



# Pilot gets kids job-ready

BY LACHLAN BENNETT

BUSINESSES and schools in greater Burnie have teamed up to provide opportunities for young people to pursue the technology-inspired careers of the future.

The two groups are involved in P-TECH, an international education model currently being piloted in 14 different locations across Australia.

Three groups of grade 9 students will commence the program in 2018 and spend an "immersion year" leaning about industry career pathways, developing the skills and knowledge required of future workplaces and engaging in project-based learning.

The following years, students can complete core subjects at Hellyers College while spending up to three days at either Burnie High School to complete an engineering/advanced manufacturing vocational qualification or Yolla District High School to complete an agriculture/food science vocational qualification.

P-TECH is administered by not-for-profit Skilling Australia Foundation, which was founded by chief executive Nicholas Wyman.

"What's really exciting is that P-TECH will allow these schools to specialise and become a centre of excellence in their chosen science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) pathway," he said.

"More than 75 per cent of Australia's new and emerging industries demand solid STEM skills."

Lee Whiteley is executive general manager of Elphinstone Group, one of the local businesses participating in P-TECH.

"Clearly we have an interest in the community more broadly and making sure students in the region ... are getting an opportunity to see what career opportunities there may be in local busi-

ness," Mr Whiteley said.

The program also involves businesses Jayben Australia, Maltec Engineering, TasFoods and Lion and industry bodies including the Tasmanian Centre of Advanced Manufacturing and DairyTas.

Two students already signed up for the program are Jayden Ralston and Kyron Bacon from Burnie High School.

The grade 9 students are in the same metal work class and visited Elphinstone's workshop in Burnie on Wednesday.

Kyron hoped being involved in P-TECH would help him earn "good money" when he's older.

"I do a bit of welding at school. I'm not the best at it but I'm getting better at it," he said.

Jayden said he signed up for P-TECH because he was interested in getting into the manufacturing industry.

"I want to get better at

metal work and building things," he said.

"I enjoy it and want to get into a proper job and get a bit of skills."



**READY TO ROLL:** P-TECH participants from Burnie High School Kayden Rowland, Jayden Ralston and Kyrton Bacon with Elphinstone operations manager Mal Watkinson. **Picture: Brodie Weeding**