



Kuhn cuts them up

At St Clare's High School, Taree, Megan Kuhn wanted to be a journalist. Wisely, she decided to have a look at a few other options (otherwise she might have worked for *Smart Start* and no-one would wish that on her). So she took her CV to a few hairdressers, and asked for work experience. Before long she ended up helping out at a salon on Saturday mornings – making tea and sweeping up – and that moved into more involved things.

All of a sudden, she realised she liked hairdressing. *Really* liked it – especially the creativity, the contact with people, and that special something else.

“You can actually make a small difference to people if they want something new,” says Megan, 22. “And it’s a nice, relaxing experience for them. I like the creative side.”

With her experience, it wasn’t hard to secure an apprenticeship in a nearby NSW North Coast town. She had started Year 12 but found the apprentice hairdresser pathway just made sense to her.

“You are constantly meeting new people and learning with every day and every client. I enjoy the client interaction, especially when a new client is unsure of what they want and you provide a consultation, and by the end of the service they are happy with the new style. Even if it’s a small change, it could be a big step for them.”

Now she has finished her apprenticeship, she lives and works in Port Macquarie, and is competing for Australia at the international WorldSkills competition in Canada.

Her goals include working overseas and helping to train other hopeful. *Smart Start* says: “Go Megan! You’ll do us proud! Also, can you get the grey out of our hair!”

Megan’s key career steps

- Looked for work experience to expand choices.
- Got work experience at hairdressers and surprised herself by *really* liking it.
- Used experience to get apprenticeship.
- Finetunes skills with competition.
- Now qualified and cutting them up!

Pave and landscape your road ahead

Michael Buist finished Year 12 and took on some part-time work through a relative who has a landscape construction business.

With his industry experience and Year 12 qualifications, he was well-placed to score an apprenticeship. But first he dipped his toes in another industry.

“After a year of working full-time in a warehouse I decided to pursue a career in landscaping.”

He has enjoyed both the structure of the apprenticeship and the trade he has chosen.

“The guys I work with are great. I enjoy working outside and sometimes we work near the beach. I’m never stuck in the same place all the time. Once a job is

finished it is great to see the client ecstatic at the transformation we have made to their gardens and outdoor living.”

He reckons that learning and developing specialised skills is a very fulfilling feeling.

Michael’s goals are straightforward at this stage: do well when he competes for Australia in at WorldSkills (the Olympics for tradespeople) and finish his apprenticeship. And, like many tradespeople, Michael is keen to experience the challenges and rewards of working for himself.



MICHAEL BUIST