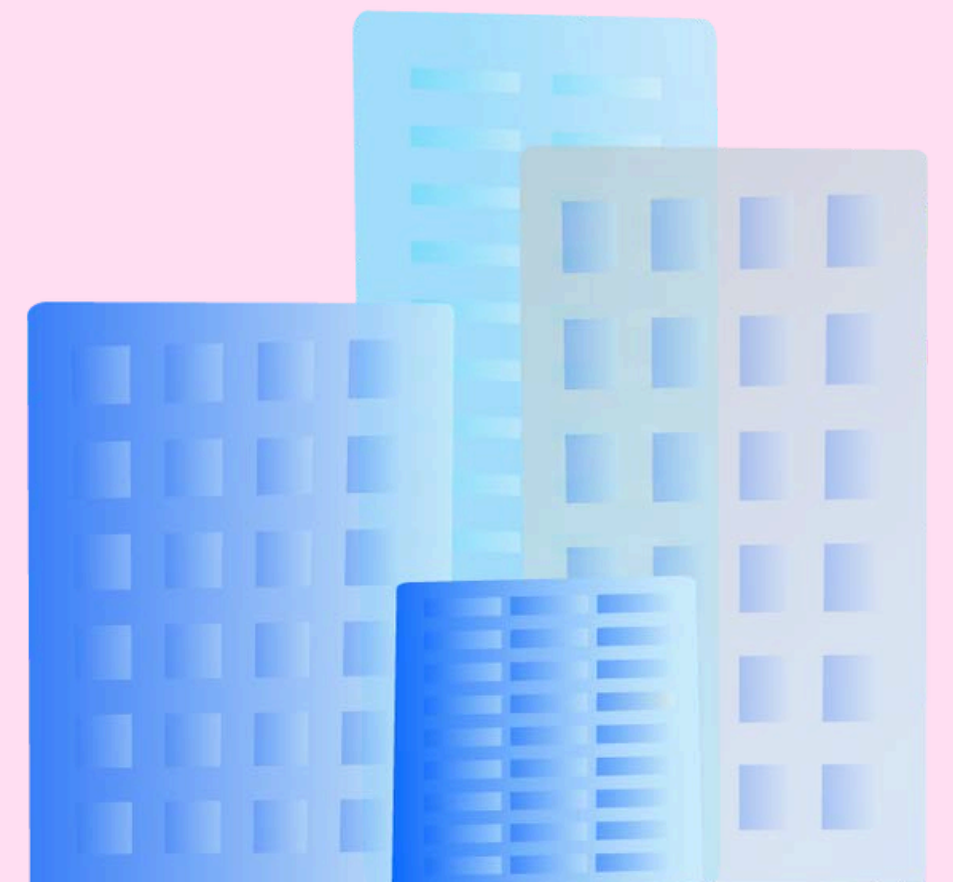
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Thank you to our 2026 Regional Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



Catholic Schools
Parramatta Diocese



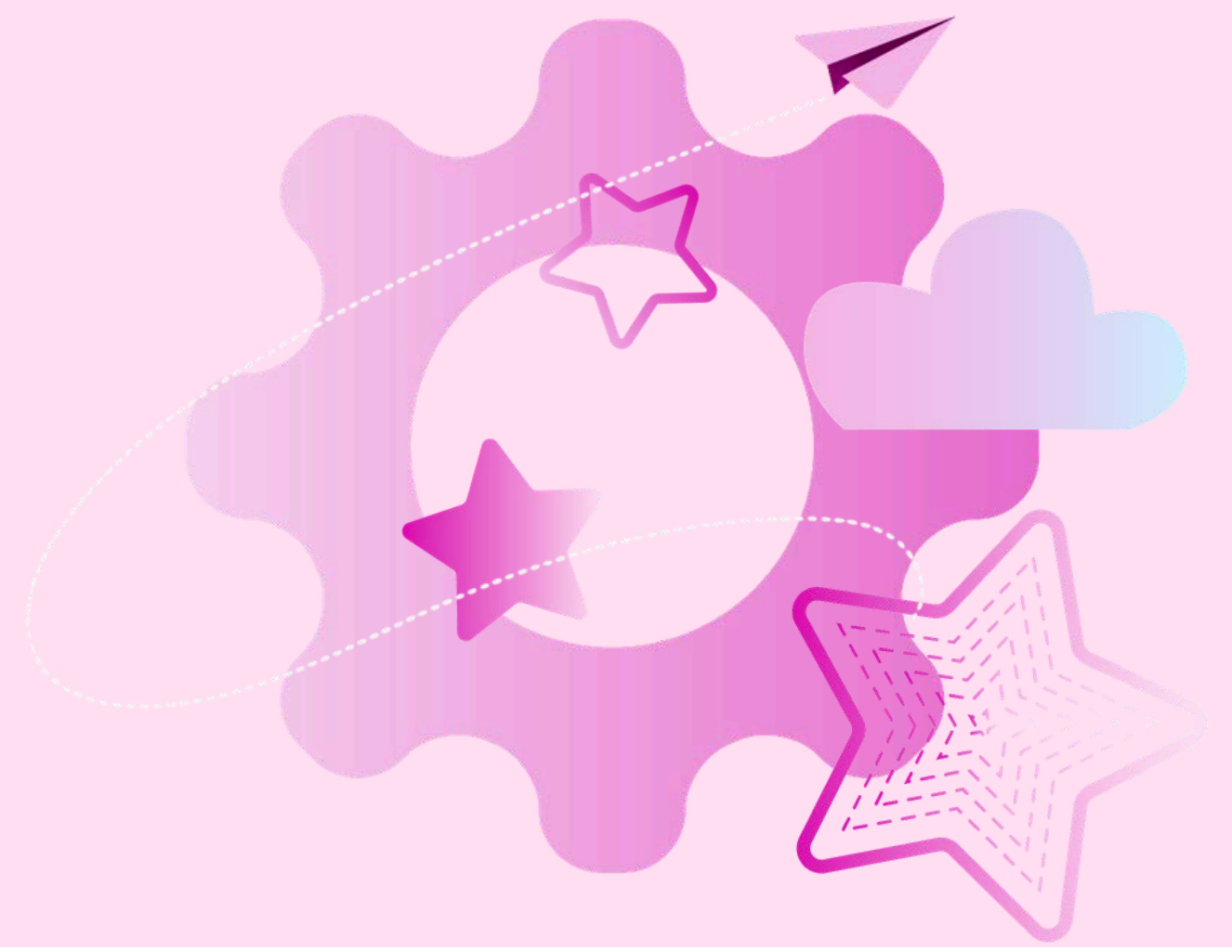
Silver Sponsor



Bronze Sponsors



Order Of Proceedings



Welcome to Country

Teresa Roberts

Master of Ceremonies Introduction

Ammaleah Astruc

2022 Western Sydney & Blue Mountains
Trainee of the Year and State Finalist

Holly Zaccaria

2022 Western Sydney & Blue Mountains
VET in Schools Student of the Year

Welcome Address

Donna Davis MP

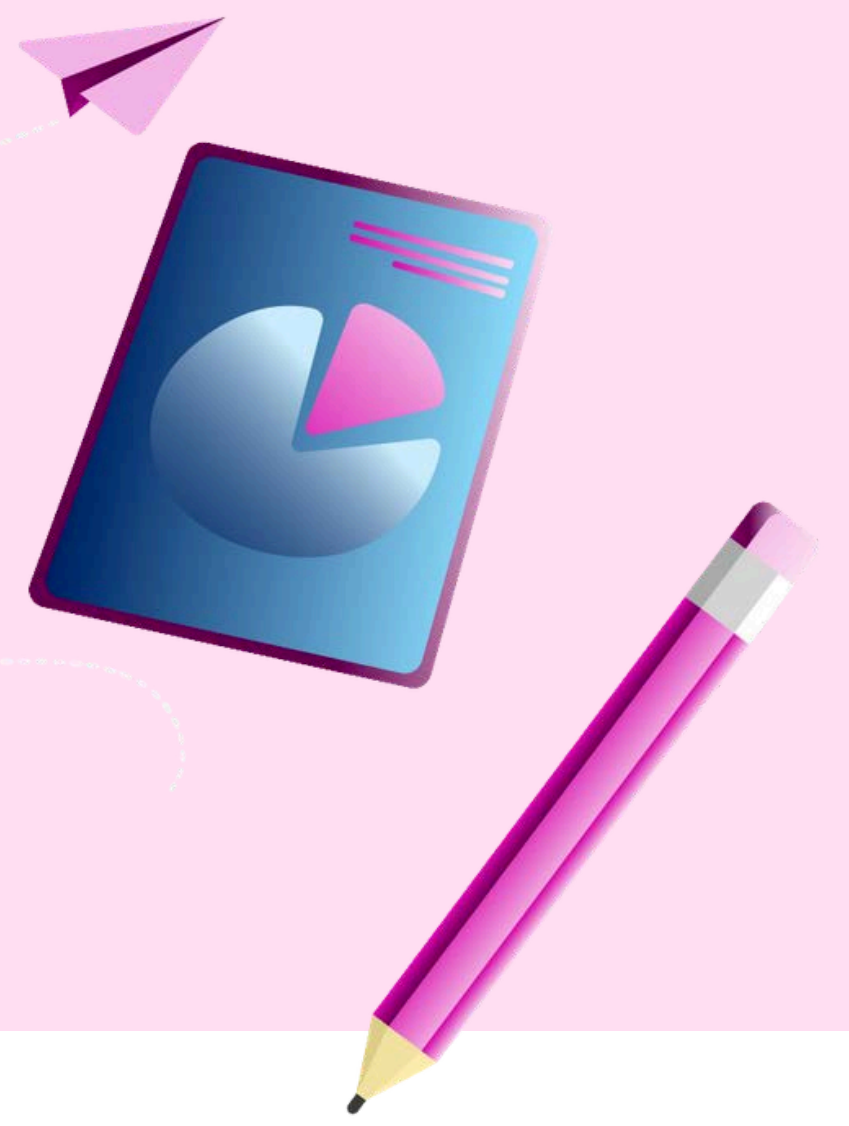
Member for Parramatta

Award Categories

- Vocational Student of the Year
- VET Trainer/Teacher of the Year
- VET in Schools Student of the Year
- School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year
- Trainee of the Year
- Apprentice of the Year



Message from the Regional Manager



Western Sydney & Blue Mountains

The Western Sydney and Blue Mountains region is a dynamic and rapidly evolving landscape.

This area includes major metropolitan centres such as Parramatta, Blacktown and Penrith, extending west to the Blue Mountains and east to Leichhardt, while also encompassing the Hawkesbury and The Hills Shire.

Spanning diverse urban growth corridors and unique regional landscapes, this region plays a vital role in New South Wales' economic future. It is home to a large and growing youth population, alongside strong and vibrant First Nations communities whose cultural knowledge and perspectives are essential to the region's identity and ongoing development.

