



Apprentice Life Skills initiative wins Victorian Training Award

Melbourne, 31 August 2015 – An initiative to reduce apprentice drop-out rates, focusing on life skills, has won a 2015 Victorian Training Award.

The Life Skills Program, developed by the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC), received the Victorian Employer Award for Apprentice Development.

Nigel Muller, Manager VACC Auto Apprenticeships, said the Life Skills Program was designed to help first-year apprentices address life's challenges.

"We're addressing issues that impact upon a young person's apprenticeship that occur outside of normal working hours," Mr Muller said.

Over 280 apprentices have completed the VACC Life Skills Program since its inception in 2013, and Mr Muller said retention rates have improved significantly.

"While we already had higher retention rates than other group training providers, we found that a significant number of apprentices were leaving in their first year. Feedback indicated that personal reasons were often to blame for this," Mr Muller said.

The VACC Life Skills Program involves a series of classes which assist first-year apprentices in areas such as financial management, drugs and alcohol, communications, relationships and automotive technical training.

"Most apprenticeships offer a chance to learn how to fix a car or spray a vehicle body, but in terms of life skills, young people are often left to find out the hard way," Mr Muller said.

Employers are reporting considerable success with the Program, as apprentices stay with their host and are better equipped for life outside of the trade.

Mr Muller said skills shortages affect over 36 per cent of Victorian automotive businesses, a figure which is expected to rise.

"We're glad to have received the Award, and it's a recognition of the VACC Auto Apprenticeships team, who are so committed to their apprentices and make sure they can stick with their training," Mr Muller said.

Steve Herbert, Victorian Minister for Training and Skills, congratulated the winners of the Awards, held on Friday 28 August as part of National Skills Week.

"Each of the winners demonstrates how quality training is supporting people from across our state to develop the skills they need for the job they want," Mr Herbert said.

VACC is Victoria's peak automotive industry body representing more than 5,000 small business members.

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