



08 JAN, 2021

Collaborative effort gives local apprentices a greater breadth of workplace experience

Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator, Sale

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LOCAL workers Thomas Lee and Marques Guedelha are the first two beneficiaries of a collaboration between leading Gippsland employers.

The duo, electrical instrumentation apprentices at Esso Australia's Longford site, have spent a month on the tools with Sale-based Marathon Electrical, as part of a workplace rotation.

The four-week work placement has helped the apprentices broaden their electrical knowledge and practical skills by increasing their exposure to residential, commercial and industrial electrical work.

WPC Group apprentice and trainee manager Janine McPhee, who arranged the rotation, said it was designed to help them learn how electrical theory and practices are carried out across different industry environments.

Ms McPhee said workplace rotations like this were increasingly being sought by employers and apprentices.

"It's fantastic when major local businesses can come together and give their staff the chance to learn and develop in this way," she added.

Marathon Electrical managing director Brett Singh said it was all about helping to develop a well-rounded workforce for the region.

"At a heavy industrial site like Longford, apprentices don't get as much exposure to the type work Marathon specialises in, so collaborating and cooperating with Esso gives us all the chance to learn and improve from each other," he said.

And Marathon Electrical is not the only business taking part in this initiative.

Rotafab Asset Maintenance, Wurruk, managing director Tony Wallace will also provide the opportunity for Esso's 10 mechanical fitter and turner apprentices to begin four-week work rotations, across all areas of the business.

Mr Wallace said he saw great value in helping local youth to develop their knowledge of the industry outside the Esso plant, building their mechanical skills base across welding fabrication, pipe spooling, industrial coatings and rotating equipment repair.

Esso Longford Plants manager Kartik Garg fully supports the Esso electrical and mechanical apprentices gaining experience with a range of local businesses.

"Employers are recognising the value of breadth of experience, as being a well-rounded qualified tradesperson gives you more options, and the employer more flexibility," he said.



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Thomas Lee of Bushy Park and Marques Guedelha, Sale, are third year apprentices at Longford Gas Plants and have just completed a four-week rotation at Marathon Electrical, based in Sale.