Vocational education and training are central to supporting key industries, including major transport and construction projects, logistics, advanced manufacturing, health, and professional services. Significant developments, such as the expanding infrastructure pipeline and new health facilities including the Rouse Hill hospital project, highlight the increasing demand for a skilled and adaptable workforce.

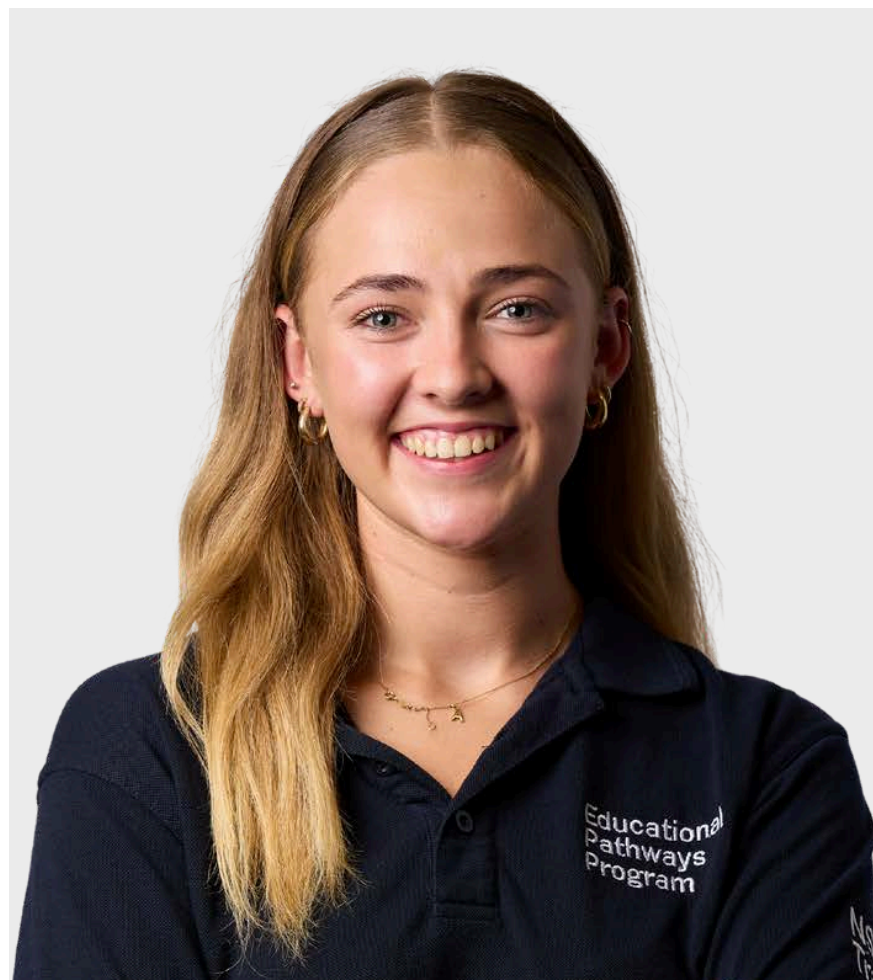
Our focus remains on creating inclusive pathways that empower young people and First Nations learners to access meaningful education and employment. Through strong partnerships with industry, community, and government, we are committed to fostering opportunity, driving innovation, and ensuring the region remains a thriving hub of growth and excellence.

Noeleen Alchin

**Western Sydney & Blue Mountains Regional Manager
Regional Training Services**

Meet Our Masters of Ceremonies

Helping us celebrate tonight are our fantastic Master of Ceremonies — passionate ambassadors for Vocational Education and Training. Having undertaken their own VET journey, they embody the transformative power of vocational education and are proud representatives of its impact.



Ammaleah Astruc

Whilst working at KFC, Ammaleah completed a school-based traineeship and earned a Certificate III in Retail, building strong foundations in customer service, safety, and teamwork - skills that continue to underpin her career.

Driven by a passion for learning and development, she progressed from team member to Internal Marketing Officer at KFC Australia, contributing to campaigns like KFC Games and Christmas in July across KFC's internal network with over 65,000 team members.

Ammaleah is now an Account Executive at global creative agency Ogilvy, working from an advertising lens to support national brand and retail campaigns for KFC. Ammaleah remains curious and driven by a passion for continuous learning and growth.

Holly Zaccaria

Holly Zaccaria is an accomplished young leader, having won the 2022 VET in Schools Student of the Year award during her time at Catherine McAuley High School studying a Certificate II in Business.

Holly's dedication to excellence and commitment to her studies have been evident throughout her education journey.

She is currently in her final year of a Bachelor of Business at Macquarie University, where she continues to demonstrate strong academic and leadership skills. Holly's passion for learning and community engagement make her a wonderful role model for students and attendees alike. Her achievements and ongoing dedication perfectly position her to help guide and energise tonight's event.



WHO WE ARE

Apprenticeships Are Us is a trusted Group Training Organisation supporting apprentices and employers across a wide range of industries. We provide employment, training coordination and ongoing support from commencement through to completion.

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employed with
Apprenticeships Are Us
across 5 states**

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**BUILDING SKILLS.
CREATING CAREERS.
SUPPORTING APPRENTICES.**

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- Employ and support apprentices and trainees
- Connect apprentices with host employers
- Coordinate nationally recognised training
- Provide ongoing mentoring and support

02 9891 6900

www.apprus.com.au

info@apprus.com.au



Apprenticeships Are Us (ARU) is a trusted Group Training Organisation supporting apprentices and employers across NSW. ARU provides end-to-end apprenticeship and traineeship services across a wide range of industries, including trades, engineering, business, early education and retail.

By employing apprentices directly and partnering with host employers, ARU ensures apprentices receive consistent support from commencement through to completion. This includes employment and payroll management, training coordination with approved Registered Training Organisations, and ongoing mentoring to help apprentices succeed in the workplace.

ARU works closely with employers to build strong, compliant apprenticeship pathways while helping apprentices develop practical skills, confidence and nationally recognised qualifications. With a strong focus on long-term outcomes, ARU supports school leavers, mature-age apprentices and career changers to build meaningful and sustainable careers. To learn more about apprenticeship opportunities or hosting an apprentice, visit Apprenticeships are us - www.apprus.com.au

“Be not afraid of greatness.

Some are born great. Some achieve greatness. And some...
have greatness thrust upon them.” William Shakespeare



We believe every child has the potential for greatness. At Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese, greatness isn't defined by competition or status. It is found in the growth of a student who is encouraged to thrive, not just in academic achievement, but in character, purpose and belonging.

We are a community, and you're welcome here. That's what makes Catholic education truly special. Our faith and values shape a culture of compassion, inspiration and connection, where the gifts of every student, every family and every teacher is valued. Across our 80 schools, we're united by a shared commitment to enrich the lives of our students through education grounded in excellence, inclusivity and Catholic tradition.

Our teachers are more than educators - they are mentors, supporters, and champions of potential. They are committed to their vocation to help each student grow in faith and learning. To inspire individual growth and development, where young people are provided with opportunities to flourish.

At Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese, students are encouraged to aim high, give more, and grow into their fullest potential through an education that celebrates the richness of our diverse communities in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and nurtures a deep sense of belonging.



**Catholic Schools
Parramatta Diocese**
Belong to something greater

parra.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) is a network of 80 primary and secondary schools serving communities across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

A recognised leader in Vocational Education and Training (VET), CSPD delivers high-quality, industry-aligned programs that equip students with practical skills, nationally recognised qualifications and real-world experience. This excellence has been acknowledged through an Australian Training Award for Small Training Provider of the Year and multiple NSW Training Awards. From School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships at CathWest Innovation College to industry-connected learning across its schools, students gain hands-on experience and valuable workplace skills while completing their HSC.

"We are incredibly proud of the outstanding achievements of our VET students across the Diocese," said Jack de Groot, CSPD's Chief Executive Officer. "Their success highlights the strength of our vocational education programs and reflects our commitment to providing high-quality, future-focused pathways for young people. CSPD is proud to be recognised as a leader in this area."

Learn More: parra.catholic.edu.au



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Supporting Infrastructure Through Skills and Innovation

Health & Safety Advisory Service Pty Ltd (#91141) has been a cornerstone of infrastructure training over the last two decades, delivering high-quality, tailored training and assessment solutions across metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW. As a NSW Smart & Skilled High Performing Provider, we specialise in high-risk, work readiness & pre-employment programs and full qualifications, including apprenticeships and traineeships.

Our strong partnerships with infrastructure leaders – such as SafeWork NSW, Sydney Water, Transgrid, Ausgrid, Transport for NSW, major Tier One contractors and their subcontractors – ensure our programs remain industry-aligned and outcomes-focused.

A proud contributor to Infrastructure Skills Legacy Projects, HSAS plays a key role in closing skills gaps and supporting workforce diversity. Our standout SBAT Civil Construction Traineeship initiative, developed with CathWest, CPB and Gamuda, offers senior secondary students valuable on-site experience.

With a strategic presence in Greater Western Sydney, HSAS is committed to building a skilled workforce to support sustainable infrastructure for future generations.



