

# ASbAs

## For Employers, Students and Parents

# Allied Health

An Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbAs) Case Study<sup>1</sup>

For the past six years, Sunshine Coast and Cooloola Health Service District Queensland Health has employed Australian School-based Apprentices (ASbAs). Kara Somerville, the Manager for Learning and Development, describes the program as 'a fabulous success'.



Tamryn Kozuszek Allied Health Assistance ASbA

// Over the previous six years we have had three groups of school-based apprentices go through, with two or three apprentices in each group, Kara said. "it seems to work well when there are at least two or three together as they can provide peer support, especially through the distance education and 'on the job' components.

"We have had a 100% success rate with our school-based apprentices. They have all either gone on to study health-related courses at university or are employed in the hospital in one form or another, whether this is in a casual capacity while they are studying at university, in a part-time capacity, or working permanently in the unit as an Allied Health Assistant.

"The apprenticeship program has acted as a spring board to careers in health for these apprentices.

"Their confidence soars through their experiences in the apprenticeship program. They encounter many different situations and learn to deal with them. This confidence feeds into their work and life skills and is evident when they pursue their future work and study options.

"It doesn't seem to matter what specific field of health they enter, having undertaken this apprenticeship is always a positive factor. One of our past apprentices, with a reference from me and an ability to demonstrate the value of her experiences as an Allied Health apprentice, was able to access a university course above the level she would have been eligible for based solely on her university entrance rating. //

## Allied Health Assistance – a springboard to your health career

Do you want a job...

- that is meaningful?
- working with people?
- that can lead to a career in health?

OR do you have...

- a high school aged child who is seeking career direction?
- a skills shortage in your workforce?
- opportunities for young people?

Find out how one service has solved these problems

Career opportunities - pathways to success //

<sup>1</sup>Please note, the terms apprentice and apprenticeship are overarching terms used nationally and are used in this material as interchangeable for the terms trainee and traineeship

// When these young people go into health careers on completion of their apprenticeships, they really know a health career is what they want. They leave school with extensive work skills, they are passionate and enthusiastic, and that has to be good for the health sector.

*“The feedback I get from the apprentices is that the apprenticeship program really helps them decide what they want to do, including what area of allied health they are most interested in.*

*“One of the key factors for the success of this program has been the excellent leadership provided by Noelene Eisemann, the Director of Allied Health for Sunshine Coast and Cooloola Health Service District. Noelene sets great store in these apprentices and this is reflected in the way all of the staff support the apprentices. //*

The service has always taken a positive approach to students on work experience and clinical placements, and the ASbA program is really an extension of this. Noelene says the most challenging part of having the apprentices is in the initial weeks of the program when developing their initial skill set. However, this effort has always been compensated for by the longer term benefits as the apprentices gain skills and grow in confidence. A previous apprentice is now working full time in the service as an Allied Health Assistant in Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology. The need for orientation and induction when she commenced full time was significantly reduced as she was already familiar with the workplace. Another previous apprentice has commenced university studies and works with the service on a casual basis.

### Advice for work unit managers going into the ASbA program for the first time

Noelene gives this advice:

// *Be prepared to put in significant effort in the early part of their apprenticeship. It pays off in the long run. We already had in place an in-house training program for allied health assistants and the apprentices went through this training program, albeit at a slower pace. Having this structure to underpin their apprenticeship has been pivotal to this being a positive experience for both staff and apprentices. //*

### What do the apprentices think of the ASbAs

The apprentices said:

// *The apprenticeship in Allied Health Assistance has really been worthwhile. I am currently still working as an Allied Health Assistant after completion of the course.”*

*“The traineeship made me aware of how to work with a team of professionals and inspired me to continue studying at university to gain more knowledge within the health field.”*

*“It has helped me develop in many areas: people skills (communication); preparation and organisation; policies and procedures within the hospital environment and techniques used by professionals. //*

### What are the pathways?

Pressure on existing allied health professionals has led to an increased need for assistants in these professions and corresponding job opportunities for qualified assistants. Allied health assistance can involve specialising in an allied health area such as physiotherapy, or working across several allied health programs. Pathways range from the Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance to the Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance and may also lead to higher education qualifications in allied health or related health careers, including a university degree as an Allied Health Professional.

## To find out more...

If you are an employer

[www.communityactivecareers.com.au](http://www.communityactivecareers.com.au)  
or to locate your local Regional Industry Career Advisor visit  
[www.careeradviceaustralia.gov.au](http://www.careeradviceaustralia.gov.au)

You can also contact the Australian Apprenticeships Training Information Service on phone number 1800 338 022  
[www.aatinfo.com.au](http://www.aatinfo.com.au) or the Australian Apprenticeships on phone number 13 38 73  
[www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au).

OR if you are a student

[www.communityactivecareers.com.au](http://www.communityactivecareers.com.au)  
or ask your school careers advisor or Vocational Education and Training (VET) coordinator for more information.



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment  
and Workplace Relations**

