

THOUSANDS ATTEND JOBSKILLS EXPO!

Students from all secondary schools across the Latrobe Valley joined more than 2,700 young people from across Gippsland to attend the biggest JobSkills Expo to be staged in the region.

More than 110 exhibitors provided a showcase of careers at Warragul's Lardner Park with hands on activities in areas such as bricklaying, carpentry, hospitality, health, horticulture, agriculture, millinery, beauty, retail, mining, electrical engineering, children's services and more.

The Gippsland Jobskills Expo was organised by Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning and Employment Network (BBLLEN), and Latrobe Valley Local Community Partnership in conjunction with a number of providers across the region. Funding support from 14 organisations including Local Government, EIV, AGA, and DHS.

BLLLEN's Lisa Tulloch-Briggs said this year's expo had exceeded expectations with record numbers of students, schools and exhibitors attending as well as being open for the first time to the general community.

"This year's event brought together three smaller expos previously held in each municipality into one super JobsSkills Expo. This extended opportunities for students to see and experience a larger and diverse range of career and training opportunities available in Gippsland and further afield."

"By pooling resources from across municipalities the Expo Committee was able to utilise funding to provide free bus transport to every student to and from the expo.

"While transporting 2,700 students from areas across Gippsland was a major logistical exercise it significantly increased student participation and removed any barriers students may face because of distance."

CEO Mick Murphy said conducting the one major expo also attracted increased numbers of exhibitors from Melbourne and all parts of Gippsland because of the volumes of students that organisations can reach at the one event.

"This combined Gippsland JobSkills Expo attracted more exhibitors than the Melbourne Herald Sun Expo which underlines the support and value organisations see in being part of it.

"It is a great platform for employers to reach young people and show them the varied career opportunities available. This year, a full-day program of seminars was added to enable young people to delve deeper into their career interest areas and learn more about skills shortage areas. A number of young workers also spoke about their own pathway into employment, their working life and schooling."

SP Ausnet set up model power grids on table to interactive dioramas to give students the chance to practically solve electricity supply problems.

RACV, VicRoads and TAC provided a Safecar simulator to take students through a virtual reality accident to promote safe driving.

Silcar showcased the range of careers in electrical, metal, engineering and mining, while the Australian Defence Force, Victoria Police, and emergency services provided a visual presence with vehicles, equipment and personnel.

The motorsport facility from Kangan-Batman TAFE provided a challenging wheel-changing exercise where students raced against the clock to gain a feel of working in the pits.

GippsTAFE hosted 19 displays in areas such as bricklaying, carpentry, hospitality, massage, millinery and more, while ECG showcased programs in horticulture, agriculture, equine, children's services and hair and beauty.

Other training providers included the Monash University, Chisholm National Centre for Dairy Education (NCDEA), Deakin, and the Victorian Academy of Interactive Entertainment.

"This expo provided an opportunity for Year 10 students and others to gain a better understanding of what jobs might suit them, the importance of choosing subjects that will lead to specific career areas, and generally fuel their enthusiasm to explore career possibilities."

"The success of this Expo sets the scene for it to become an important annual event," Lisa said.

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