



16 young locals join Team RVC in 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday 9 January 2020

SIXTEEN young recruits have been welcomed to the ranks of Richmond Valley Council in 2020, in preparation for another successful year of Council's award-winning Youth Employment Strategy (YES).

YES was developed in 2014 to provide more employment and training opportunities for Richmond Valley youth while also helping future-proof Council's workforce.

The 2020 intake now brings to 90 the number of young people given a valuable start to their career throughout the program's seven-year history.

Feedback from the community, including educators, suggests YES is the standout youth employment program in the region – and the awards speak for themselves.

In 2015 Council was named the best large employer in NSW at the NSW Training Awards on the merits of YES, and in 2019 Council was again recognised for its achievements as an employer, winning the 2019 Outstanding Employer of Choice award at the Northern Rivers Business Awards.

General Manager Vaughan Macdonald said YES was about delivering tangible career outcomes for young people in the Richmond Valley community.

"YES was created in response to the priorities of our Richmond Valley Made 2030 Community Strategic Plan, in which the community voiced their desire to see more job opportunities for our youth," Mr Macdonald said.

"It's well known that youth unemployment is a challenge, and even more so in regional areas.

"Fortunately, local government can make a real difference. Through YES, Council has been able to offer a range of valuable job opportunities and the ability to progress careers where young people perhaps couldn't in other places."

Mr Macdonald said a fortunate by-product of the program was the growing pool of valuable young employees, who were shaping up to be future leaders of the organisation.

“Developing young employees straight from high school is helping establish a new generation of talent within Council, while also ensuring the experience and skills of our older staff is being effectively transferred,” he said.

This year’s recruits include school-based trainees and full-time trainees and apprentices who will work in a wide range of chosen fields including civil construction, horticulture, mechanical and electrotechnology, waste management, records, sport and recreation, and events and tourism.

Of the 2020 recruits, six are recipients of an Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant, a State Government initiative developed to support young Aboriginal people with training and employment opportunities.

Mr Macdonald said as a result of this year’s intake, the number of Aboriginal employees now reflected the proportion of Aboriginal residents in the local community.

“In the last Census, Aboriginal people made up 7.2 percent of the Richmond Valley population, and with the new YES intake Council now has 25 Aboriginal staff members, or 7.8 percent of our total workforce.

“This is a fantastic achievement in line with the goals of Council’s Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

“Over the past decade Council has successfully pursued all available options for the engagement of Aboriginal employees, as well people with disabilities, via employment agencies and school career days, as well as various apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

“Having six new trainees in 2020 who are recipients of an Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant is a fantastic achievement which shows Council’s efforts to recruit, train and retain local Aboriginal staff are held in high regard.”

Mr Macdonald said YES was also part of a broader priority to support local employment in the Richmond Valley and help grow the local economy.

“Council is committed to its role as an enabler of the Richmond Valley economy, as prioritised in our Community Strategic Plan,” he said.

PHOTO: Seven of the 2020 YES recruits on their first day with Richmond Valley Council. From left: Jess Laughton -Trainee Records; Tyrell Roberts - Trainee Horticulture; Tiarn Stenner - Trainee Events and Tourism; Callum Molineux - Apprentice Mechanic; Laura Walker - Trainee Waste; Hayden Ditrich - Trainee Rural Operations; Maddison Hodges - Trainee Water Operations.