Congratulations

TO ALL 2026 REGIONAL FINALISTS

WE WISH YOU THE BEST OF
LUCK





Vocational Student of the Year Finalist

Ashley Luscombe

Qualification

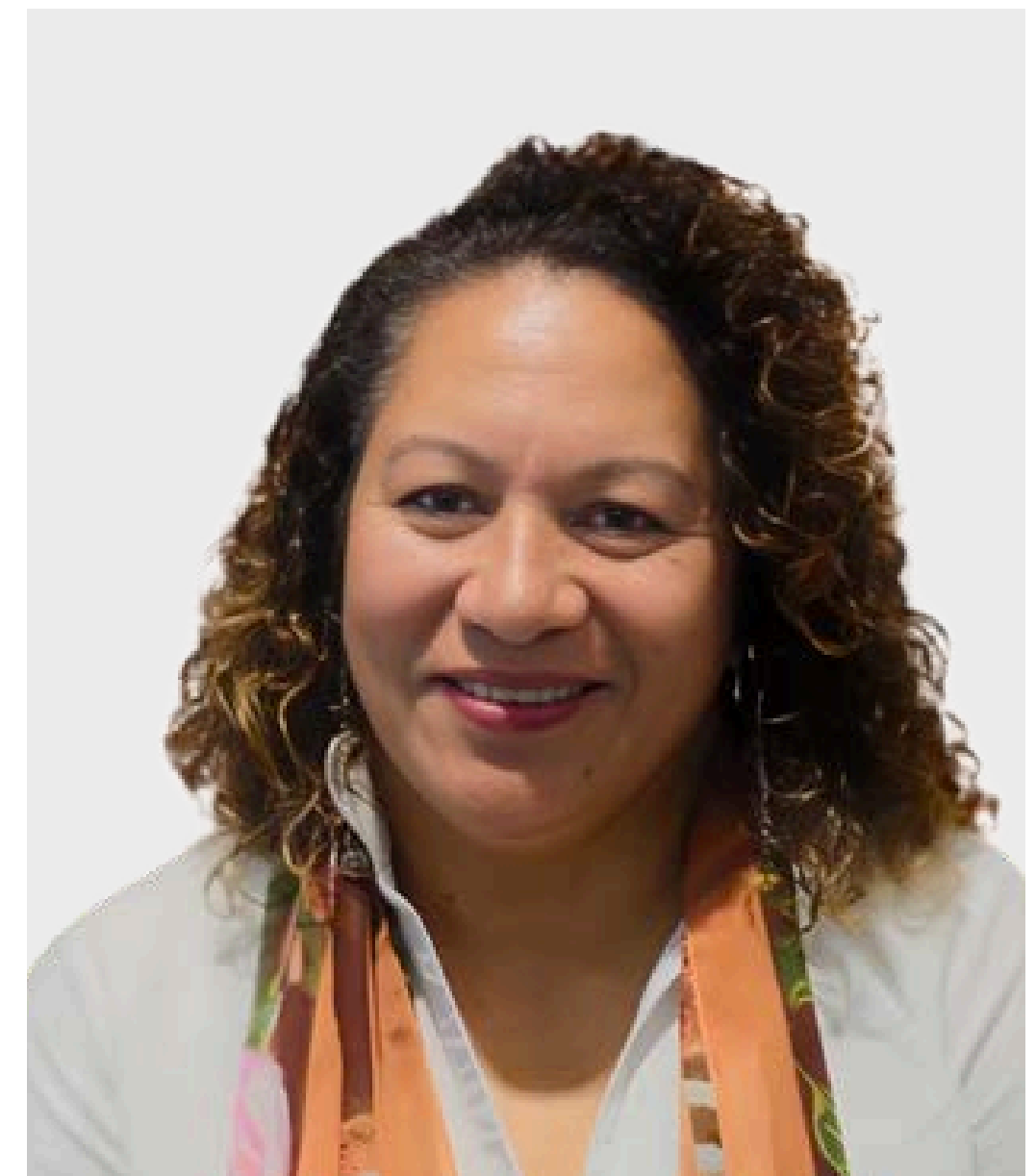
Certificate III in Individual Support

Training Provider

ARC Training

Employer

Rogue Industries



Ashley Luscombe has completed a Certificate III in Individual Support through ARC Training. She has consistently shown exceptional commitment, professionalism, and genuine care for others, earning the Student of the Month award. Ashley's trainers praise her thoughtful, high-quality work and positive attitude.

Drawing from her own life experiences, she approaches her studies and support role with compassion, empathy, and resilience. Ashley believes in treating vulnerable people with respect and dignity, empowering them to achieve their goals. Her training has equipped her with essential skills in communication, person-centred care, and teamwork, allowing her to confidently support clients with disabilities and mental health challenges.

She also willingly helps her peers, demonstrating leadership and generosity. Ashley's dedication to making a meaningful difference in the lives of others reflects her deep passion for mental health and disability support. She actively promotes learning, collaboration, and respect in all aspects of her work.

Vocational Student of the Year Finalist

Karen Portelli



Qualification

Certificate IV in Business

Training Provider

NSW Health RTO

Employer

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

Karen Portelli is an Administration Officer at Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District who has advanced her career through Vocational Education and Training. After completing the Certificate III in Health Administration in 2023, she progressed to the Certificate IV in Business in 2024, delivered by NSW Health RTO.

Karen excels at applying new skills to her role, notably improving processes with effective quality improvement strategies. Known for her organisation, punctuality, and strong communication, she fosters positive working relationships and supports colleagues with respect and encouragement.

Her dedication has strengthened her confidence, time management, and emotional intelligence, enabling her to handle workplace challenges and contribute meaningfully to team culture. Karen is a proactive learner who mentors others and promotes vocational education. Her professionalism and problem-solving ability make her a valuable team member and a strong ambassador for VET pathways in business administration.



VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year Finalist

Umanda Ferdinando

Field of Study

Financial Services

Employer

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese



Umanda Ferdinando is an exceptional VET Financial Services educator at St John XXIII Catholic College, Stanhope Gardens. With a Master of Business Administration, Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and significant industry experience, she brings deep vocational expertise and current financial services knowledge to her teaching.

In 2025, Umanda revitalised a Year 10 class by creating an accessible Accounting Module workbook and redesigning assessments to align with both VET competencies and HSC exam preparation. Her structured approach combining real-world examples, interactive activities, and targeted individual support, significantly increased student confidence and competency, leading to strong HSC results, including state prize recognition and full qualification attainment.

Umanda's commitment to differentiated instruction and continuous feedback ensures all learners receive the support they need. She actively promotes vocational education as a credible and aspirational pathway, fostering professionalism and industry readiness in her students. Umanda is a respected leader and advocate within the Financial Services VET sector.

VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year Finalist

Andrew Kerr



Field of Study

Manufacturing and Engineering

Employer

NSW Department of Education

Andrew Kerr specialises in manufacturing and engineering education. He leads the Vocational Innovation Centre, a partnership with TAFE NSW, driving innovative, student-centred VET programs. Andrew's leadership has significantly improved student retention and engagement, with rates nearly double the state average.

Known for designing personalised general capabilities reporting frameworks and embedding micro-credentialing, Andrew fosters strong partnerships with industry, TAFE, and universities to align programs with workforce needs. His commitment to professional development and collaborative learning communities supports teacher growth and program excellence.

Andrew's initiatives create authentic, real-world learning experiences that prepare students for meaningful pathways beyond school. His inclusive approach supports diverse learners and promotes continuous improvement at all educational levels. Recognised for his innovative leadership, Andrew exemplifies dedication to transforming vocational education and strengthening outcomes for students, staff, and partners in Western Sydney's educational community.



VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year Finalist

Danielle Nevin

Field of Study

Business Services

Employer

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese



Danielle Nevin is a highly experienced VET Business Services educator with over 20 years of teaching at Emmaus Catholic College. She combines deep industry knowledge with a comprehensive understanding of the Business Services Training Package to deliver engaging, competency-based lessons tailored to diverse learner needs. Danielle is known for her professionalism, clear communication, and ability to build supportive learning environments that foster student success.

As Leader of Learning for the HSIE faculty, she mentors early career teachers and coordinates professional experience programs, promoting continuous improvement and high academic standards. Danielle's innovative teaching includes practical, real-world projects such as the Business Services Innovation Showcase, which enhances student engagement and skill development.

Recognised with prestigious awards including the NSW Rotary Award for Teaching Excellence in VET and the Teachers Guild of NSW World Teachers Day Award, she is a respected leader and advocate who inspires students and colleagues alike with her dedication to vocational education and strong commitment to student outcomes.

VET in Schools Student of the Year Finalist

Andre Cauchi



Qualification

Certificate III in Business

Training Provider

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese

School

Santa Sophia Catholic College

Andre Cauchi is completing a Certificate III in Business through an accelerated VET course alongside senior students. He is recognised for his leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills, consistently producing high-quality work and actively seeking feedback.

His training combines practical workplace skills with classroom learning, covering topics such as workplace health and safety, sustainability, and policies. Andre's work placement enabled him to apply his skills to real tasks including managing documents, processing rent payments, scheduling meetings, and communicating professionally with clients.

He has developed confidence in public speaking, teamwork, and professional conduct, all essential for his long-term goal of working in law within a firm. Andre values clear communication, respect, reliability and initiative, which he demonstrates daily. His dedication and quiet confidence make him an excellent ambassador for vocational education and training, showcasing the real-world value of VET in preparing students for future careers.



