



# Brisbane Youth Education & Training Centre



## Student-made Dog Kennels Donated to the RSPCA



BYETC manual arts teachers Rob (left) and Ivan (right) with Mark Townend (RSPCA QLD CEO)

Two dog kennels fabricated by students at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre were donated to the RSPCA in early December 2014. Students undertaking a Certificate I in Construction have been contributing to the fabrication of dog kennels as part of their course work.

The construction course is a new offering to students at the detention centre with the program only commencing in Semester 2, 2014. Much of the equipment in the school's construction workshop was donated to the Brisbane Youth Education & Training Centre by the Department of Education, Training and Employment following the closure of Nyanda State High School. The availability of high quality equipment has meant that students are able to learn trade skills with up-to-date tools.

Intended to prepare students to work in construction related industries, the Certificate I in Construction qualification provides students with an understanding of workplace safety issues and teaches the use tools and machinery. Students also learn key industry skills such as how to read

and interpret plans and how to use some specialised equipment to complete jobs like levelling, framing, and roofing.

The practical component of the construction course requires students to contribute to a number of class projects. These projects are subsequently donated to community organisations as part of a focus on a 'curriculum of giving' which aims to build students' engagement with the broader community.

The only 'job' which is retained by the students is their 'carry-all' toolbox, which is intended to support them to get started in the construction industry. Otherwise, all the practical work undertaken has some benefit to the community, either through direct donations or through savings to the detention centre by off-setting reducing the need for certain expenditure.

In addition to the dog kennels students have completed a large cubby house and a chicken coop. The chicken coop will be used in the detention centre in 2015 and beyond as part of the school's science program.

There has been much positive engagement by students in the construction program and the first Statements of Attainment were issued in November. 6 students were successful in completing a workplace safety module which also qualified them to receive a General Induction (White Card). Possession of a current White Card is a legal requirement for all persons working within the building and construction industry. The White Card course was delivered in partnership with an industry trainer. Students benefitted from having an experienced tradesperson teach them about the requirements of a job site and this perfectly complemented the hands-on skills they have been learning in the construction workshop.

## Literacy and Numeracy Success

Students undertaking vocational certificates in literacy and numeracy at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre have reached some significant milestones in the second half of 2014. 10 students were awarded a Certificate I in Core Skills for Employment and Training – Numeracy and 15 students were awarded a Certificate I in Core Skills for Employment and Training – Numeracy.

Successful completion of the Certificate I in Core Skills for Employment and Training (CSET) courses enables students to fulfil the minimum literacy and numeracy requirements for the senior certificate, the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). More importantly the courses teach students the basic literacy, communication and numeracy skills required in the workplace.

A major contributing factor in the success of students has been the use of engaging teaching resources. Students undertaking the CSET courses at BYETC are using a suite of highly engaging materials which have been specifically developed to assist young people in detention and teenagers disengaged from education. The resources assist these young people, many of whom have significant gaps in their learning, to close these skills gaps and make more rapid progression than is typically the case.

The course materials are extremely flexible and portable which means that students can study their courses anywhere. Students recently released from detention are able to complete their course work in the community, either at a flexi-school a youth justice service centre or even in their own home. The self-paced modules allow students to complete their studies around other commitments but it also means that work can be recommenced should a young person return to detention.

Following innumerable requests for the CSET materials BYETC has made them freely available on the schools website. Youth justice and

corrections educators are encouraged to use the materials.



[www.brisbaneyoutheu.eq.edu.au](http://www.brisbaneyoutheu.eq.edu.au)

The Certificates in Core Skills for Employment and Training form a small part of the remodelling of teaching practice at the Brisbane Youth Education and Training Centre. The schools literacy and numeracy strategy, known as 'Unlocking Learning' uses a range of innovative strategies to ensure that teachers are aware of students' skills gaps, teach to these gaps, and re-test students following the teaching period to ensure that what has been taught has been learnt.

The Unlocking Learning strategy employs a number of teaching methods including explicit, whole-class teaching, certificate course work and individualised skills-gap teaching. This pedagogical approach has seen students in detention make rapid progression towards their educational goals.

Assessment data indicates that students who engage in the school's program for 1 semester (20 weeks) improve their reading age by an average of 1.2 years, that is more than twice the rate of progression normally expected. This accelerated learning is critical for students in detention as most are significantly behind their mainstream peers. For example the average ability level of an incarcerated youth in 2014 was equivalent to that expected of Grade 5 student.

Considering the average age of a detained student is nearly 16 it is apparent that innovative programs like 'Unlocking Learning' are required to ensure young people in detention return to the community prepared with the skills to enable them to participate in school, flexi-school, training or work.