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Apprentices fear licence changes

LOCAL NEWS 15 DEC 11 @ 07:30AM BY NADINE BISHOP

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DRIVING AMBITION: Marcellin College student Jordan Modra says he needs a licence to do his job. Pic: Cathy Mundy.

SOUTHERN apprentices will be forced out of work if a State Government push to raise the minimum driving age to 18 goes ahead, local youths say.

P-plater **Jordan Modra**, who is in his first year of an automotive mechanic course at Marcellin Technical College, Christie Downs, said young apprentices needed a licence to get to work.

"The first thing my boss asked me when I applied for my job was, do you have a licence?" the 17-year-old said.

"I need to be able to jump in the cars at work and move them around when we're servicing them.

"And if you need tools for a trade, like a carpenter, you're pretty much useless if you don't have a car or licence."

Fellow Marcellin student and apprentice electrician **Roy Jolly**, 16, from Old Reynella, agreed: "It's going to be a lot harder for young people to get jobs if they can't get their licence. Employers look for people with their licences as it helps them out a lot."

A Marcellin spokeswoman said a number of students were waiting on getting their licences before they could start their apprenticeships in the new year.

These follow concerns raised by Onkaparinga Mayor **Lorraine Rosenberg**, who said the proposed changes would disadvantage youths in outer suburbs.

"On one hand, the State Government is encouraging youths from the age of 15 or 16 to get involved in VET programs but if they do that, these kids have to get to a number of different places, like school or work, and

sometimes the only way to do that is by car," she said.

"They are encouraging them to get into a workplace style of activity but these licensing changes will have a big impact on whether they can work or not."

Road Safety Minister **Jennifer Rankine** said the Government might consider offering exemptions to people aged under 18 who needed to drive to work or school.

But she would not disclose what these might entail.

"A decision will need to be made taking into account the clear safety benefits available through these initiatives, and feedback on those initiatives and any possible exemptions," she said.



Southern Times Messenger

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