



# PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE

## VOCATIONAL STUDY OPENS MANY DOORS

**Lauren Ahwan**

SCHOOL students are encouraged to obtain a vocational qualification before graduating to tertiary study.

Regardless of whether the student wanted to continue with further vocational education or pursue a university pathway, holding a VET qualification could significantly affect future career success, said TAFE Gold Coast education and training director Lee Russell.

“(Schools) used to only look at a VET option for some students, but now they’re looking for VET options for all students,” Russell said. “Many schools now want their students to graduate with at least one VET qualification.”

Russell said workplace exposure through VET was unrivalled in its ability to influence career choices.

For example, a student who wanted to work in the legal profession could undertake a VET quali-

fication in justice studies to see whether the career was right for them.

Without VET, the student could spend several years learning law theory at university, only to discover in their first job it was not what they expected, Russell said.

A VET qualification also enables university students to find part-time work in their area of interest while

continuing their study, providing a further headstart on their career.

Nicholas Wyman, CEO of apprenticeship recruitment agency WPC Group, believes a VET qualification is a “good taster” for education and career pathways.

He said there had been a resurgence in technical schools specialising in pre-apprentice trades for Year 11 and 12 students.

But he warns students who complete a VET qualification at school can be restricted from receiving government funding for further study, unless it is for qualifications at a higher level than they already hold.

“I think young Australians should try out options,” Wyman said.

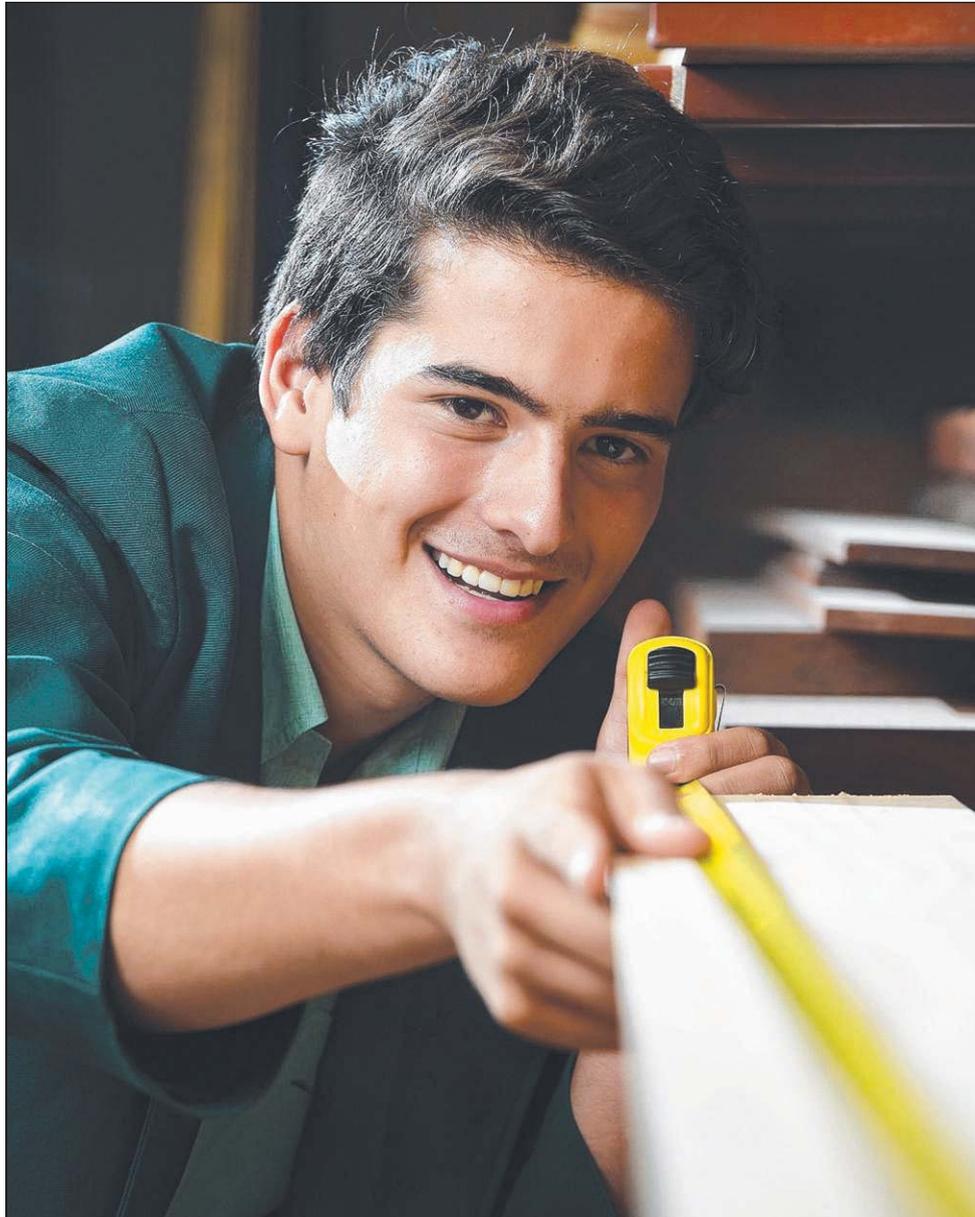
Westminster School Year 12 student Thomas Raptis has already completed a Certificate II in Construction Pathways and, while he is still debating whether to seek a construction apprenticeship or go to uni next year, he believes his VET studies will be beneficial.

“Not only did I learn how to plan and construct, I also learned organisational and communication skills as part of the problem,” he said.

“These are valuable life skills ... no matter what career path I choose.”

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- Lee Russell



**Year 12 student Thomas Raptis is still weighing up his post high-school options, but says skills such as communication learned through VET studies will keep him in good stead.**