

Trades desperate for more trainees

Easy to view what a career might involve

TANIA BAWDEN

CHECKING out a person practising a trade has just become easier. The Federal Government's \$22 million SkillsOne campaign is up and running, with digital videos of tradespeople at work showing at the website and on Foxtel pay-TV community channel Aurora.

Brian Wexham, the chief executive of the associated industry-backed Institute of Trade Skills Excellence, said the campaign supports the need for more trade apprentices and vocational skills.

"Trades and skills are still areas where we have to try to change perceptions," he said in Adelaide yesterday. "Parents and school counsellors still often hold up universities as the pinnacle of career aspiration. Technology has vastly changed trades over the past 20 years - mechanics are now automotive electricians, for example, because of changes in car-making."

Employment opportunities available on the Careerone.com.au national job network can now be accessed at www.skillsone.com.au

News Digital Careers chief executive Stephen Hollings said the venture was a "good fit" for the News Limited employment print and online network with its strength in the vocational skills sector.

"Out of 65,000-70,000 jobs listed on the website at any one time, there are about 25,000 jobs which relate to the various vocational skills sectors," Dr Hollings said.

The website helped both job-seekers and employers.

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CAREERONE EDITOR

AN urgent call has gone out to employers to take on apprentices as young people leap back into traditional trades.

In all, trade apprentice and trainee numbers in South Australia have jumped 12 per cent from 11,729 to 13,110 in the past three years, according to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

The largest group, automotive, as well as the agricultural/horticultural and wood and textile trades, showed falls in people in training between 2003 and 2006.

However, there were strong rises in participation levels in:

MECHANICAL and fabrication engineering, up 22 per cent to 1588 (360 apprentices completed their training in December, 2006).

ELECTRICAL and electronics trades, up 58 per cent to 2131 (329 completions last year).

FOOD trades, up 11 per cent to 1591 (381 completions 2006).

PRINTING trades, up 3 per cent to 225 (62 completions 2006).

HAIRDRESSERS up 13 per cent to 912 (200 completions 2006).

CONSTRUCTION trades up 45 per cent to 2519 (496 finished 2006).

The Master Builders Association group training scheme is seeking more employers willing to train apprentices, with 205 trainees on its books this year.

More employers are needed to meet the skills gap, MBA state chief executive Robert Steward said.

"The building and construction industry itself has to take a greater role and recognise its responsibility to 'host' apprentices and tertiary students with more on-the-job training opportunities," he said.

The industry faced a critical la-



BUILDING A CAREER: Apprentice Beau Beaumont with Damien Kolen. Picture: MORNE de KLERK

drift of workers into defence and mining, a forecast 60 per cent shortfall in trained tradespeople had been forecast by 2014.

Kolen Carpentry owner-manager Damien Kolen said he was receiving "a call a day from people who want to come out and work".

"So I am advertising for another carpenter before I can take any more apprentices," he said.

Mr Kolen's Trinity Gardens company employs 10 carpenters and eight apprentices and is one of the

