James Atkins, TE Connectivity

TE Connectivity is the world’s largest provider of connectivity solutions. The organisation offers its clients a worldwide supply chain and logistical support — with a truly local presence, like the one right here on the Central Coast.

James Atkins took on an apprenticeship role, under the Memorandum of Understanding Wallarah 2 entered into with Central Coast Group Training. The apprenticeship has seen him work under the supervision of his manager Alex McCormack in the production of Utelux Custom Connections.

Alec McCormack said, “It is wonderful to see how well James has adapted and how much he has learnt since he joined us. James walked in having only ever worked with wood, now he has learnt how to work with metal and use complex and state-of-the-art equipment worth $100,000 and more.”

James, who is finishing high school alongside the apprenticeship said, “I am really enjoying my time at TE Connectivity, I am working on really interesting jobs and have had the opportunity to be hands-on... and despite the strong learning curve I am pleased to report I haven’t broken anything yet!

“I’ve also been lucky to have a great team here to support me in my learning, including Justin who is a third year apprentice who has been able to share his knowledge with me.”

Alec, who undertakes eight weekly reviews with James and Central Coast Group Training to monitor James’ progress, said it has been a great opportunity for both TE Connectivity and James taking part in the apprenticeship scheme with Wallarah 2.

“James has a wonderful work ethic and is diligent in making safety a priority, something I hope will benefit him both at work and in his personal life.”
David Grime, a senior student from Wyong Trade High School, has taken up an apprentice position at Express Lube as part of the agreement between Wallarah 2 and Central Coast Group Training. The initiative is intended to support young people on the Central Coast transition into a trade.

Express Lube, is 100 per cent Australian owned and started on the Central Coast in 2009, expanding to three stores across the Coast today.

Offering a ‘no appointment’, ‘while you wait’ service, David said it’s an exciting place to work, with no two days the same. “It’s been amazing working at Express Lube so far, I’ve had lots of support from the trained mechanics and am now confident doing a basic service on my own, which is really rewarding.”

Naithan Roberts, Floor Manager of Express Lube Tuggerah, said the whole experience with working with Wallarah, who are sponsoring David, and Central Coast Group Training has been a huge success. “David is just one of the apprentices Express Lube employ across the Coast, but it has been made so easy working in conjunction with Central Coast Group Training and Wallarah 2.”

David said he’s enjoying being on the tools and learning from other skilled mechanics but is finding the TAFE component of his apprenticeship equally as rewarding.

“Having the opportunity to start my apprenticeship while I complete school has meant I can get a head start on gaining the experience I will need once I finish school. This apprenticeship has opened a lot of doors for me.”
DNA Electrical has been operating on the Central Coast for more than 20 years and is currently taking on three apprentices at various stages. Having recently changed professions, Gavin is a mature-aged first year electrical apprentice and said that he is thoroughly enjoying his time with DNA Electrical.

“It’s going great, I’m learning a lot,” said Gavin, who is undertaking the study portion of his apprenticeship at Hunter TAFE’s Wyong Campus.

“Being a little older, I found it difficult to get an apprenticeship but I was really interested in gaining skills in the electrical trade because it’s such a varied job and there are lots of different options available to you when you finish,” he added.

Gavin’s Manager at DNA Electrical, Steve Christie said that a mature-aged apprentice such as Gavin has been a positive addition to the team.

“It’s great to have someone with such a strong work ethic, who is self-motivated and eager to learn,” said Steve.

Steve explained that taking on a new apprentice can be a huge obligation, particularly financially, and that the funding and support from Wallarah 2 has helped eliminate some of that pressure.

“Wallarah’s sponsorship made the decision to take on an apprentice much easier and we couldn’t be happier to have Gavin join our team,” Steve added.

Central Coast Group Training has been monitoring Gavin’s process with ongoing performance assessments and so far, he has received fantastic feedback.
Robert, a local Charmhaven resident, joined the team at Brian Hilton working one day a week as part of the first year of his apprenticeship.

Robert, who is getting experience across all sides of the business, from mechanics to customer service, said he was “enjoying the opportunity to have a real-life hands-on learning experience.”

“I’ve had the benefit of driving the courtesy vehicle and liaising with customers and am looking forward to continuing my training with the mechanics.”

Ashley Donnelly, service manager at Brian Hilton expressed his appreciation of Robert’s work ethic and ability to adapt in a busy workplace.

“We’ve had to throw Robert in the deep end a few times and he has always responded enthusiastically, showing his genuine willingness to learn and understand all elements of the operation.”

Ashley described the added value apprentices can contribute to the business and his pleasure at partnering with Wallarah 2 in supporting young locals.

“It’s great having Robert onboard. Cars are getting more and more technical, it’s not all about the oil and filter changes anymore. Robert is technically minded so a lot of the newer hi-tech stuff comes really naturally to him,” added Ashley.