



## CELEBRATING OUR 10TH BIRTHDAY

# Apprentices a winning formula for Nature Coast

By **AMANDA WOOD**

GONE are the rigid days of senior high school at Moruya.

Today's students are proving that the flexibility they're afforded to complete their senior schooling while getting a start on an apprenticeship or traineeship is a winning formula.

Just ask Brendan Sheldon, the proprietor of Nature Coast Plumbing. He has recently taken on his second school-based apprentice from Moruya High, Luke Coles, following the success of his first, Joe

Lambert, who recently won the Eurobodalla Shire Apprentice of the Year Award.

"Joe came to do work experience with me when he was in Year 10 and then approached me about doing a school-based apprenticeship before commencing Year 11," Brendan said.

"I had never heard of the program, but was so impressed with Joe I decided to give it a go. It's been fantastic and the flexibility and support shown by Moruya High School meant we could juggle the work load here with Joe's

school work and TAFE commitments."

"Joe recently finished year 12 so now he's here with me full-time as a second-year apprentice. I nominated Joe for the local award because of his dedication to his job. He hasn't had a sick day in two years and will drop everything to come to work on the weekend if we get called to an emergency."

Participation in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships has grown steadily since the program was revamped a few years ago. The careers adviser at Moruya High School,

Mike Dent, has embraced the opportunity to let students gain valuable work experience while continuing their secondary education and training towards a recognised qualification.

"We have 19 school-based trainees and apprentices this year, which is up from the 13 we had three years ago when we very keenly piloted the new program," Mr Dent said.

"That's a lot for a school like ours.

"The employers we work with have been fantastic. We all work together to keep the program flexible while looking after the interests of the student. Some of our students, like Joe, would not have continued with their secondary education if this option wasn't available, yet they also would have struggled to find a full-time apprenticeship without getting this experience behind them."

Tracy Beesley, Illawarra and South Coast consultant at ABL Apprenticeships Centre, who administer thousands of apprenticeships each year in the Illawarra and South Coast said the number of school-based apprentices that have been administered in NSW rose 64 per cent in the

2010 financial year compared to 2009, and I'm certain this will continue to grow with schools like Moruya showing such continued support for the program."

When asked about his experience in completing high school as a school-based apprentice, Joe said: "It's been really good. At the start it took a bit of time to get used to getting my school work done as well as go to work and do TAFE, but it was worth it. I wanted to get school behind me, but also get a start on my trade."



**JOE COOL:** Nature Coast Plumbing's Joe Lambert receives his Apprentice of the Year award at the Eurobodalla Employee of the Year Awards in July.



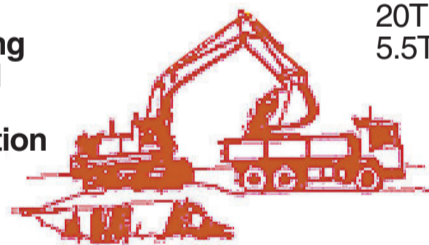
**PIPE LAYING:** Joe on the job for Nature Coast.

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Congratulations to Nature Coast Plumbing on achieving 10 years in business, all the best for the next 10!

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7am to 5pm Monday - Thursday  
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## All the best to Nature Coast Plumbing on your 10th Birthday

Moruya Office: 4474 4840  
Batemans Bay Office: 4472 9142  
Narooma Office: 4476 2993  
Email: office@kevindonald.com.au  
www.donaldralston.com.au