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CHOICES: ATC – Adelaide South apprentice Katrina McPhail with Scott Akers, who finished Year 12 last year and is now a full-time apprentice at Alfon Industries.

Skills to meet trade demand

ENROLMENTS at the Australian Technical College – Adelaide South are picking up this year.

Last year, 101 students were enrolled in the college. This year it has accepted 133.

Principal Jim Fenoughty says the college combines the benefits of practical experience and vocation education with a certificate III school-based apprenticeship model.

Unlike the traditional trade apprenticeship system, the Christies Beach college lets students complete their SACE while obtaining trade training as an Australian School-based Apprentice, he says.

Katrina McPhail, 16, is going on to Year 12 this year to complete her SACE while doing a school-based apprenticeship with Lonsdale firm Dinki Di Engineering.

She was one of the first

students to start Year 11 last year.

"While attending my first year at the college, I tried several different trades, and realised engineering was the right choice for me," she says.

"Then my curriculum was tailored around the trade-specific requirements."

After doing work experience at Dinki Di Engineering, she began to combine hands-on experience with schoolwork.

"I was offered an ASbA that will flow into a second-year full-time apprenticeship after my graduation from the college," she says.

The ATC – Adelaide South provides training and education to students to meet the growing demand for skilled workers across trades such as building and construction, electrical and metals and engineering.

Mr Fenoughty says ATCs will work with other education centres to meet the skills

needs of mining and defence companies expanding in the state. "The ASbA model offers young people a unique opportunity to join the workforce earlier in life without sacrificing their education," he says.

"Students who graduate from the college get the best of both worlds with practical work experience, trade-relevant training and a solid education that allows them to undertake further studies at TAFE and university later on."

Once she finishes her apprenticeship, Ms McPhail plans to study computer-assisted drafting to specialise in designing engineering machines.

Go to www.atc-as.com.au, for details about the ATC – Northern Adelaide at Elizabeth go to www.atc-northernadelaide.sa.edu.au, for courses offered by the Spencer Gulf and Outback college go to www.atc-sgo.sa.edu.au