VET in Schools Student of the Year Finalist

Georgia El-Khoury

Qualification

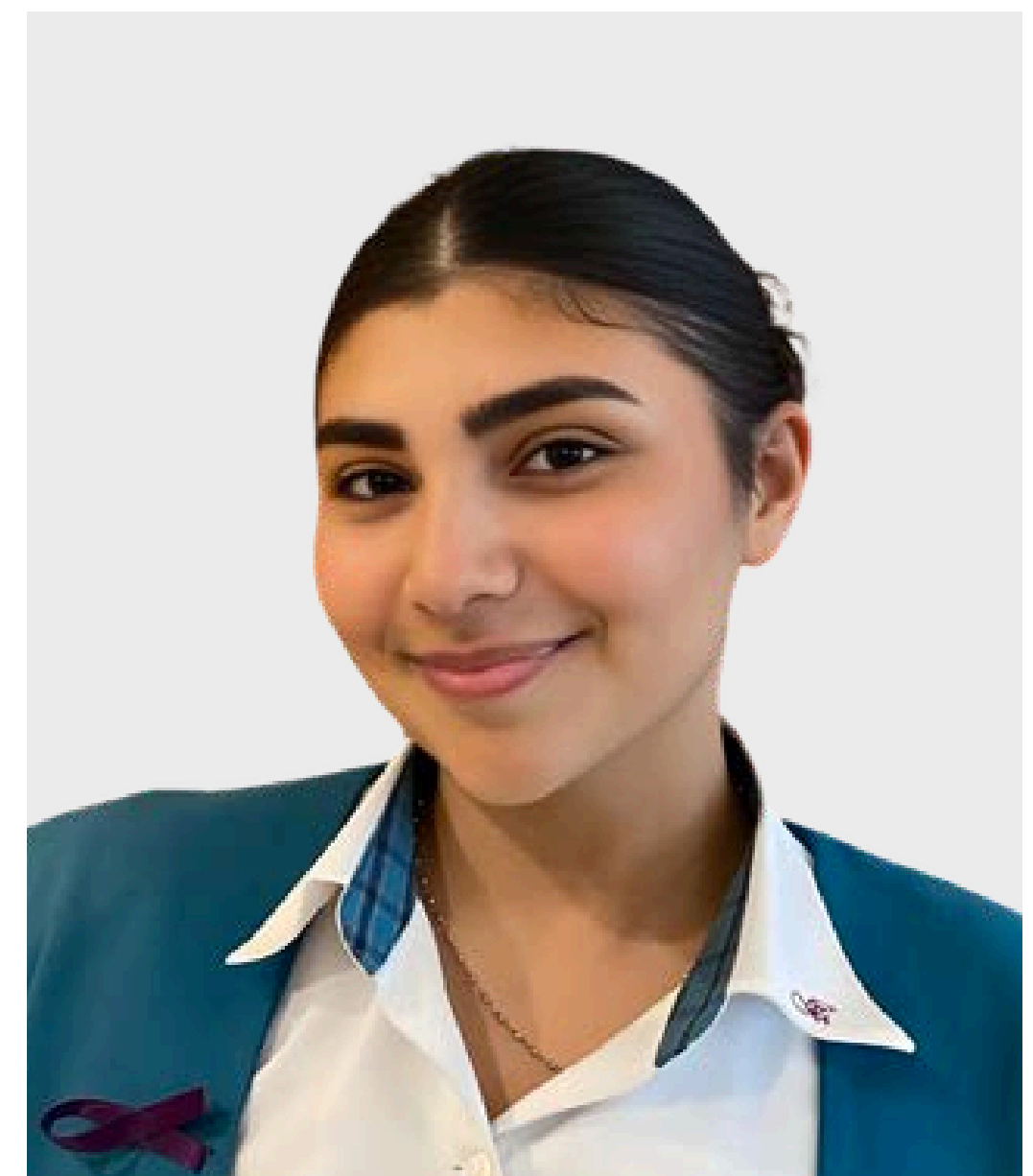
Certificate III in Business

Training Provider

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese

School

Catherine McAuley Westmead



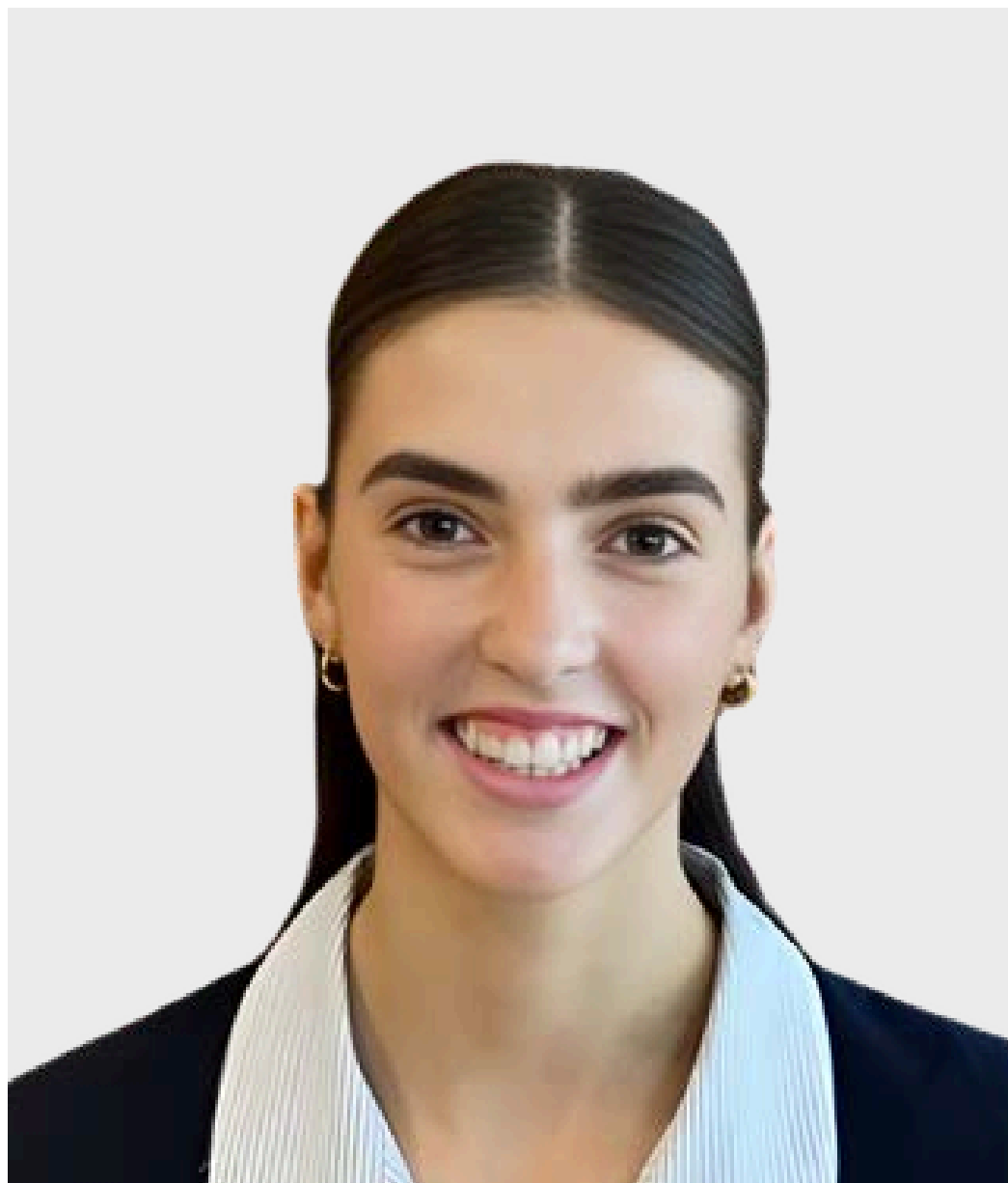
Georgia El-Khoury is a dedicated and professional student completing a Certificate III in Business through the Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese. She has demonstrated exceptional workplace skills, including communication, organisation, time management, and professionalism. During her work placement, Georgia was entrusted with meaningful responsibilities and praised for her initiative, adaptability, and strong work ethic.

Her VET training has increased her confidence, independence, and leadership in school activities. Georgia has a clear understanding of business operations and articulates the value of vocational education with authenticity and enthusiasm. She actively advocates for VET pathways among peers and younger students, highlighting how practical skills complement academic growth.

Beyond business studies, Georgia coaches karate, reflecting her resilience, mentoring ability, and commitment to personal growth. Her involvement in a national promotional video contest further showcases her teamwork and creativity. With strong skills and leadership, Georgia's professionalism and enthusiasm make her an excellent role model and ambassador for VET pathways.

VET in Schools Student of the Year Finalist

Ruby Moller



Qualification

Certificate II in Hospitality

Training Provider

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese

School

Marian Catholic College

Ruby Moller is a dedicated and mature leader completing a Certificate II in Hospitality through Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese while attending Marian Catholic College Kenthurst. As School Captain, she balances leadership responsibilities with academic and vocational commitments in an organised and thoughtful manner.

Ruby embraced hospitality training with enthusiasm, gaining practical skills through work placements. She quickly adapted to busy, customer-focused environments, demonstrating professionalism, effective communication, and teamwork. Ruby's experiences have strengthened her time management, resilience, and problem-solving abilities while boosting her confidence in handling diverse customer needs.

Though she plans to pursue occupational therapy or pharmacy, Ruby recognises how hospitality skills such as client-centred communication and adaptability will support her future. She actively promotes VET as a valuable pathway, encouraging peers to see vocational education as a positive and effective complement to academic study. Ruby's leadership, professionalism, and commitment make her an outstanding ambassador for vocational education.



