

The Mining Chronicle
Page 2
October 2007 edition
size 18 cm x 16 cm

Apprenticeships streamlined

By Janine Martin

Josh Edwards has his heart set on carpentry and, at just 18, is well on his way to nailing his dream.

Earlier this year, Josh signed up for the new school-based apprenticeship program through the Australian Technical College in South Adelaide.

The first few months of the course, he said, were spent covering base work at the college and at work placements before beginning an apprenticeship at Don Wake Building in August.

"It's a great pathway to a trade and, once I finish my school year, I will move on to a fulltime apprenticeship," Josh said.

"The course has also enabled me to build my base of contacts and network."

Inaugurated in April, the concept enables potential school-based apprentices to complete their South Australian Certificate of Education while gaining practical work experience – all geared at making transition from a school environment into the workforce smoother.

Robert Harding, Housing Industry Association executive director for SA and the Northern Territory, said: "Traditionally, the education component of an apprenticeship was purely trade-



Eighteen-year-old Tobias Scheid from the inaugural program has been signed on for a school-based carpentry apprenticeship with SA builder Rivergum Homes.

related but Australian Technical College school-based apprentices receive a higher level of education, allowing them to complete a degree later on, which was unheard of in previous Australian school-based apprenticeships."

While the Australian Technical

College in Adelaide is following the SACE curriculum, subjects have been modified to show students how to apply the concepts in the working environment.

Mr Harding said that with SA's booming economy, the demand for skilled tradespeople would continue to soar and in turn the need for effective training programs for apprentices.

"The construction industry's skills shortage is fuelled by an ageing workforce and the growing number of infrastructure projects, and will only get worse over the years if we do not change the way we train young people in the state," he said.

Local businesses such as Hughes & Hero Engineering, Showtrek Productions, Vortrak Construction, Aluco Aluminium Construction and mechanical engineering firm Watson Fitzgerald & Associates were the first companies to take on school-based apprentices from the college.

"The combination of professional training and practical experience prepares students for the real world, which is exactly what is needed to increase the number of skilled and educated tradespeople in Australia," Showtrek director Steve Conroy said. ■