

Media release

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Traineeships provide opportunities for local youth

Collie trio Tabitha McKay, Corey Backhouse and Chloe Ugle are kick-starting their working careers thanks to traineeships with Premier Coal.

Introduced earlier this year as part of Premier's ongoing commitment to supporting skills and training initiatives in Collie, the mine is working with children's education charity The Smith Family to provide traineeship opportunities for young people across all areas of its open-cut operations.

For 17-year-old Tabitha, the opportunity to undertake a school-based business administration traineeship in Premier's Health, Safety and Training Department has allowed her to follow her dream. "I want a career in safety, where I can help make sure people get home after every shift," Tabitha said. "My dad works in the mining industry, so if I can help make sure people like him go home to their families every day, that would be a good thing."

Sixteen-year-old Corey Backhouse said his time on site provided an opportunity to learn about IT through his school-based traineeship, while also gaining the experience of a large workplace. "I'm learning a lot of skills I wouldn't have got in a normal workplace like communicating with lots of different people and problem solving," he said. "If anyone else gets a chance like this, go for it."

Both Tabitha and Corey will continue their traineeships until the end of next year as part of their Year 12 studies at Collie Senior High School.

Chloe Ugle recently started a 12-month, full-time business administration traineeship with Premier after finishing her Year 12 studies at CSHS. Having never been to a mine site prior to commencing her traineeship, Chloe initially found the environment slightly daunting. "It's been very challenging but I am up to it," Chloe said. "I have adapted quickly, I am learning a lot and I would love to work for Premier in the future."

Sereena Pas of The Smith Family in Collie, thanked Premier for initiating the traineeships, which she said provided a great opportunity. "The trainees have all been part of our Learning for Life scholarship program, which supports them with the tools needed to participate fully in their education," she said. "The traineeships provide an opportunity to train and earn an income at the same time as working toward a nationally-recognised qualification."

Premier Coal General Manager, Glenn Burlinson, said the mine was proud to be working with The Smith Family in support of employment and training initiatives for local young people. Premier Coal is a major supporter of The Smith Family. It has a workforce of more than 400, 70% of whom live in the Collie area and approximately 95% within 70km of the town.

Photo caption: Premier Coal school-based IT trainee Corey Backhouse shows fellow trainees Chloe Ugle and Tabitha McKay some of the things he has learned in his new role.

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Media contact: James Rickards, General Manager Investor Relations and Corporate Affairs, Yancoal Australia Ltd, +612 8583 5922, +61419 731 371, james.rickards@yancoal.com.au