



Mary Jensen, WECA Co-ordinator

## Winter's here – it's nice to work indoors ....

**Indoor work has its good points – especially at this time of the year!** This is a very real advantage of the Mechanical Engineering sector – it definitely has the benefit of being largely indoors and comes with respectable working hours – an advantage over, say, the agricultural sector that we can promote to young people considering their career options.

However of course many WECA members businesses are tied to the agricultural sector and we need to thank the Weather Gods for growing plenty of grass this year and producing a good season that means our farmers can inject spending into the economy. Fielddays are coming up next week. Trisha King (WECA Chair) and Graeme King have been making the trip out to exhibit at Fielddays for 20 year of their 25 years in business in Mainline Sheetmetals. That's dedication for you (you can catch them at site G20!)

The global crisis is still with us and on a local level, we have seen more fiscal "belt tightening". There has been the recent threat of fiddling with the number of technology teachers in schools which in my opinion would be a mistake given the loss of practical skills to a certain extent already in the next generation. Short of getting involved in a politically charged debate, I will share with you part of a light-hearted article I read recently by Dave Armstrong, Dominion Post

"Though my older brothers came home from manual with wooden stools and lamps mounted on intricately-cut dodecahedrons, I spent six months making a small scraper to wipe mud off my soccer boots. It didn't work because it was so crooked. And yet we all loved manual. In a school week dominated by "writing" subjects such as English and maths, we relished doing something practical.

I actually didn't learn that much woodwork, but I learned that my Niuean mate (called "that Island boy" by the teacher) had enormous practical ability. I learned that although I had a precocious ability to manipulate words and symbols, I could do little with wood. I learned that there was a subject where the "bottom" kids ruled and that I was part of the 20 per cent "tail", as our Government loves to call it. I understood what it must feel like for the kids who dreaded maths and English every week because they had little academic ability.

We also learnt something that this Government has not - do not mess with technology teachers. If our economy is to get out of the present morass it's in, we'll need creative entrepreneurs. But we'll also need practical people who can utilise technology to realise these visions. New Zealanders pride themselves on their No 8 wire ability, yet thanks to national standards and other "reforms", it's fast becoming a myth as our schools and universities become more academic and less practical.

If anything, Education Minister Hekia Parata should be increasing funding, not just for technology teachers, but for the equipment in their workshops. Go visit a Scandinavian technology class and you'll understand why they lead the world in furniture manufacturing."

This year the CareerPaths Waikato Expo is not taking place in Claudelands and so we are missing giving out that one-on-one advice to young people and their parents considering a career in engineering. In its place we increased the numbers doing "Get a Life" (see below) and are making the videos in order to create a profile of mechanical engineering in our region. Please be a part of this project.

Don't forget to register for the Phil O'Reilly event on July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Catch you soon (Maybe at the Perry Metal Protection event on June 6<sup>th</sup>) ☺

.....Mary Jensen  
WECA Co-ordinator



*A special HUGE thanks to Sarah Hickey of Wintec for co-ordinating Get a Life. Fantastic job! And thank you Rosemary Wyborn of Wintec for providing the 200 plus lunches for the hungry staff and students!*



## Get A Life – Engineering Careers Day – May 8, 2012

Engineering careers pathways were in the spotlight at the Get a Life Engineering Careers Day on May 8.

The event gave over 200 year 12 and 13 Waikato students an insight into engineering careers and study options through onsite visits to WECA engineering companies and Wintec's City and Rotokauri Campus. Thanks to the teachers who brought students came from St John's College, Huntly College, St Paul's Collegiate, Ngaruawahia High School, Melville High School, Te Awamutu College, Cambridge High School, Paeroa College, River City Training Academy, Taumarunui High School, Hamilton Boys' High School, St Peters School, Fairfield College, Fraser High School, Hamilton Girls High School



Vaughan Wetton of Wintec Rotokauri Campus directs secondary school technology teachers and careers advisors on Get a Life Day

Thank you to the WECA companies who hosted students :

Stafford Engineering, Stainless Design, Active Plastics, Mainline Sheetmetals, Progressive Group, Alto Packaging, Convex Plastics, Hunter Filling Systems, Wilkinson Transport Engineers, J P Marshall, Millennium Plastics, Supreme Sheetmetals.



Ngaruawahia High School visited Mainline Sheetmetals. From left to right : Matiu fabricates a chicken shed vent cover, Tom Gilbert is helped by Ian Langlands, Harold Clatworthy is using a plasma cutting machine watched by Patrick May.



## Sector promo video starring...YOUR COMPANY!

**We are pleased to invite you to be part of a video showcasing the Waikato Mechanical Engineering Sector to young people throughout the Waikato.**

The video project, a partnership between WECA and Brella Projects, is designed to showcase the sector, its jobs, training options and career paths.

Video profiles will be filmed for participating WECA members for a very special rate with footage from all videos later cut into a 12-minute DVD showcasing the sector.

Members can use their video on their websites and marketing material and are guaranteed to feature in the sector video, to be distributed via Waikato technology and engineering teachers.

The video is scheduled to be launched at WECA's Annual General Meeting, the Atrium, Wintec House, in October. The video will also be available on-line

Please contact Mary Jensen on 021 2955 951, or [mary@brella.co.nz](mailto:mary@brella.co.nz) to find out more...

## WECA Event : BusinessNZ Chief to speak

**BusinessNZ chief executive Phil O' Reilly will speak at a joint WECA and Regional Business Partner Waikato event in July.**

As the head of New Zealand's largest business advocacy group, Phil represents thousands of businesses of all sizes. He is a refreshing speaker with a valuable message on how business capability and the right connections create prosperity.

The BusinessNZ group includes four large regional business associations, the Major Companies Group, Export NZ, more than 70 affiliated industry associations and Buy NZ Made. The group's goal is New Zealand's prosperity through successful business.

Phil works with government and other key decision makers on issues of concern to business and the economy.

Join us to hear him speak – **July 18, 4.30pm, Bill Gallagher Centre, Wintec**. Drinks and nibbles provided. Register your interest by e-mailing [mary@weca.org.nz](mailto:mary@weca.org.nz).

## Congratulations Trisha and Graeme King of Mainline Sheetmetals on 25 years of business!



## Do you have a star staff member? NZCTF applications close on August 1st

The New Zealand Craftsman Training Foundation assists young people just starting out in their trade careers to gain industry skills and experience overseas without leaving their jobs in New Zealand.

The NZCTF places Awardees into short term roles (4-8 weeks) in top level international companies where they gain further training and practical work experience to bring back to their NZ employer. Employees come home equipped with the latest overseas knowledge in technical skills and methods and feed their knowledge and skills back into the New Zealand industry, thus raising their own value and further identifying the skilled trades as a worthy and rewarding vocation.

The NZCTF provides travel scholarships for young tradespersons who have recently completed their trade training, apprenticeship or recognised trade qualification to National Level 4 Standard, and who have been recognised by their employer/industry for future leadership potential. This experience will stimulate young tradespeople to accept responsibility upon completion of their training and look for new challenges and horizons in their organisation and industry.

Each Award is custom-designed with the employer to benefit the company and the trainee. Travel and some specified accommodation grants are included.

For more information and to apply go to [www.craftsmantraining.co.nz](http://www.craftsmantraining.co.nz) or contact [mary@weca.org.nz](mailto:mary@weca.org.nz) for an application form.

### WECA thanks sponsors:



**Articles and photos welcome for JulyNewsletter.** Please email to [mary@weca.org.nz](mailto:mary@weca.org.nz)

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