

Media release

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Students get a taste of working life

Collie youngster Jake Avins would like nothing better than to work alongside his brother Cody as an apprentice at Premier Coal. It's a similar story for Blake Briggs, Bryton Oliver, Hayden Barber, Cameron Simm and Fraser Hislop who also hope to build a career in the mining industry.

The six were among 23 Collie Senior High School students who got a taste of working life at Premier Coal this year as part of the company's commitment to workplace learning.

Premier provided a total of 40 workplace-learning positions for Collie students in 2016 in the mechanical, electrical, boilermaker and auto-electrical trades as well as in nursing and surveying. Students from Manea Senior High School, Bunbury Catholic College, the WA College of Agriculture Harvey and Southern Regional TAFE also took part.

Premier Coal general manager Glenn Burlinson said the mine was proud to support training and employment initiatives for local young people. He said Premier Coal had a workforce of more than 400, 70% of whom lived in the Collie area and 95% of whom lived within 70km of the town.

The Collie students praised Premier Coal's workplace learning. "They were really well organised," Blake said. "They had a project motor purely for students to pull apart, which was great."

Collie Senior High School technology and design coordinator John Bylund said the program provided an invaluable opportunity for students to get one-on-one instruction from people working directly in their field of interest. Mr Bylund said he had benefited from similar experience by twice taking part in the Teacher Industry Placement Scheme at Premier Coal.

"I got the opportunity to work across different fields in a real workplace, which was all about currency," Mr Bylund said. "It really helps my students by me getting out there and seeing and experiencing first-hand what industry does, needs and wants."

Collie Senior High School workplace learning coordinator John Williamson thanked Premier Coal for its ongoing support. "We've had kids going out there for 20-odd years and the (tradespeople) are great with them," Mr Williamson said. "Premier Coal has consistently been the biggest employer that takes our kids for work placement and many have gone on to secure employment there."

Photo caption: Collie Senior High School students Blake Briggs, Bryton Oliver, Jake Avins, Hayden Barber, Cameron Simm and Fraser Hislop as well as design and technology teacher John Bylund have all enjoyed workplace learning opportunities at Premier Coal.

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