School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Finalist

Hollie Casey

Qualification

Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician

Training Provider

TAFE NSW

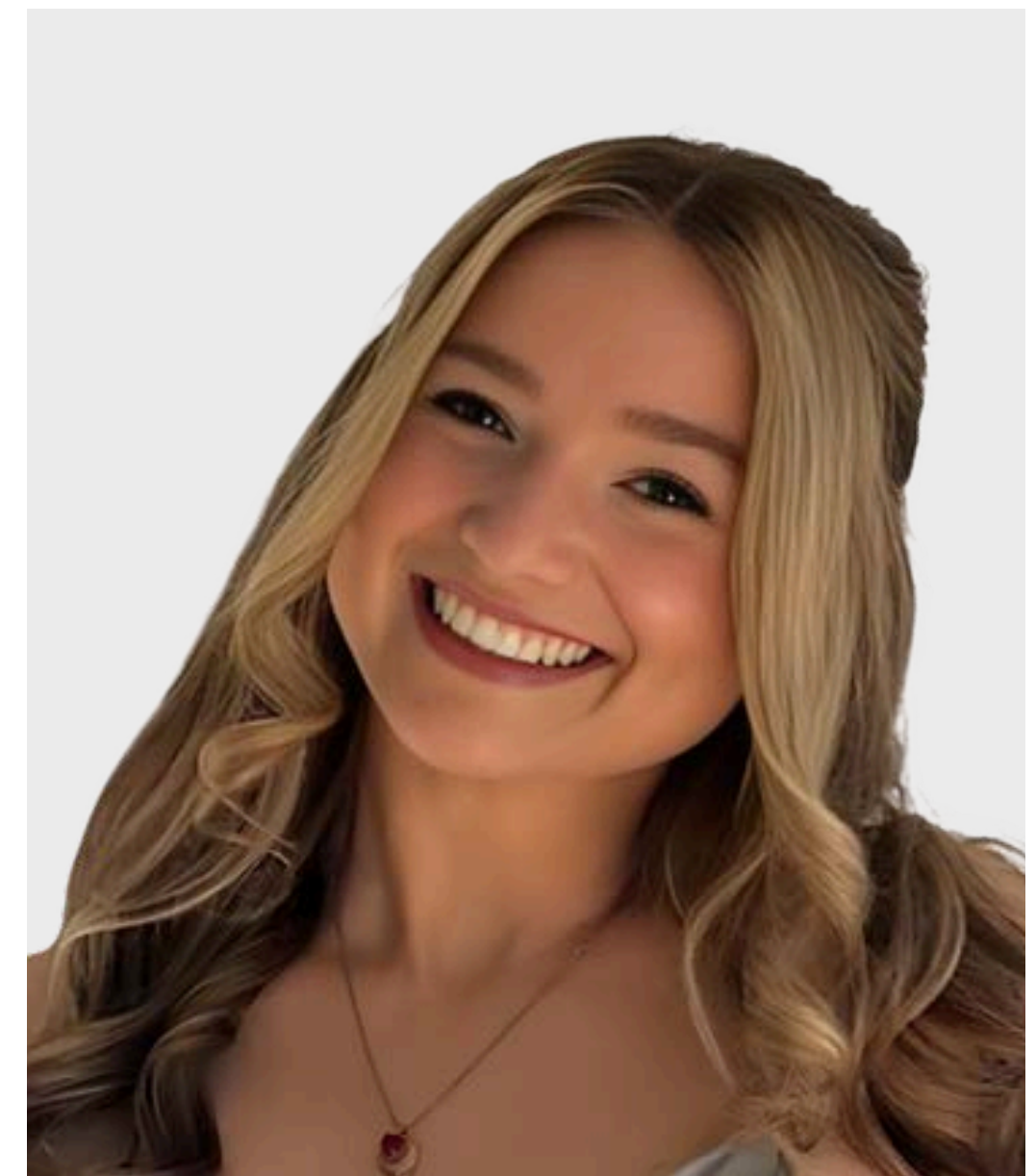
Employer

Servcore

School

Northmead Creative and Performing Arts

High School



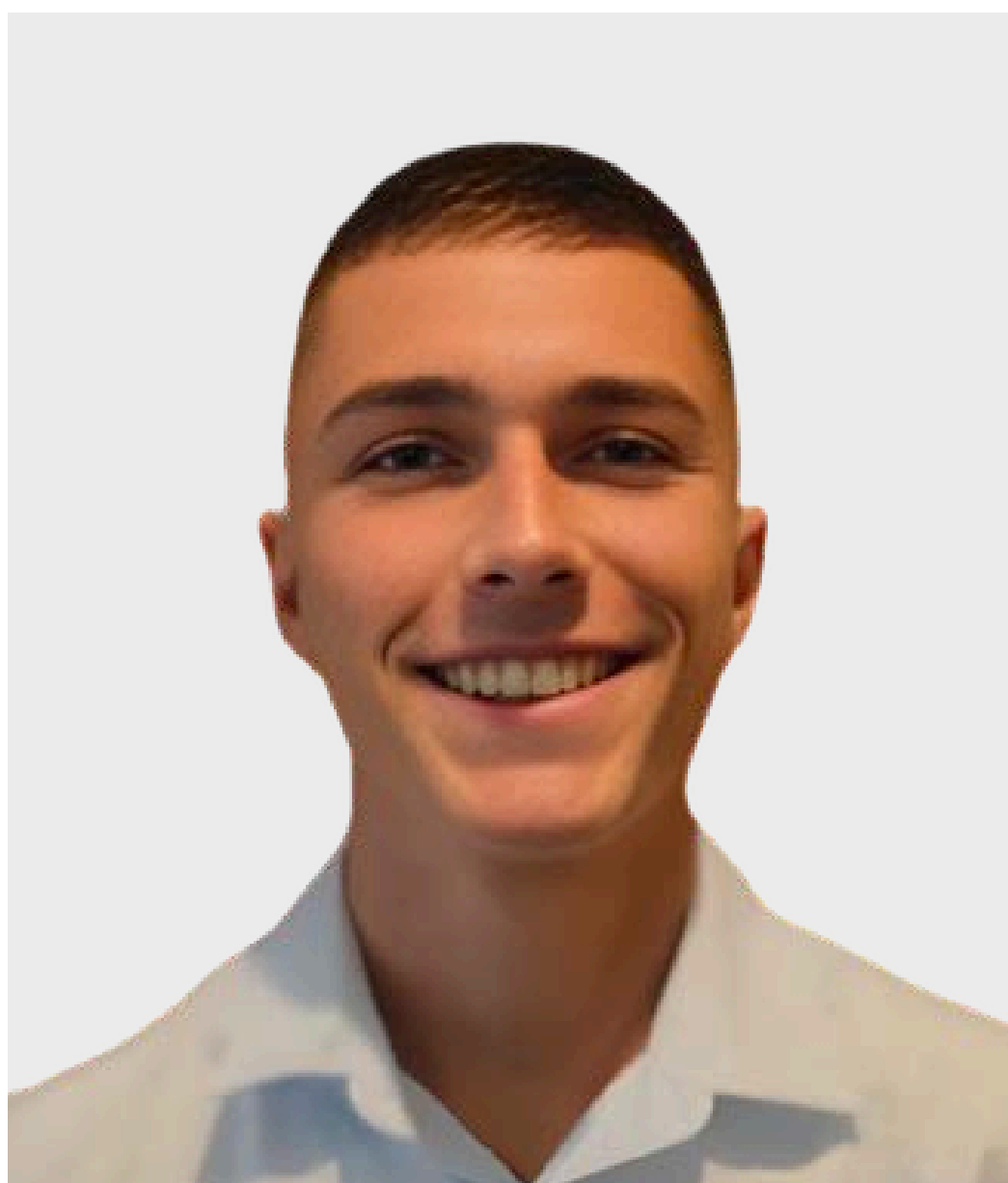
Hollie Casey is completing a Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician through a School-based Apprenticeship with Servcore and TAFE NSW. Since beginning, Hollie has shown exceptional commitment, balancing school, training and work with determination and strong organisational skills. She brings a positive attitude, resilience, and eagerness to rise to every challenge.

Hollie values teamwork and effective communication, often supporting her peers and contributing to a safe, efficient workplace. She was elected School Captain at Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School, reflecting her leadership and professionalism. Hollie's passion for electrotechnology was sparked by her desire to challenge stereotypes and pursue a fulfilling career in a male-dominated industry.

Through hands-on experience and TAFE study, she has developed technical expertise and confidence in problem-solving. Looking ahead, Hollie hopes to become an electrical engineer in the Australian Defence Force. Her dedication, skill, and leadership make her an inspiring ambassador for vocational education and the electrotechnology industry.

School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Finalist

Kalan Markson



Qualification

Certificate III in Carpentry

Training Provider

TAFE NSW

Employer

Bradali Building Services

School

CathWest Innovation College McCarthy Campus

Kalan Markson is completing a Certificate III in Carpentry through a School-based Apprenticeship with Bradali Building Services and TAFE NSW. Since beginning in September 2024, Kalan has gained valuable hands-on experience on real worksites including home renovations and first-floor additions in the Lower Blue Mountains area.

His passion for carpentry began in early childhood, inspired by his great-grandfather and projects in his workshop. Kalan approaches his apprenticeship with maturity, a strong work ethic, and excellent time management. He effectively balances school, training and work responsibilities while demonstrating pride in his craftsmanship.

Kalan enjoys working closely with experienced carpenters who provide one-on-one mentoring, helping him build confidence and refine his skills. He values teamwork, problem-solving, and clear communication on site. Kalan has also undertaken a Certificate III in Business to support his long-term goal of running his own carpentry business. His dedication, reliability, and positive attitude make him a respected apprentice and an ambassador for the School-based Apprenticeship pathway.



School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Finalist

Ava Schofield

Qualification

Certificate III in Retail

Training Provider

McDonald's Australia Ltd

Employer

McDonald's

School

Xavier College



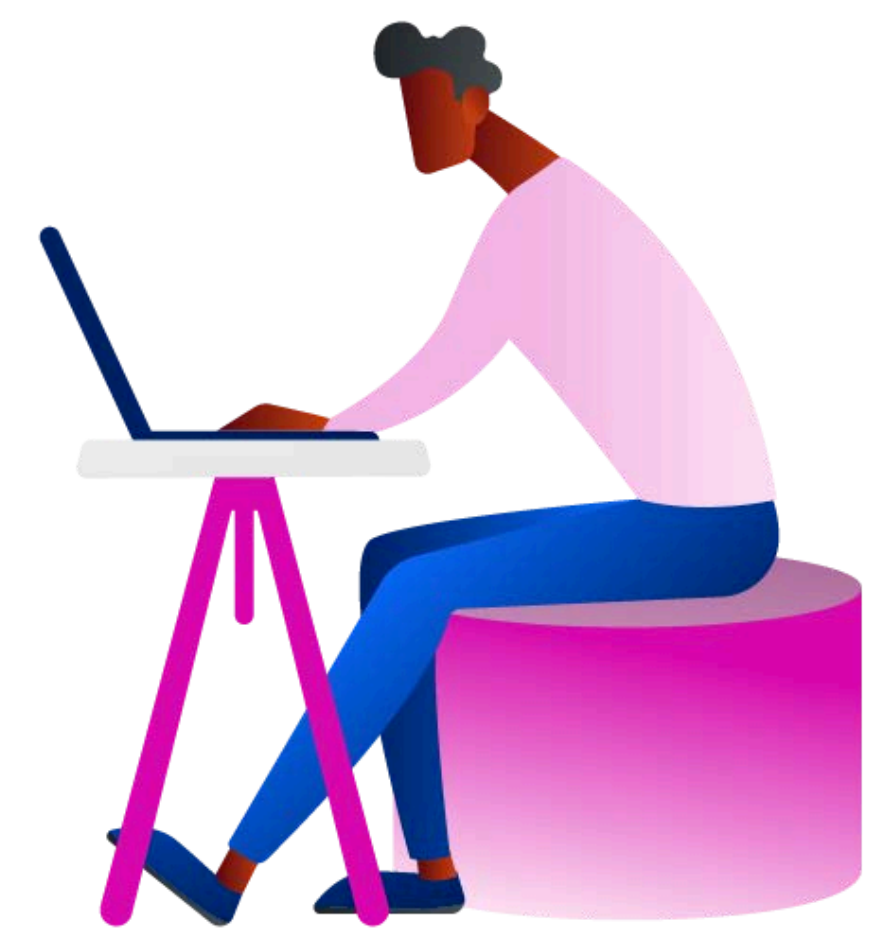
Ava Schofield is currently completing a Certificate III in Retail through a School-based Traineeship while working at McDonald's. Since starting in November 2023, Ava has shown dedication and maturity, excelling in both her studies and workplace. Motivated by a passion for people-focused environments, she has developed strong skills in customer service, communication, and problem solving.

Working in a fast-paced setting has helped Ava build resilience, adaptability, and teamwork. In January 2026, she was promoted to Crew Coach, where she trains new employees and supports team performance, demonstrating leadership and professionalism. Ava has balanced her traineeship with school and extracurricular commitments, including leadership roles in netball and volunteering in community programs.

