

MEDIA RELEASE

11 March 2019

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From stay-at-home mum to lady tradie

TAFE Queensland student and mother-of-four, Jennah Wone is a trailblazer.

Ms Wone is an apprentice air-conditioning and refrigeration technician and nationally just 1.5 per cent of the industry's workforce is female*.

Ms Wone, 34, said she is living proof that it's never too late to get on the tools.

"I am so keen to complete my trade successfully and to hopefully inspire other women and mothers to give a trade a go, and remove the stigma around females in male-dominated industries," Ms Wone said.

"I believe that being a female in a trade is a great thing and I get great feedback from clients," she said.

TAFE Queensland North Region Building and Infrastructure Industry Portfolio Manager Tracy Turner said increasing diversity in industry is a win-win.

"There is plenty of research that shows gender equality in the workplace can positively impact an organisation's reputation, sustainability, competitiveness, productivity, economic growth and overall performance," Ms Turner said.

"The female apprentices studying with us are often leaders in the classroom, they are tidy, gentle on the tools and have great attention to detail - attributes which are appealing to employers.

"There are skills gaps in a number of trade areas, so there's no better time for women – at any stage of their working life - to get started in a trade," she said.

According to the Australian Government's National Skills Needs List, air-conditioning and refrigeration mechanic, bricklayer, carpenter, fitter and turner, plumber, telecommunications technician and motor mechanic are just some of the occupations identified as experiencing a national skills shortage.

Ms Wone works for Recharged Air and Electrical and she said her brother, who is also in the trade, inspired her to become an apprentice.

"I love making things work, whether it be a brand new install or a breakdown, there is always problem solving and fault finding involved which means that I never stop learning," Ms Wone said.

"I am lucky that I found something I love and I get paid to do it," she said.

Ms Wone said that juggling work and studies while raising four children had been a learning curve.

"I went from being a stay-at-home parent for eight years to having an empowering feeling of being able to provide a great lifestyle for me and my children and that makes me proud," Ms Wone said.

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“My children are my biggest cheerleaders and recently something broke at my son’s daycare and his instant response was 'My mum will bring her tools and fix it', my son is three years old!

“My advice to other mothers and women is to find something you love and do it; hold your head high, push your comfort zones and own it.

“Learning a trade takes hard work and dedication, but you’re gaining a lifelong career,” she said.

Ms Wone’s dedication to her studies was recognised at the 2018 Trade Excellence Awards when she was named the TAFE Queensland Cairns campus Female Student of the Year.

Ms Turner hopes Ms Wone’s story inspires other women to pursue a trade career.


“Jennah is the first female student to enrol in a Certificate III in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration at the TAFE Queensland Cairns campus in the last five years,” Ms Turner said.

“It’s wonderful that Jennah has gained new skills and achieved a job outcome that she is passionate about,” she said.

TAFE Queensland has a range of pre-apprenticeship courses available to help high school students, school leavers and mature age learners try out a career before committing to an apprenticeship.

To find out more about your study options, call TAFE Queensland on 1300 308 233 or visit tafe.qld.edu.au

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 [Photos of TAFE Queensland air-conditioning and refrigeration apprentice Jennah Wone can be found here.](#)

More Information

*According to [Job Outlook data from the Australian Government](#), 1.5 per cent of air-conditioning and refrigeration mechanics are female and the industry is in demand of qualified workers, with around 18,000 job openings predicted between now and 2023.

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