



Renewal SA's Works Program builds a better workforce on-site

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Bringing new life to old places is just one part of the Renewal SA story. As well as constructing new neighbourhoods, the organisation is also upskilling locals through its Works Program.



Stepping Stone Curtis Road Centre Director, Leonie Langley, with Renewal SA Works Program graduate, Abi Lasham.

With projects in Playford Alive, Bowden, Port Adelaide, Woodville West and Tonsley – among several others – Renewal SA has a widespread and ongoing influence in the urban renewal of Adelaide.

While these built environments are visible proof of the organisation's impact, the agency also has a strong commitment to providing employment and job training opportunities through



established in 2008 to maximise the community and social inclusion benefits from our urban renewal projects,” Renewal SA’s Training and Employment Initiatives Manager, Samantha Wilson, says.

“One of the key elements of our strategy is to embed work experience and job opportunities into all our contracts that go out for tender.

“We deliver pre-employment programs using State Government funds for qualifications and skill sets, and partner with registered training organisations and employers to provide training programs that offer local people an opportunity to upskill, gain work experience, and on-going employment.

“We also deliver live training site programs where we take a Renewal SA piece of land or a community piece of land – be that a church or a community centre – and partner with registered training organisations for students to attain a qualification or skill set.”

These live training projects provide participants with an opportunity to gain practical hands-on experience and gain skills in a non-traditional classroom environment, whilst working on projects for the community.

Since 2008, the Works Program has provided 540 work experience opportunities and 247 paid employment positions across Renewal SA projects.

Darren Wanganeen is one such worker who found opportunity through a Renewal SA project in Port Adelaide. After having his eye on the Port Adelaide redevelopment’s Facebook page, he noticed the Works Program flyer and decided to register his interest to join a Live Training Program.

“[I was] really keen to get into construction, it had always interested me and I had not had the opportunity. I like working hands-on, and the fact that this program offered working with machinery and the opportunity to gain some tickets was very appealing,” Wanganeen says.

After completing the Works Program Live Training Program in June 2015, Wanganeen was offered work experience with T&J Constructions, a Renewal SA contractor on the Woodville West development, which led to ongoing employment with the firm.

“Life is great – it is flat out and I love it,” Wanganeen says.



The Works Program is designed to respond to industry needs and offer opportunities “around construction, civil construction, aged care, childcare, retail, hospitality, just to name a few,” Wilson says.

After opening a childcare centre in Playford, a strong relationship was built between Renewal SA and Stepping Stone (SA) Childcare & Early Development Centres, much to the benefit of Abi Lasham, who had been looking for a way into the industry, and found it through Renewal SA’s Works Pre-Employment Program

“I always wanted to be a teacher when I was younger, [but] I did not do well at school – I struggled and found school difficult,” Lasham says.

“I attended an Information Session [and] there was at least 100 people there. We had the Managers from Stepping Stone, Helen Ketley and Colleen Crane, discuss their organisation and the opportunities on offer.

“We completed some group activities and then had small group interviews with Stepping Stone Directors. From there we were advised if we had been accepted into the program.”

Abi was accepted into the Program, gained employment with Stepping Stone (SA) Childcare & Early Development Centres and has since enrolled in a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care

“I was scared and overwhelmed at first – it was very real and no longer a classroom situation I was very much aware of my responsibilities and it even made me a little anxious at times,” Lasham says.

“I was working with a great team who were very supportive... [And] it was about me trusting my own ability to do well. I knew I was competent and told myself to be confident – I can do this.”

For more information on current Works Program opportunities, see the Renewal SA [website](#).