Her confidence, independence, and work ethic have grown throughout her training, making her a respected member of both her workplace and school community. Ava is an inspiring example of how vocational education provides valuable skills and pathways for young people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Finalist

Jessica Barton



Qualification

Certificate III in Business

Training Provider

Western Sydney University The College

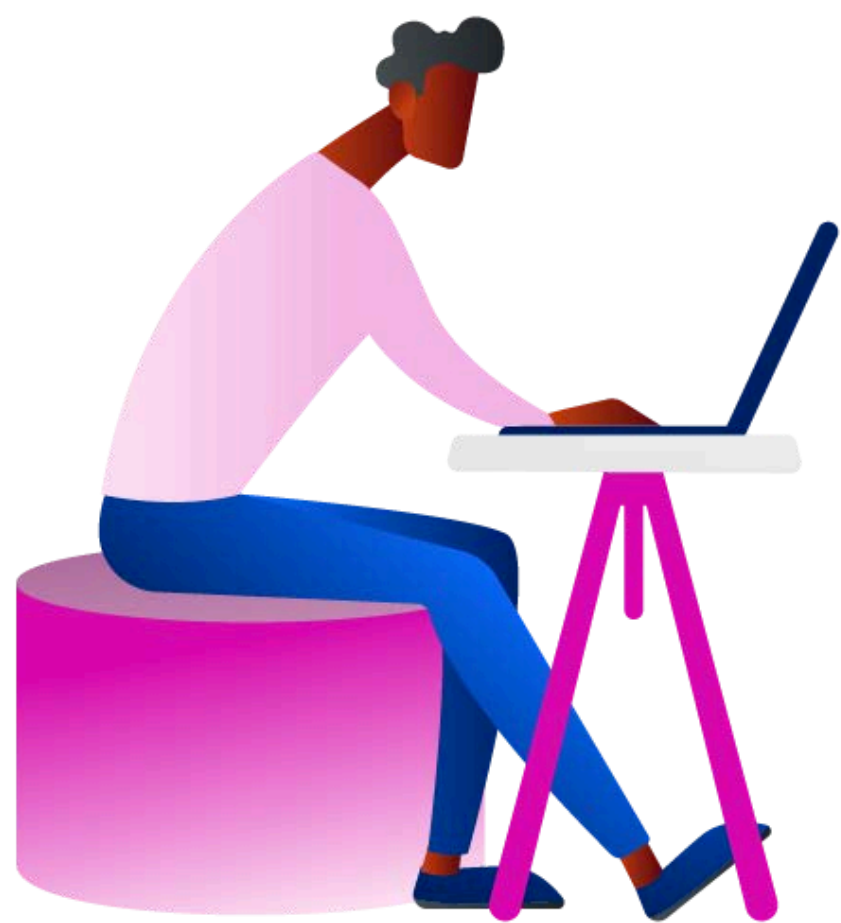
Employer

Western Sydney University

Jessica Barton completed a Certificate III in Business through the Ignite Indigenous Traineeship Program at Western Sydney University. Employed within the University's Office for People, she has gained valuable practical skills while balancing full-time work and structured study. Jessica's dedication and willingness to embrace challenges have enabled her to support key projects, including the development of the Wumarra Indigenous Mentoring Program, where she contributed ideas that ensured cultural respect and relevance.

As a committed team member, she has offered peer support and played a key role in fostering a connected learning environment. Jessica's leadership was recognised through her role as valedictorian at graduation and participation in the Igniy program promotional video, experiences that boosted her confidence and showcased her growth.

Her traineeship has strengthened her organisation, communication, and problem-solving skills while deepening her connection to Indigenous culture within the workplace.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Finalist

Lowanna Ellis

Qualification

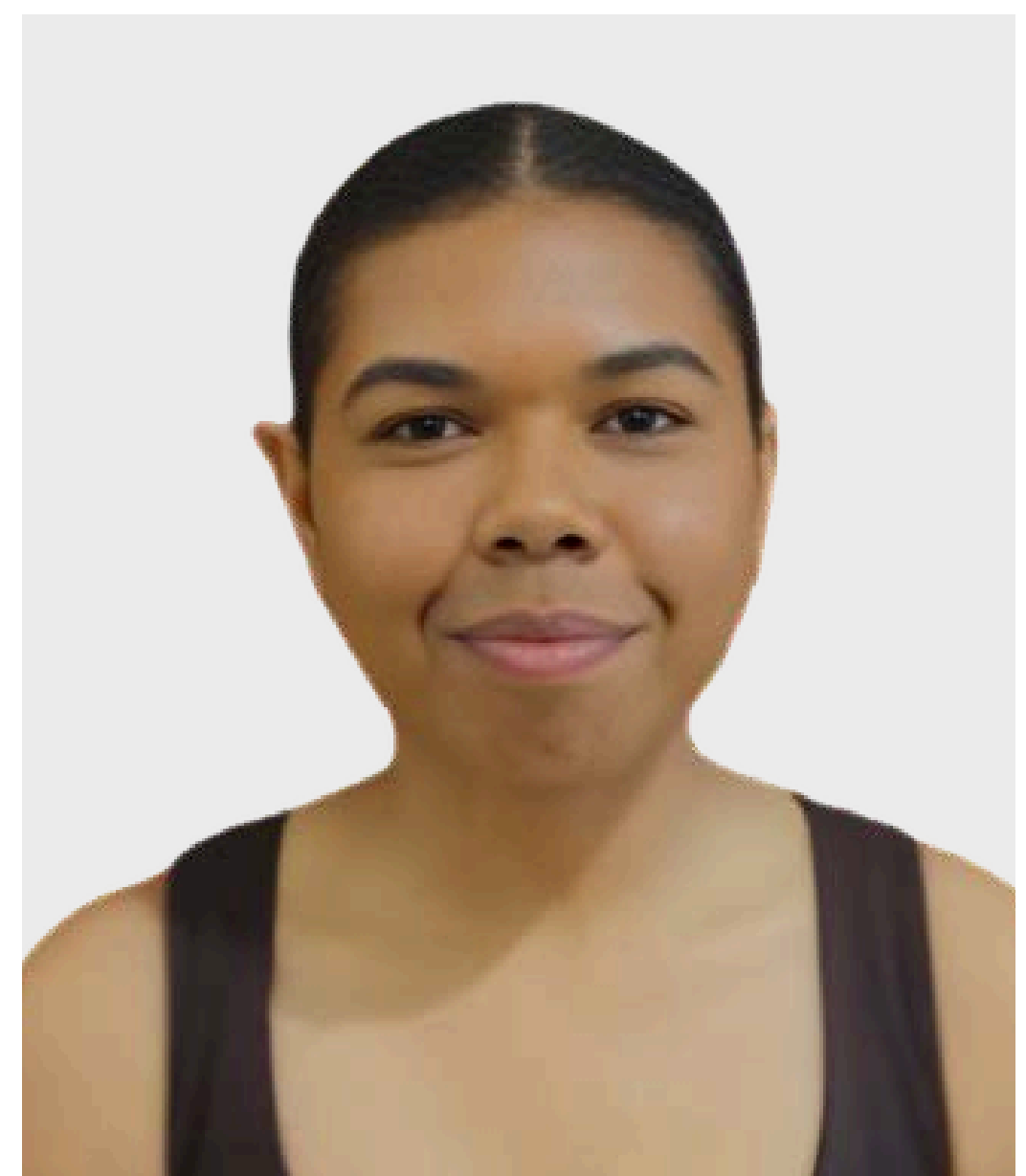
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education
and Care

Training Provider

KARBEN Training Solutions

Employer

The Learning Jungle



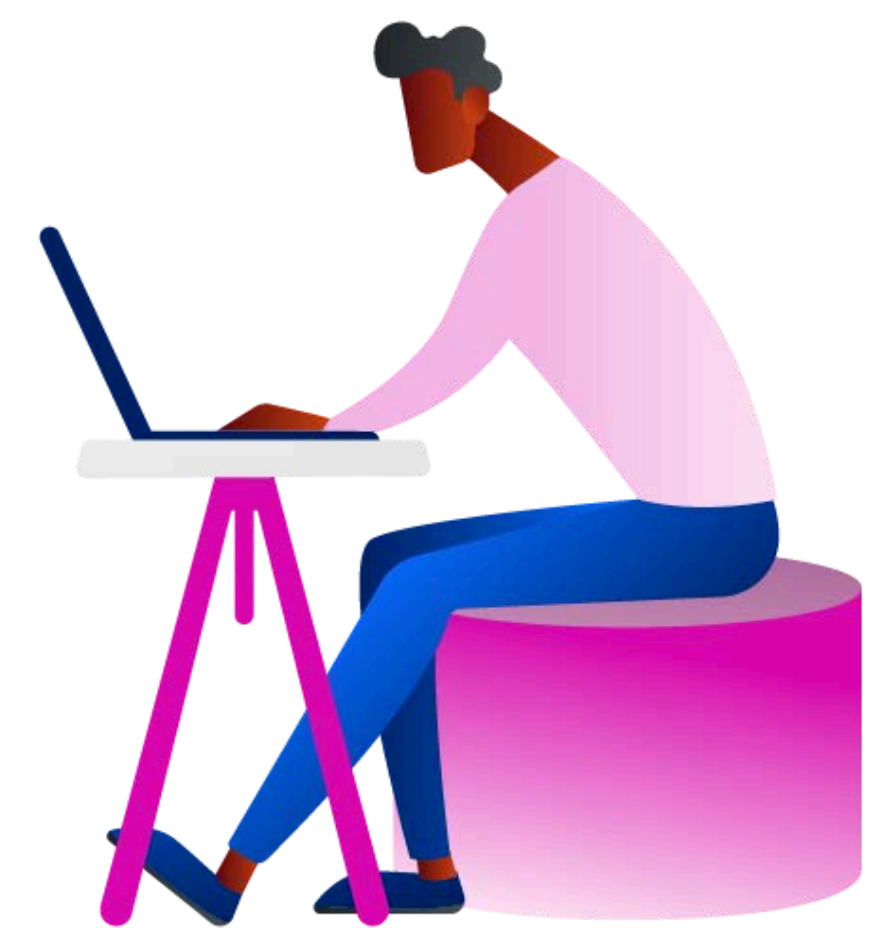
Lowanna Ellis recently completed her Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care through a traineeship with The Learning Jungle and KARBEN Training Solutions. As a proud young Aboriginal woman, Lowanna has grown in confidence and professionalism, becoming a role model in her workplace and community. Despite initial challenges with study demands, she overcame hesitation through tailored support and perseverance.

Known for her compassionate and intuitive care, Lowanna creates safe, nurturing environments that promote learning and wellbeing. She actively integrates Aboriginal culture into her work, enriching children's experiences through storytelling, cultural symbols, and play. Lowanna's dedication earned her a role as Inclusion Support Educator, where she supports children with additional needs.

