



THE TOOLS TO SUCCEED

Don't knock what you don't know. Lauren Ahwan reports

PARENTS must be more open to their children pursuing vocational education if they want them to have a successful career.

Advocates for vocational education and training say too many young people are discouraged from the sector by parents who perceive a university education will lead to superior career outcomes.

Skilling Australia Foundation general manager Joanne Gedge says there are a lot more opportunities in VET than at university.

"There's a high number of young people that go through apprenticeships or traineeships and end up running their own business, or they end up heading up a government department," she says.

"A VET pathway, through an apprenticeship or traineeship, absolutely gives you job security because, if you're good at what you do, no employer is going to let you go after they've spent all that money and time on training."

Gedge, also general manager of the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation, says parents wrongly believe university is the only path to high-paying jobs and opportunities for promotion.

They also fear VET leads only to manual labour-type jobs. "They think 'mechanic' and think their (child) is going to be covered in oil," Gedge says.

TAFE spokesman Jon Black says VET is the starting point to a rewarding career.

"You only have to look at what someone like an electrician charges, compared with some of the professionals, to see (VET leads to) far better salaries," he says.

WorldSkills Australia chief

executive Brett Judd believes if parents were better informed about VET there would be far more apprentice and trainee enrolments.

Carol Javier admits she and husband Dino, who both hold university qualifications, were mortified when their son Scott, 17, announced he was leaving school in Year 11 to take up an IT traineeship with the George Institute of Global Health.

"When Scott was in Year 10, he had all these ideas of doing a double degree and we were really proud and looking forward to that," she says.

"When he said he wanted to do (the IT traineeship), I was crying and his dad was thinking, 'Have I failed as a parent?'"

Now, Javier says that her views have changed, as Scott is earning and training for a rewarding career.

"We're just so happy and proud he is doing so well - we couldn't have asked for more," she says.



QUICK TURNAROUND: Parents Carol, left, and Dino Javier are now fully supportive of their son Scott's decision to embark on an IT traineeship. Picture: JENNY EVANS