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Pathways to the World of Work – how local industries can play a part

The North Central LLEN (NCLLEN) is working on a range of initiatives to help inform students, parents, businesses, and industry about the changing world of work and how young people can prepare for the future.

Most schools offer a range of opportunities for students to engage with the world of work and for these programs to be successful, it is vital to have the support of quality host workplaces and employers.

According to NCLLEN Career and Pathways Manager Jerri Nelson, becoming a host employer or involving yourself in school activities is a great opportunity for local businesses to participate in the education, career development and training of young people in your community.

“It is also a chance to talk to students about your industry, its career paths, future directions and promote the attitudes and skills you want in your workforce, at the same time identify young people with potential for your industry,” she said.

“At the same time, you can strengthen your links with the community and raise your business profile as well as increasing the supervisory, training and mentoring skills of your staff,” she said.

Through work experience placements, businesses agree to host a student - usually for a period of one or two weeks - so they provide them with a wealth of practical know-how they can draw upon when they consider career options, no matter what field they enter.

St Arnaud Secondary College Careers Coordinator Rebecca Reynolds says getting into a real work environment provides students with an invaluable practical knowledge base, from technical skills to the basics of dealing with customers and other employees,

“Students can learn interpersonal skills, practical applications, basic finance, professional conduct, computer/data entry, and many other skills that can be applied to almost any profession,” she said.

“Even if students don’t eventually follow a career path related to their work experience placement, they will still benefit from the experience,” said Ms Reynolds.

Through Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) placements, host employers provide students with the opportunity to integrate on-the-job experience with secondary study by supervising and instructing them as they practise and extend the industry skills they have learned in their Vocational programs.

By offering a School Based Apprenticeships and traineeships (SBAT), host employers provide students the option of combining part-time employment, school and training through a registered training plan that leads to a nationally recognised VET qualification.

Ms Nelson says businesses can also provide opportunities for students to participate in workplace tours and immersions, such as the Broader Horizon’s program at St Arnaud Secondary College in partnership with the Northern Grampians Shire Council, East Wimmera Health Service, and local agricultural businesses.

Currently some of the work placement programs have either been suspended or modified under COVID restrictions, however it is still a great time for businesses and young people to be thinking about ways they will be ready to participate in these opportunities in the future.

For more information about students might become part of your local business please contact Mary Ann Sait at the North Central LLEN on 0400 696 156 or email m.sait@ncllen.org.au.