Now undertaking her Diploma, she continues to develop her skills and leadership potential. Lowanna's journey reflects cultural pride, resilience, and commitment to quality education and care, making her a valued educator.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Finalist

Aaliyah Kearney



Qualification

Certificate III in Business

Training Provider

Western Sydney University The College

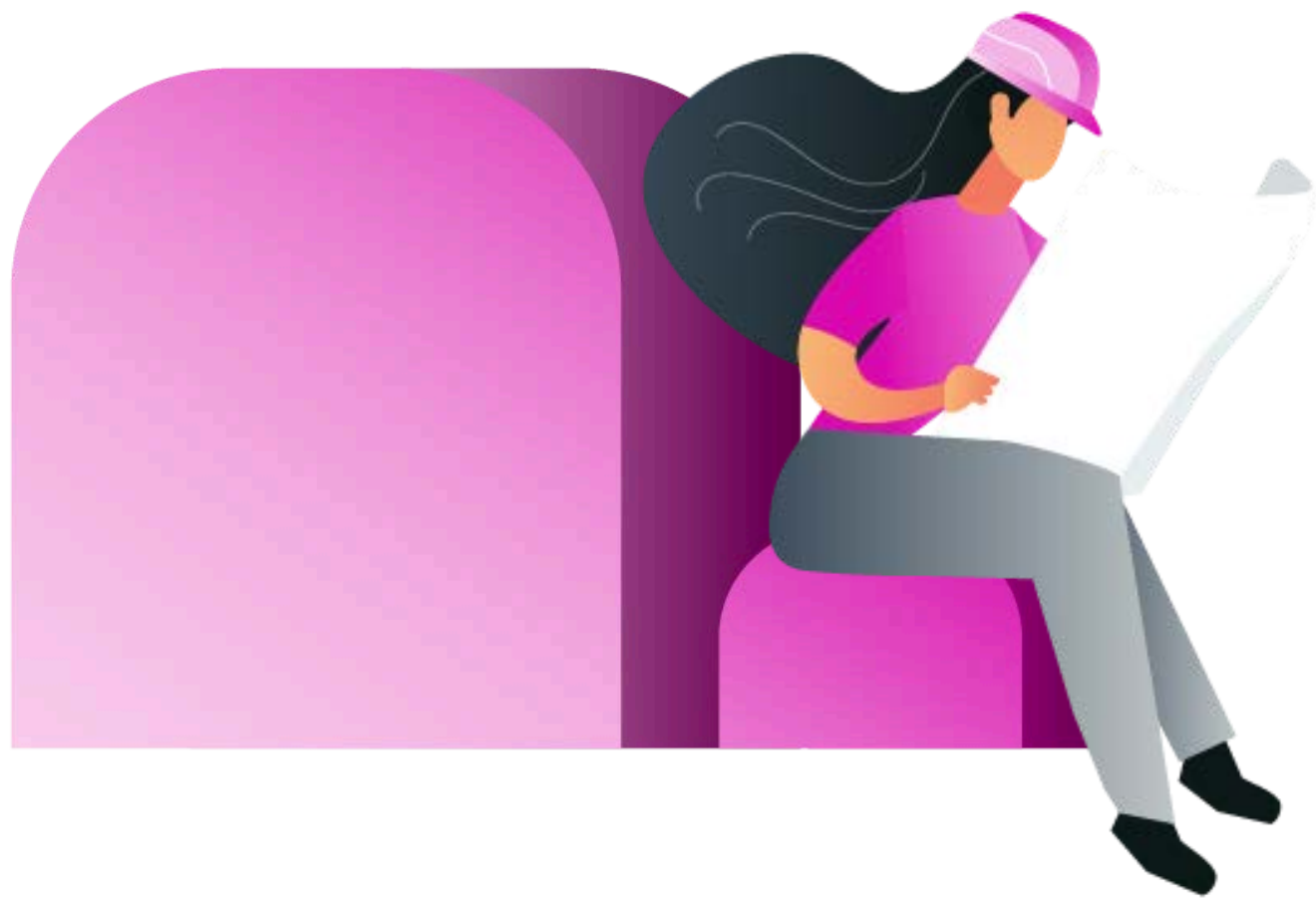
Employer

Western Sydney University

Aaliyah Kearney is a proud Wiradjuri, Ngiyampaa, and Yorta Yorta woman who has completed a Certificate III in Business through the Ignite Indigenous Traineeship Program at Western Sydney University. Employed in the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching, Aaliyah has demonstrated exceptional professionalism, cultural leadership, and dedication to learning. She has actively contributed to enhancing cultural awareness within her workplace, notably delivering the Acknowledgement of Country at major university events.

Aaliyah's traineeship combined formal study with hands-on experience, helping her develop strong skills in business administration, stakeholder engagement, and communication. Her commitment earned her the Local Achievement Award and secured a permanent administrative role. She continues to build on her professional journey by undertaking a Certificate III in Accounts Administration, balancing full-time work with study.

Known for her teamwork, clear communication, and passion for vocational learning, she is a respected member of her team and an inspiring example of cultural strength and career dedication.



Trainee of the Year Finalist

Amelia Gray

Qualification

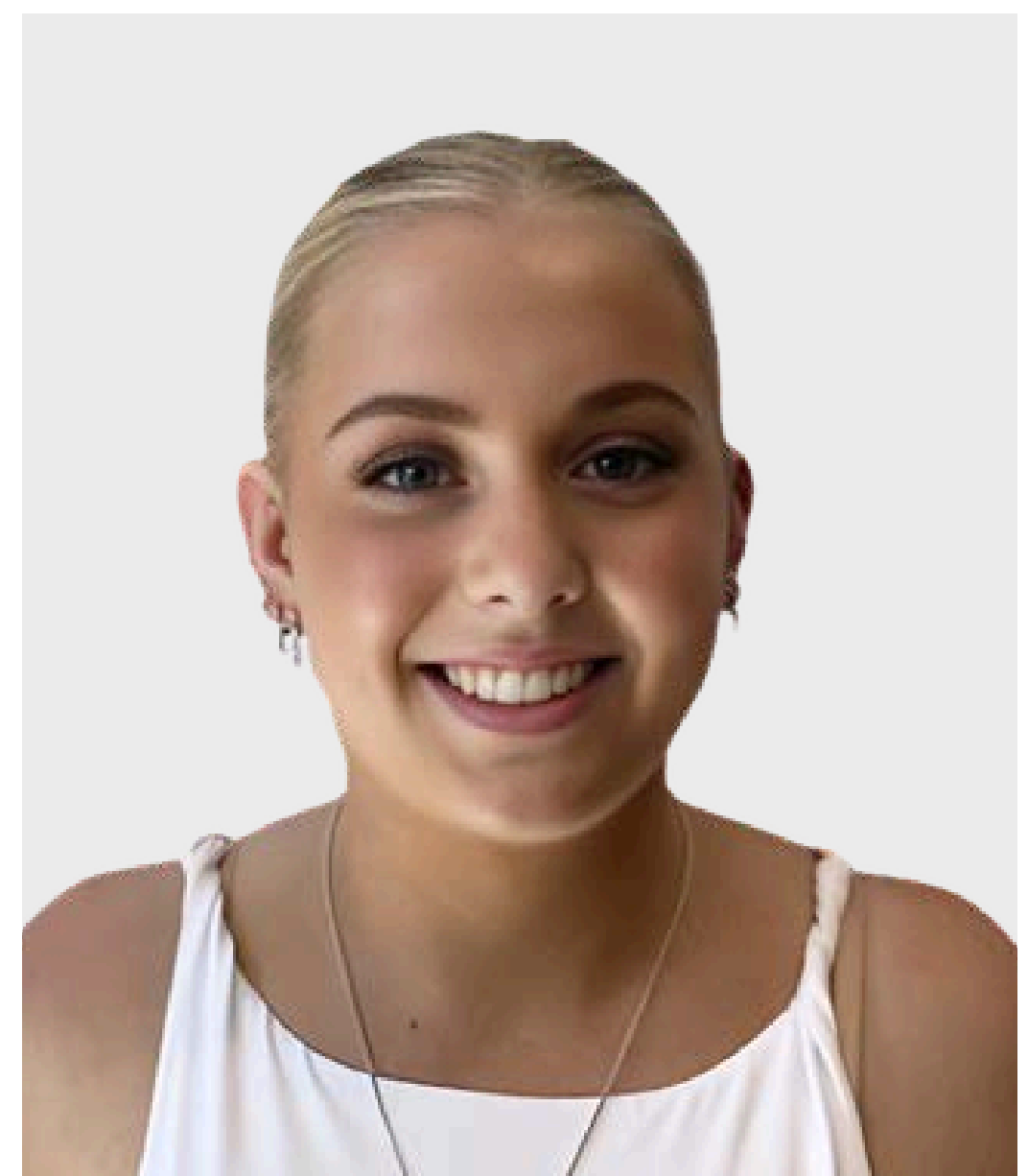
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education
and Care

Training Provider

International Child Care College

Employer

Little Angels Early Learning Centre



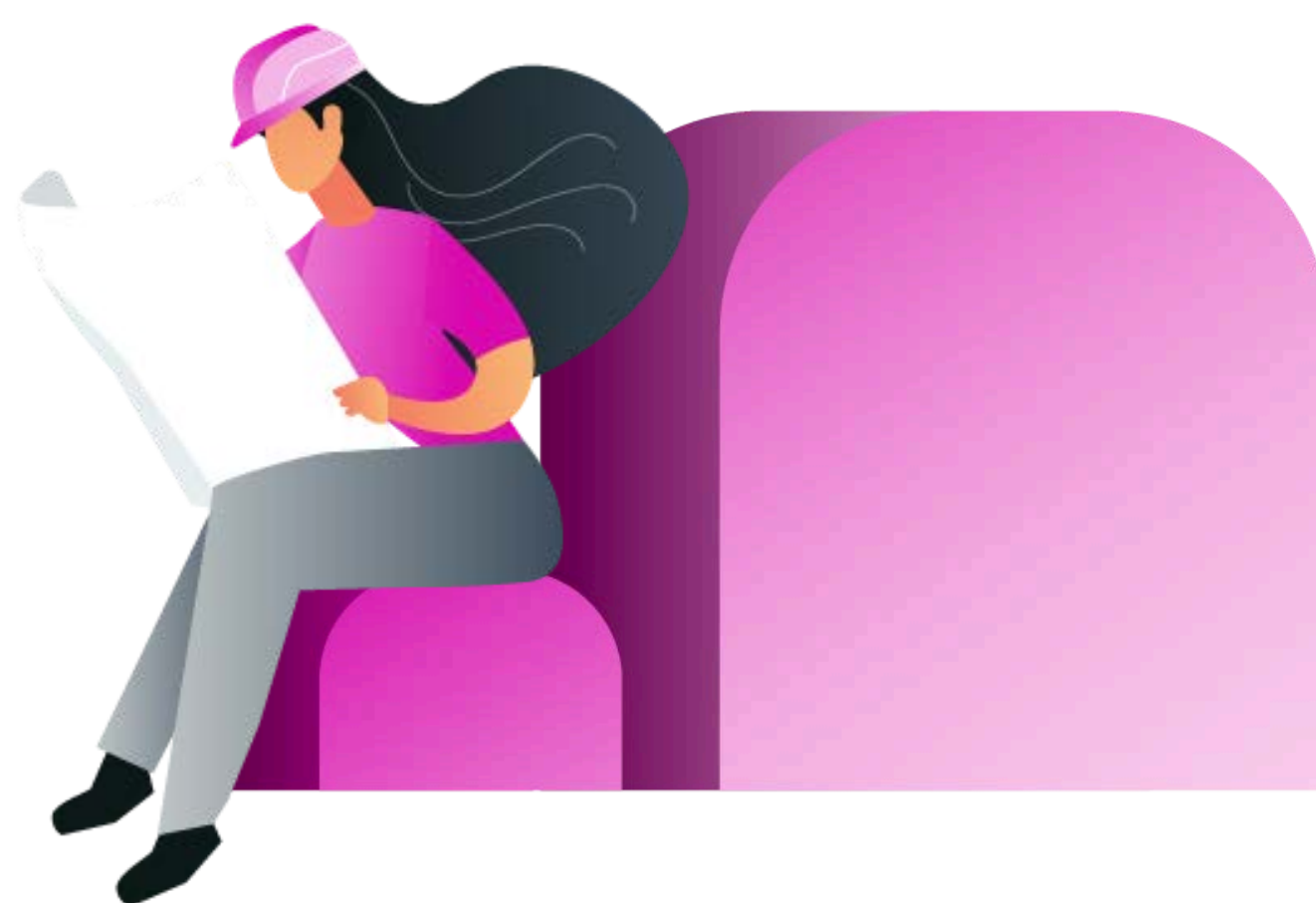
Amelia Grey holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, which she pursued as a valuable learning opportunity. She chose the childcare industry because she loves watching children grow, learn, and reach important milestones. Amelia enjoys nurturing and supporting children, believing that both educators and children teach each other. Working in childcare has given her a joyful and motivating environment.

