

Workplace's sought for Youth Employment Programme work experience

The Central Otago Youth Employment Programme is seeking prospective businesses to take on students for work experience.

The pilot which has been running just four months, is a new initiative, to develop a coordinated learning pathway targeting students who are disengaged from learning in a typical schooling environment.

Pilot Manager, Melanie Mills says the aim is to personalise a vocational pathway for these students. To find out what they are passionate about and might like to 'do' and then help them get there.

“As we know, school isn't for everyone. This is for any young person who has become disengaged from their learning, for whatever reason.”

At the moment students must be enrolled at Dunstan High School or Cromwell College and aged between 13-16. The programme has an education focus, with a structured and supported pathway into local employment.

“We would like to see our young people supported so that they have options in their future. I'll be looking at what qualifications can be obtained within their programmes of work. So they will remain enrolled at school, and must complete work that links to their NZQA or NCEA goals - ideally gaining level one literacy and numeracy. I'll also work with the students on their “employability skills” like communication, resilience, and teamwork,” she says.

The pilot which runs for 18 months, will work to build a successful infrastructure that can be sustained after the project, to hopefully be picked up throughout Central Otago.

Two students are currently enrolled in the programme and receiving support from local businesses.

“It has been amazing the willingness of people and businesses so far. And we are looking for continued backing to provide a range of opportunities for these students.”

Both students currently in the programme, are passionate about what they want to do in the future. The experience gained thus far has assisted them in determining their career path. In large part this is thanks to the people that give them a chance and an opportunity to experience varying roles.

HR and Health and Safety Manager at VinPro, Rebecca Corkin is in full support for the project, and when appropriate has volunteered their business.

“School isn't necessarily the right thing for everyone, it was never for me. In all my roles I have been given opportunities to build my skillset and with an enthusiasm to learn, I have worked my way to where I am today. If VinPro could offer someone else an opportunity to gather that hands on experience, we would happily do so,” she says.

The students spend four days a week learning in the workplace, and one day in school which goes towards their NZQA or NCEA goals. This is flexible depending on the student's, and the workplace's needs. But the workplace should be prepared to commit to a student for a set period of time.

Melanie stresses the focus needs to be on the learning and development of the student. Part of building self-efficacy in young people is for them to be valued, so they should be encouraged to participate in full.

The pilot is being coordinated through Cromwell College and Dunstan High School, supported by Central Lakes Trust. Chief Executive Susan Finlay encourages workplaces to consider how they might be able to support the pilot and benefit the students in our region.

"Please get in touch with Melanie to talk with her about the opportunity," says Susan.

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ABOUT THE CENTRAL LAKES TRUST

Central Lakes Trust is a charitable trust supporting our community, by granting funds for charitable purposes throughout the Central Lakes district.

Annually, approximately \$6-9 million is granted to community organisations throughout the Trust's funding region, which spans most of Central Otago and Southern Lakes.

Since inception in 2000 the Trust has grown its asset base from the \$155m bestowed by the Otago Central Electric Power Board to assets totalling \$360m, and granted over \$86 million, into a wide range of community projects and services.