

Media Release (Special Feature)

10 September 2021

It's a Wrap – West Coast Students Learn About Council Life

15 students from Mountain Heights and Rosebery District High Schools had a limited opportunity this week to see what happens within the West Coast Council through our inaugural local government work experience project.

The week-long pilot program 'A day in the life of West Coast Council' was developed as part of our Local Government School-based Apprenticeship Program aimed at increasing the number of young people within the sector. Research shows engaging with local businesses increases the likelihood of students finishing school and gaining employment.

Students were blown away by the diversity within the organisation, which keeps the West Coast community thriving and making it an awesome place to live, work, learn and play!

The week kicked off with a welcome from West Coast Mayor, Shane Pitt and General Manager, David Midson who opened the doors for students to learn what a day in the life of West Coast Council looks like. The reins were then handed over to the Manager Customer and Corporate Services, Eleanor Strang to roll out the program in partnership with Cradle Coast Authority.

With 41% of the local government workforce due to retire over the next 10 years in our region, Councils provide a diverse range of exciting long-term career opportunities for young people

There are so many people and jobs required to grow our region while keeping the community safe. CCA and our Member Councils are working together to help young coasters see a bright future for them in their own backyard. Local government, being the tier of government closest to the community is committed to further growth and investment in local people and acknowledges the role and social obligation they have in developing the skills of our future workforce.

A big thank you to West Coast Council management and staff, Mountain Heights and Rosebery District High Schools, with your collaboration this project has been an enormous success.

Students interested in a Local Government School-based Apprenticeship can find out more via our website: www.cradlecoast.com/jobs, applications close Friday 24 September 2021.

Program Highlights:

- Balance HR & Municipal Training provided a national accredited skills training unit "Work in local government". After providing the foundations, students were eager to gather the skills and knowledge throughout the week to achieve competency.
- Day two kicked off with a tour of Capital Works projects, which included the famous gravel oval and a large stormwater project that is currently underway.
- Students watched part of the recent Council meeting and gained an understanding of governance practices.
- Students were tasked with an exercise approving community projects within the Council budget, providing them with an understanding as to how and why community projects are evaluated and progressed.
- Students learned about the Governance Apprentice role on offer as part of the program to support their decision to apply.
- Day three included a road trip to Zeehan to visit the Transfer Stations, Landfill and Recycling Facility followed by a fun activity for students to determine what is or isn't recyclable. The next stop was the Mechanical Workshop where students learnt all plant and equipment is serviced by trade qualified staff employed by Council - a critical cog in the workings of Council!

- Students learnt the vital principles of food licensing and safe food handling to mitigate the risk of community members becoming sick when eating out.
- As a part of the animal control function of Council, students learned about local laws which provide guidance for decision making and now understand the General Manager doesn't decide how many dogs we can have!
- A trip to the newly opened Mountain Bike Tracks was the destination on Friday, where Project Managers, Dirt Art, provided an overview of the process required to develop such tracks and how long each phase took.
- On return to the Council Chambers, students then got creative developing individual West Coast branded posters, showcasing what the region has to offer, while learning about Council's Branding Strategy and how to use it.
- Throughout the week students collected various information on staff members and prepared Staff Profiles for presentation back to Council.
- To wrap up the week students successfully completed the "Work in local government" unit and were presented with a Certificate for actively participating in 'A day in the life of West Coast Council' program to add to their resume.

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CCA is jointly owned by eight Councils of western and north-western Tasmania, to help them achieve regional outcomes and maintain strong local government, by working together.

Image: West Coast Council with students at Queenstown's Gravel Oval

