

Welding up skills

By Casey Neill

A new workplace training program could solve the region's skills shortage.

Hilton Manufacturing in Dandenong South applauded the first six graduates from its in-house four-week welding program on Thursday 14 June.

"They'd never held a welding gun in their lives," managing director Todd Hartley said.

He approached Chisholm Institute for help to meet demand. The business grew 40 per cent in the past year.

"One thing now that's holding us back is labour," Mr Hartley said.

"We're now knocking back business.

"It's purely because we don't have skilled labour.

"Over the past two years we've worked with over 25 skills and jobs centres ... with very little return."

He said they'd provided people who were underqualified or not work-ready.

"We're here to manufacture sheet metal components," he said.

"This is another cost to our business.

"We have no choice if we want to continue to grow."

He said Hilton could have "taken the 457 visa approach" and hired workers from overseas.

"I've said 'let's back our local people'," he said.

So Chisholm partnered with Hilton to establish the Advocacy and Employment Program.

It's designed to help local job-seekers to find employment in sectors where there are skills shortages.

Hilton hosted the pilot through Chisholm's Foundation College and Skills and Job Centre.

The program focuses on providing inter-



Marcus Barber with new welders Michael Rezk and Zakir Nourozi at the launch.

view preparation, support and mentoring.

Participants then receive on-site training and employment with an industry partner.

Chisholm CEO Dr Rick Ede said there were already plans to expand the Advocacy and Employment Program into new sectors.

"We are targeting people who are entering the workforce for the first time, those transitioning out of other industries, as well as migrants looking for a new start," he said.

"They can hit the ground running and be productive members of the team immediately.

"We can scale this.

"We can take this model out other employers.

"The Greater Dandenong area has one of the highest rates of unemployment in Victoria and through this new initiative, we will create more job opportunities for the region."

Chisholm is taking expressions of interest in the Advocacy and Employment Program.

Email ann.irding@chisholm.edu.au for more information.

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Help finding job

CHISHOLM has joined forces with Hilton Manufacturing to launch the Training and Employment Program to help job seekers find employment in sectors with skills shortages.
Details: chisholm.edu.au