

Construction job builds trade skills



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ABOUT 60 students from various local high schools have been rounded up to construct a timber site office for next year's massive AUSTimber forestry and timber expo, while taking a leap towards further education into the future.

The students, from Grant High School, Kingston Community School, Millicent High School, the Independent Learning Centre and Naracoorte High School, are tackling the project through the Building Trades Doorways 2 Construction Trade Training Course.

The program, better known as Building Trades, assists students in entering the building and construction pathway at Certificate I and II level to help address future trade strategies in the South East.

With AUSTimber 2012 approaching, Chapman Herbert Architects were approached to help with the design of a site office for the event near the Mount Gambier Airport and students were invited to take part in the construction.

AUSTimber manager David Quill said the expo was not just about the forestry industry promoting their products, but also about promoting careers in the industry.

"At the previous AUSTimber expo in 2008 we looked at ways of getting young people involved in careers in the timber and forestry industry, so when the architects suggested we get the students involved in

constructing the site office, we thought it was a great idea," Mr Quill said.

"They will be building the site office with raw timber so it would have the smell and feel of timber from ceiling to floor."

Students will construct panels of framing, single side sheet lining and cladding under trade supervision to be pre-fitted with electrical and data conduits for transport and erection on site in a modular framework to be bolted together.

Sections will be produced at three campuses and provide up to 500 square metres of interior and exterior wall space for promotion of different timber products.

Building Trades coordinator Mick Neu said the project would help students meet some of the requirements towards a Certificate I in construction and earn them SACE points, but the initiative would also benefit the community.

"After the expo, it is going to stay in the community," Mr Neu said.

"We are in the process of negotiating with two local sporting clubs, so it may be used as a clubroom or changing room by a sporting club."

The products for the construction of the site office have been donated by various local timber businesses.

GETTING READY: Year 11 and 12 school students Taylor Walker-Matthew (front, left), Jake Schutz, Luke Thomson and Mitchell Gowland, pictured right, stack the timber they are going to use to construct a site office for next year's AUSTimber expo.

Picture: ANELIA BLACKIE.



Mental health program 'falls victim' to own success

A PROFESSOR has given his public endorsement for an Anxiety Disorders Association South East (ADASE) program, but the organisation is still facing a battle for funding despite the encouragement.

Flinders University Associate Professor in Psychiatry Malcolm Battersby credits ADASE's Great Step Forward program with bringing much-needed psychological relief and support to the region.

"Its success is its consumer-led approach," Professor Battersby said.

"While the professionally-trained practitioner is vital to the sufferer's recovery, people respond incredibly well to guidance from someone who has trod the path before them, and that's what we see being presented from this South East-based organisation, which has reached an international standard," he said.

ADASE has just held its annual general meeting and members were advised that while South East mental health professionals and general practitioners were referring their

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clients to them, the organisation had had little success in gaining sufficient funding for the programs.

Great Step Forward combines tuition from the UK-based Mind Over Mood Manual with the experiences of ADASE's founder Helen Williams - a recovered sufferer.

Since the program's inception in 2007, people achieved some life-changing results, such as overcoming anxiety disorders and depression, according to Ms Williams.

But she said the sustainability of the consumer-led group depended on future funding, which is becoming increasingly hard to attract, even though practitioners within the system are referring people to ADASE at an increasing rate.

Ms Williams said ADASE was becoming a victim of its own success.

"The committee of volunteers, most of whom are recovered anxiety sufferers, continue to run the workshops by contributing their own time, energy and, sometimes, expense," she said.

"The future attraction of the program to a community in need of mental health treatment is certainly assured, however continued lack of meaningful funding gives it a shaky future, which is particularly strange, given the nod of approval that it receives from the profession."

While currently leading the 15th Great Step Forward Program, Ms Williams was re-elected as chief executive at this year's annual general meeting.

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