She studied at International Child Care College, gaining hands-on experience alongside theoretical learning. Amelia sees childcare as a stepping stone to future career goals such as management, university studies, and ultimately becoming a paediatric occupational therapist. Her training taught her essential skills like teamwork, communication, time management, and problem-solving.

Despite challenges and stigma as an early school leaver, Amelia persevered with determination. She has contributed fresh ideas to her workplace and developed a deeper understanding of children's diverse needs, including those on the autism spectrum. Amelia is motivated to continue supporting children as they grow into amazing individuals.

Trainee of the Year Finalist

Ruby Leauma



Qualification

Certificate III in Business

Training Provider

Zeal Futures Learning

Employer

Zeal Futures

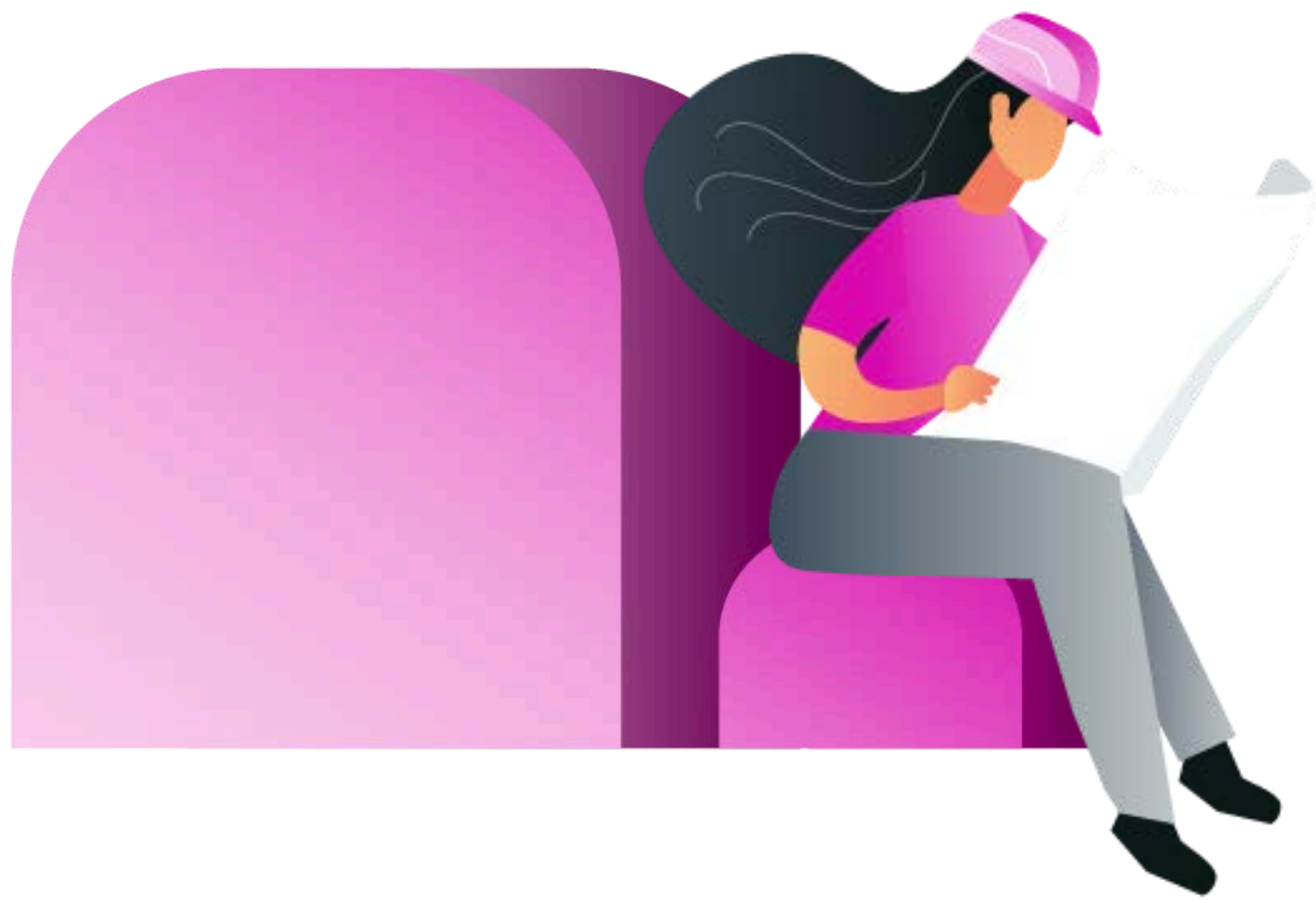
Host Employer

Service NSW

Ruby Leauma completed a Certificate III in Business through Zeal Futures Learning while working as a Digital Service Representative trainee at Service NSW. She chose this traineeship to gain practical customer service experience and build transferable business skills. Ruby developed strong teamwork, communication, and organisational abilities, regularly assisting hundreds of customers with empathy and professionalism.

She mastered complex transactions and adapted quickly in a fast-paced environment. Ruby's training reinforced her skills in verbal and written communication, customer engagement, and business systems, building her confidence in high-pressure situations. She also took on informal leadership roles by mentoring new trainees and helping them settle into the workplace.

Despite balancing work, study, and family commitments, Ruby achieved outstanding results and completed her qualification ahead of schedule. Her dedication and maturity earned her full-time employment at Service NSW. Ruby actively promotes vocational education and traineeships as valuable pathways to meaningful careers and professional growth.



Trainee of the Year Finalist

Chantelle Mistic

Qualification

Certificate IV in Project Management Practice

Training Provider

Australian College of Commerce & Management

Employer

ARCway Careers

Host Employer

Linde Material Handling



Chantelle Mistic completed a Certificate IV in Project Management Practice, building on a strong foundation established with a Certificate III in Business. She completed her traineeships through ARCway Careers at Linde Material Handling, where she demonstrated exceptional dedication and growth.

Chantelle thrives in the fast-paced, innovative material handling industry, supporting business operations and project coordination. Her training enhanced her skills in planning, organisation, stakeholder engagement and risk management, enabling her to manage complex tasks independently, such as coordinating forklift module programming and dispatch.

Known for her strong communication and teamwork, Chantelle consistently applies her learning to real-world challenges, contributing valuable outcomes to her team. She balances full-time work and study with resilience and excellent time management. Recognised for her motivation and professionalism, Chantelle was awarded Student of the Month twice during her training. With her experience and proactive approach, she exemplifies the positive impact that vocational education and training can have on career development and workplace success.

Apprentice of the Year Finalist

Jonathan King



Qualification

Certificate IV in Aeroskills (Avionics)

Training Provider

TAFE NSW

Employer

Airbus Australia Pacific Limited

Jonathan King completed his Certificate IV in Aeroskills (Avionics) with Airbus Australia Pacific Limited. As an adult apprentice, Jonathan has demonstrated exceptional maturity, technical skill, and dedication to maintaining avionics, communication, navigation, and electrical systems on C130J aircraft. His work is vital to the Australian Defence Force, supporting missions such as evacuations and humanitarian aid.

Jonathan's strong commitment to safety and documentation is matched by his passion for continuous learning. He consistently exceeds training requirements, achieving a high distinction average and proactively seeks further professional development. Beyond his technical abilities, Jonathan has shown leadership as an employee representative on Airbus's Enterprise Bargaining Committee and mentors new apprentices.

His journey from casual work to a skilled aircraft maintenance engineer has been supported by a dedicated team and his family's resilience. Jonathan embodies professionalism, integrity, and teamwork, making him a respected figure in the aviation maintenance community.



Apprentice of the Year Finalist

Joshua Murray-Fitzpatrick

Qualification

Certificate III in Cabinet Making and Timber
Technology

Training Provider

TAFE NSW

Employer

Peerless Joinery



Joshua Fitzpatrick gained a Certificate III in Cabinet Making and Timber Technology completed through an apprenticeship with Peerless Joinery while studying at TAFE NSW. Joshua's interest in woodworking began at home with simple furniture repairs and quickly grew into a passion for crafting quality pieces.

Throughout his training, he consistently exceeded expectations, demonstrating strong leadership and impressive skills in both design and hands-on cabinetmaking. Joshua values the practical, hybrid learning model, which allowed him to apply theory directly in the workplace and solve real-world challenges, such as innovative joinery techniques.

He thrives in team environments and recognises the importance of collaboration to achieve excellent results, as shown in his role in a complex kitchen fit-out project. Joshua's dedication, curiosity, and pride in his craftsmanship mark him as a respected figure among his peers and educators. He looks forward to creating quality, tailored cabinetry that enhances clients' homes.

Apprentice of the Year Finalist

Lara Tamer



Qualification

Certificate III in Hairdressing

Training Provider

TAFE NSW

Employer

Salon Kiin

Lara Tamer holds a Certificate III in Hairdressing from TAFE NSW, graduating in January 2026. Her passion for hair began at a young age, inspired by tutorials and practicing on family and friends. After completing Year 12 in 2021, she pursued an apprenticeship and began working at Salon Kiin in early 2022, where she found a supportive and reliable team.

Her training covered all aspects of hairdressing, including cutting, colour techniques, chemical treatments, client relations, and health and safety. Lara is recognised for her solid understanding of industry standards, excellent consultation skills, and commercial awareness. Over time, her confidence has blossomed in both technical skills and client communication. She has introduced new techniques like curly cuts and men's styles to her workplace and enjoys sharing knowledge with junior team members. Lara values kindness, accountability, and teamwork in creating positive experiences for client and colleagues alike.

Thank You



On behalf of the Western Sydney & Blue Mountains Regional Training Awards team, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your generous support and involvement in this year's program and event. Your contribution played a vital role in celebrating the achievements of our region's outstanding VET learners, trainees, apprentices, employers, and training providers.

Your commitment to fostering excellence in vocational education and training inspires future generations and strengthens our local workforce. We are truly grateful for your support and look forward to continuing this important work together.

Thank you once again for helping make the Western Sydney & Blue Mountains Training Awards a success.

