

Welcome to the Future

Welcome to the future of the transport industry. This is 17-year-old Amar Kurejsepi. Twelve months ago he did not put transport and career in the same sentence. Now he is employed full-time in the industry, is on his way to being a qualified furniture removalist, and is set on a career path that will keep him in the transport industry for years to come.



Amar is a smart, hard working 17-year-old. Like many others his age, he did not want to be at school, but didn't know what he wanted to do. In years gone by, he would have been lost to the transport industry.

Now, under the School Based New Apprenticeship program run by the Transport Forum of WA, he is one of 50 young people brought into the transport industry in the first two years of the program.

Under the program, year 11 and 12 students undertake a School Based Traineeship, working as a paid employee one or two days a week at a transport company and another day a month training towards a Certificate II in Road Transport, Transport Administration or Transport Warehousing. At the end of the traineeship, they are hopefully employed by the company.

That was the case with Amar. He started his traineeship in March and after recently finishing it, has been employed full-time by Keys Bros Removals and Storage. He will continue his studies to complete Certificate II in Transport and Warehousing and by the end of 2007 will be a fully qualified furniture removalist.

Amar said the traineeship appealed because it allowed him to finish year 12 and start a career at the same time.

"Everyone has doubts about the transport industry, but you don't know until you do it," he said. "What I thought was not how it was."

"I hadn't thought about the transport industry until my year coordinator mentioned it and it has opened a new door for me."

Keys Bros was the first removal company to take part in the program. Director Nick

D'Adamo said Amar has proven to be such an asset that the company is looking at putting on two more furniture removal traineeships in 2007 and considering another in Transport Administration.

"We could see there was a problem getting young people involved in our industry so we needed to go out to school leavers and show them there were career paths in our industry," Nick said.

"What appealed to us was that you can get a young person in, train them how you want them to be trained and at the end of the traineeship, hopefully they will stay on and be employed by us."

"Amar has fitted in very well. He's got the right attitude and he's not one to stand back – he has a willingness to learn and a willingness to work. I hope we can get a couple more just like him."

Blazing a trail

Transport Forum of WA's business manager Navinder Singh said Amar "has been the reason why other removal companies are putting up their hand to take on School Based Apprentices. He is the first one ever in the furniture removal industry. Amar has been fantastic and is blazing a trail to help get other kids involved."

Amar is among the first batch of school-based trainees that have just completed the course, and all four are now employed full-time. Another 15 will complete their traineeship during 2007 and 32 more have signed up to start in 2007.

Navinder said none of these young people had previously considered a career in the transport industry. He said there was a skills shortage nationally and businesses could see the value in taking on youth to help address that shortage. The program's success was due

to employers' willingness to create positions for young people and that parents and school careers advisors were involved in the process.

"It's a three pronged strategy," Navinder said. "The first is aimed at the kids. We go and visit a business so they get to experience a road transport company – they can get into a truck, they can see that warehousing is all automated and computerised."

"The second is the teacher, who has a limited understanding of the transport industry. We have made presentations to career advisors and opened their eyes to the career opportunities that are available in the transport industry. So they are telling the kids, for example, that if you want to go and do marketing, you can do that at WA Freightlines."

"The third party that's very important is the parent, who usually has a distorted view of the industry. The parents of one of our trainees, for example, weren't sure what their son was going to learn but he is shining. Eight months in, his employer is very happy with him, and his parents are thrilled."

According to Transport Forum's Greta Fisher, who runs the traineeship program, it is also working because trainees and employers are specifically matched to ensure a good fit.

"We are finding good kids that want to work in transport and matching them with the right business and the areas they are interested in," she said.

"And parents get to see it's a professionally run system. We understand their child is precious to them and their first job is a huge step in their life and they want them to have

Making it happen

Employers already involved in the School Based New Apprenticeships program include JD Transport, logistics company FCD, GKR Transport, GoldStar Transport, AMCAP Distribution Centre, Ullrich Aluminium and furniture removalists Keys Bros, Grace Bros, Wridgways and Chess Wilson.

WA Freightlines, who had two school-based trainees in 2006, want to take on two more in 2007 and Midalia Steel and Australian Liquor Marketers are waiting for trainees to be found for them.

a good experience."

Get on the trainee train

The first step in a School Based New Apprenticeship is for a vacancy to arise. Schools are notified of the vacancy, and it is promoted through each school's VET Coordinator. Interested students send a resume to the Transport Forum and are interviewed.

"At the interview, we encourage at least one parent and the school coordinator to be there," Navinder said. "There has to be a commitment from the parent to get the kid to the job and the school needs to understand what the employer needs."

The next step is a meeting between the student, the employer, the school and TFWA at the business. If all parties are keen, the student will then do four weeks of 'structured workplace learning', which essentially acts as a trial. After that, the student is formally signed up to a traineeship.

Transport Forum chief executive Debra Goostrey said the genesis of the School Based New Apprenticeship program goes back to 2001. The average age of the transport industry worker was 49, and the industry needed to find

ways to get younger people into the industry.

The first step was encouraging employers to train existing and then new staff to Certificate III level. This introduced a training culture into the industry and employers began to understand the value of training.

"Young people don't have pre-conceived ideas about the industry. We are able to take them on a tour and get them excited about the industry," Ms Goostrey said.

"In 2001, there was a survey of 20,000 students and not one of them said they wanted to work in the transport industry. Now we have 32 who will proactively be entering the industry next year."

"We've still got a long way to go but if you get school kids to think positively about the industry, it has a multiplier effect. They go back and talk to their friends, who talk to their friends; their parents say they didn't know there were so many opportunities in the industry."

"Schools are now ringing us wanting to get involved."

To find out more about a School Based New Apprenticeship contact the Transport Forum of WA on 08 9470 1245. ●



Transport Forum of WA's Navinder Singh and Greta Fisher

