



HUNTLEE ACADEMY

*Edition 1
Nov 2018*



ON THE RISE

GM UPDATE

Huntlee Academy's purpose is to provide increased opportunity for disadvantaged unemployed persons. By helping to develop their full personal potential, the Academy can have a positive and lasting influence on their health and wellbeing and the prospects of their families. To encourage community involvement as an integral part of the establishment and management of the services we provide.

Firstly, thank you to the supporters of Huntlee Academy, including the Board and the team at the Academy for your continuing input. This has allowed us to achieve our aim of giving opportunities those who have had difficulty obtaining employment.

The last 12 months has been a time of great change in the Academy which has seen the increase of our number of employees from 21 in July 2017 to 34 in July 2018.

Our turnover was close to \$2M of which nearly \$700K was spent on goods and services in the local area and a contribution of \$1.3M in wages was pumped into the local economy through our employees and their families.

The added input of the Return and Earn bulk collection point and both bulk and domestic loads of firewood has enabled the Academy to employ more people in these areas.

A project we began early last year to ensure, where possible, that 100% of our suppliers were local businesses for the Cessnock, Singleton and Maitland areas is complete. I am proud to report that this has been adhered to and the Academy is a substantial contributor to the local economy.

I have ensured this momentum continues by becoming a member of the Business Chamber in Cessnock and Great/Branxton where we will get involved where we can to supply labour and services for worthwhile community projects like the Greta to Branxton cycleway etc.

The Academy will continue with the Adopt-A-Road initiative for Wine Country Drive to ensure it is kept as pristine as we can.

The Academy is firstly, about teaching new transferable skills to qualify them for external employment when the opportunities arise.

I look forward to the coming year as we implement formal training programs and expand our offerings to Huntlee Estate and clients in the area. My aim is to take the Academy through the transition of the initial set up ably completed by Keith and Hamish Rodgers while achieving a long term sustainable business that can continue to offer opportunities and remain an integral part of the community.



Noel Kirby
General Manager Huntlee Academy



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MEET MARK BROWN ~ OUR OPERATIONS MANAGER.

Mark is our longest standing employee. Having been employed through LWP Property (Huntlee Estate) since 2008, Mark's employment was transferred to Huntlee Academy as Site Operations Leading Hand in 2014 during its inception. During this time Mark led a team of three, including himself, and managed all day to day operations and requests through Huntlee Estate.

Mark has been heavily involved in the supervision, mentoring and training of our employees. He has worked in all areas of the business and being the hands-on type, you'll see Mark around the Estate and along Wine Country Drive overseeing work quality as well as trying out all our new equipment.

Today, Mark manages all site operations at Huntlee Academy and is intrigaul in its daily operations. He is a valued member here at the Academy and we hope he sticks around for another 10 years!

LANDSCAPING



Meet the Team

PAUL – Landscaping Supervisor

Paul is one of our longest serving employees who first came to us through a work experience program. At completion he began here as a casual in the fencing team in early 2016 moving into a leading hand role in early 2017. Since then his dedication, hard work and passion for all things green has allowed him to become our Landscaping Supervisor.

JOEY – Leading hand

Joey came to us at the end of last year looking for work as he had recently completed his Certificate 3 in Landscaping. His personality during the interview and experience landed him a role in January of this year. Joey's commitment and leadership skills have earned him a leading hand position at Huntlee Academy.

SHANE C. – Labourer

Shane came to us through Mai-Wel. Looking for a chance to gain meaningful employment Shane was originally employed on a short-term basis but has proven he is a valuable team member willing to give anything a try. He is now a permanent casual.

SHANE O. – Labourer

Shane also came through Mai-Wel and hit the ground running. Shane is always willing to take on work in any area of the business and his goal of obtaining a fulltime role here became a reality in July. Shane is currently being trained to operate our newly purchased bobcat.

KEEPING IT LOCAL

Continuing to maintain community involvement, Huntlee Academy have engaged local businesses for the majority of our purchases including Simply Divine from Cessnock, as the primary supplier of all our plants.



Work done by our landscaping team can be seen throughout Huntlee Estate. We can proudly say our landscaping team have installed every front yard to date. Our supervisor Paul and his team take immense pride in their work and work tirelessly in making sure every resident is happy with the end result.

This year has seen change and growth in landscaping including the purchase of a designated iPad giving homeowners lifelike yard and garden designs prior to commencement to ensure everyone is on the same page.

The purchase of a bobcat and tipper this year has seen the Academy:

- Win a contract with an onsite builder for backyard landscaping
- Offer lot clean-up to builders and

resident as well as improve efficiency in front yard completions

- Facilitate in-house training and assessment to our employees on the bobcat
- Create a purpose-built assessment area for bobcat and tipper training
- Deliver bulk soils to site and improving efficiency on completions
- Retain employment for 2 employees: Shane. C and Shane. O

WOODSPLITTING PROGRAM

In 2016 Huntlee Academy partnered with Mai-Wel LabourForce Solutions to create the wood splitting program. It is aimed at providing training and support for participants who were part of the Supported Wage System (SWS). This is a special workplace arrangement to give opportunity to those in our community who are not able to perform jobs at the same capacity as other employees due to a disability either physical, mental or learning.

