



The industry's future stars

Jakeb Solley

Jakeb Solley is one of our three 2016 national apprentice winners.

Following the National Apprentice Awards in Canberra in November – where Jakeb was the national winner in the Communication's category, Barry Jackson from NECA caught up with him to find out a little bit more about what made him choose the Electrotechnology industry as his career.

Q. What made you become an electrical apprentice?

A. Early on in life I realised how much I enjoyed using both my hands and my head to achieve an outcome. Plus my uncle was an electrician and helping him gave me good exposure to the industry at an early age. So I set my mind on becoming an apprentice.

Q. Was the four-year training experience what you were expecting?

A. The training experience was more or less how I had pictured it would be. But there were some surprises along the way. The leap between the 2nd and 3rd years was when I felt I had found my feet and I started to feel less like an apprentice, and more like a worker. In regards to the training, PEER do a great job at delivering the material at an appropriate time. So the bookwork was pretty straight forward and easy to manage.

Q. Any particular highs (and/or lows)?

A. One of the most memorable highs would have to have been completing a major construction job (Tonsley TAFE) from start to finish. I feel like this gave me the exposure a lot of apprentices miss out on.

Q. If you were the head of NECA's GTO/RTO what changes (if any) would you like to see in the apprenticeship training and on-the-job work experience?

A. I think the whole industry would benefit from apprentices gaining more experience across the board - domestic, industrial and commercial. I know this isn't always easy, and I appreciate the logistical reasons why not all apprentices can move around as easily as I could. But maybe NECA could run workshops on each area to make up for any missed experience?

Q. How would you encourage more females to become apprentices?

A. I was lucky enough to have worked with a number of fantastic female apprentices, and it has made me realise that there really isn't any stigma around females working in the industry – contrary to popular beliefs. I just think it's an old-school idea and I would love to see that message shared with more females looking at getting into the industry. I think it would give them the confidence, and reassurance, that it's nowhere near as male-dominated as you may think.

Q. How did you find completing the project and the interviews to get to the finals?

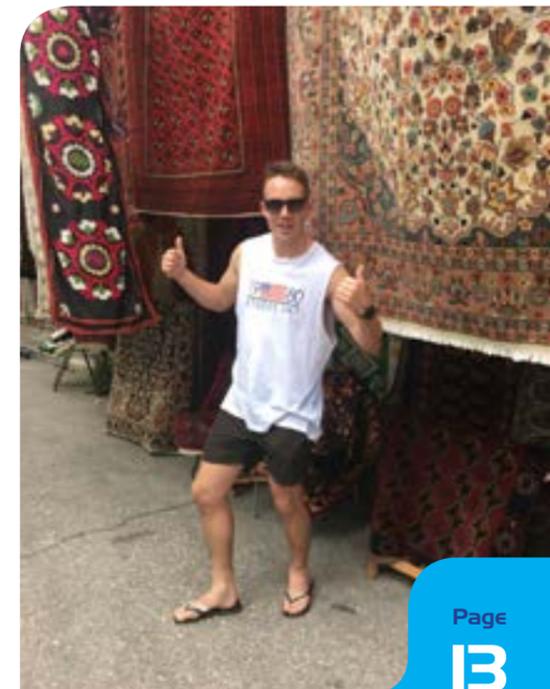
A. I enjoyed working on the project. There were a few small administrative issues that had me scratching my head. And flying over to Melbourne was super stressful. But once I was in the room with the judging panel and I saw how relaxed they were, it made it a lot easier to present well – and with confidence.

Q. Do you still manage to keep a good balance between work and fun (sport/interests etc.)?

A. I would like to believe I do. My employer (Adelaide Health Tech) has a fantastic culture that stresses the importance of time outside of work, and enjoying life. I play football, golf and love fishing. Gives me plenty of time to wind down from a busy or stressful week. Testament to the encouragement of AHT.

Q. Where to from here (life and career)?

A. From here I would love to continue growing with AHT. There is plenty of opportunities in front of me and not once has a suggestion for further education been dismissed. I'd like to up-skill into security and automation which would give me, and the company I hope, more to offer our clients. Further into the future I can see myself in a project management, or estimating job, but I'd need more experience under my belt to make that move. I've got plenty of mileage to go at AHT, and I'm in no rush.



Even an apprentice has to fit in the odd holiday!