

Building community trade skills

CHEVALIER COLLEGE OFFICIALLY OPENED ITS HIGHLANDS TRADES SKILLS CENTRE, AND WITH IT, A NEW ERA OF COMMUNITY CO-OPERATION.

A ceremony was held in July to open and bless the facility, with many special guests in attendance. The new facility includes two purpose-built educational buildings which will be used by students studying construction and primary industries courses.

The project was completed with a \$1.5 million grant provided by the Federal Government as part of the Department of Education's Trade Training Centre in Schools Program, as well as a \$30,000 grant from the Veolia Mulwara Trust that helped to fit-out the centre once it was built.

NSW Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General and Minister for Social Services, spoke at the official opening and unveiled the facility's plaque.

Ms Fierravanti-Wells said creating a highly-skilled and well-trained workforce was a priority, through innovative and practical approaches to deliver trade qualifications during secondary school.

"We need to provide students with skills employers need into the future," she said.

School headmaster Chris McDermott said that as the majority of funding was provided through a government grant, the facility should be accessible to students beyond Chevalier College.



A group of Chevalier students from the Year 12 construction course in the new Highlands Trade Skills Centre at Chevalier College. Photo by Victoria Lee

"We want these facilities to be something more than just for us," he said.

"These facilities need to be part of the community and that is why we are working with TAFE Illawarra as well as other schools and professional bodies in the area to see this facility be available to all in the community."

Mr McDermott said community support as well as support from family and friends of the Chevalier College community had been integral to the project's success and completion.

Gubbins Home Timber and Hardware Moss Vale and Mittagong Home Timber and Hardware each made equipment available at cost price up to the value of \$30,000 to ensure the facility would be stocked with quality tools.■