The program was initially designed to run for 13 weeks. In 2016, 3 x Mai-Wel participants commenced and we are happy to say that Anthony, one of our original participants, has retained ongoing employment since.

In 2017 Alex and James commenced and we were able to provide employment to them for 6 months before they moved on to permanent employment. Thomas and Freda then entered the program late 2017 and have been with us ever since. Gerard and Dean joined the program this year.

The last 2 years has seen the wood splitting process move from one splitter and hand packing bags of firewood to sell to residents, to a designated wood splitting area with an upgraded splitter, purpose-built conveyor and storage area for bulk collection.

HOW MUCH WOOD WOULD A WOODCHOPPER CHOP?

Since the beginning of this year we have cut enough wood to supply Wood Galore with 53 truckloads (6m³) of firewood and 30 trailers of firewood to local residents.

OUR MAI-WEL TEAM

Our wood splitting program could not have run without the ongoing support from the guys at Mai-Wel. They have spent many hours coaching, encouraging and helping the participants achieve their goals in a safe and rewarding manner. Always there if someone needs to talk Jamie, Maddie and Alex have been a great support to our guys. And who could forget Andrea, she spends time behind the scenes making sure the participants are suited to the role and the program is running smoothly. They have become very much part of our family here at Huntlee Academy.



Meet the team

FREDA – Freda commenced in 2017 under the program for 2 days per week. Since then Freda has had the opportunity to work in POS when needed and recently took on the role as the office cleaner. Freda thrives on the variety of her roles and continues to be supported by both Huntlee Academy and Mai-Wel.

THOMAS S.– Thomas commenced with Freda and a strong friendship has formed. Thomas and Freda work well together as a team when performing their roles in both the wood splitting program and in POS. Thomas also continues to be supported by both Huntlee Academy and Mai-Wel.

GERARD – Since commencing the program Gerard has shown sheer determination to do the best job he can. Unhindered by cerebral palsy, Gerard works in both the wood splitting program and as a casual painter in the fencing team.

DEAN – Happy to have a chat and always in a cheerful mood, Dean has spent some time helping the fencing team paint panels on the Estate in between wood splitting.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE



Our Public Open Space (POS) was the first business unit established when the Academy was in its infancy. Commencing in 2015, the unit was made up of only three employees, two of which are still employed with us today. It focussed on clearing land at Huntlee Estate, sawmill work and boundary rural fencing. A lot of this work was conducted manually or with limited machinery.

POS continued to expand in conjunction with the progression of Huntlee Estate where it moved into the maintenance of the developed land and the parks, recreation areas and roadside of Wine Country Drive. Towards the end of 2015 the Academy increased its original three employees to 12, covering the three business units that we have today: POS, Landscaping and Fencing. The Academy took on the Adopt-a-Road agreement with Cessnock City Council in 2016 and has been committed to keeping the 7.6km of Wine Country Drive in excellent condition. This agreement will come to an end next year, however the Academy is committed to upholding this agreement beyond 2019.

During 2017, the POS equipment was upgraded to provide employees with more ergonomically sound equipment as well as improving efficiency and quality for the residents. Over the last 12 months the POS team have acquired:

- Top soil/fertiliser spreaders
- Tow behind weed spraying machines
- Edgers, whipper snippers, ride on lawn-mowers as part of the commitment to upgrade equipment

In conjunction with this, the POS team have undergone HazChem training for working with hazardous chemicals, teaching employees regarding safe use, suitable PPE, application practices and storage when working on the Estate.

Meet the team

Since this is a larger team we will meet some of them this newsletter and the remainder in the next edition.

MICK – Leading Hand

One of the longer serving employees, Mick has worked his way up from a casual labourer to Leading Hand. Mick is in charge of keeping Wine Country Drive rubbish free and presentable. You may have seen him!

IAN – Leading Hand

Huntlee Academy was able to provide Ian employment after spending years not working to care for a family member. His years of experience as a greenkeeper and bubbly personality made him a perfect member of our team. He is also a member of the HSE Committee.

CAITLIN & MITCH – Labourers, brother and sister!

These two are a powerhouse. Mitch, one of our younger employees, is hard working and willing to try anything. Caitlin is currently undergoing traffic management training to meet our obligations for working on Wine Country Drive.

JOHN – Labourer

John is our youngest employee. He started working with us last year as part of a work experience program from Cessnock High School. During this time John's work ethic, willingness to work and reliability shone through. John has been offered a casual position while he continues to attend school.

Work practices within POS have evolved to include the introduction of a seasonal schedule to facilitate growth rates, pest and weed control. The challenge still remains however, as frosty mornings, 40C+ days and continuous dry weather, impacts the health of our fauna.

FENCING

Our fencing team has seen huge growth over the last 3 years and as a result, completions have quadrupled! Starting out with 4 employees, the fencing team were averaging 4 completions per month, now the team has expanded to 11 employees including a leading hand and dedicated fencing supervisor.

Our dedicated team can proudly say the average number of fences completed every month is 15! Let's not forget our rural fencing, to date, we have completed over 4000 meters in and around land earmarked for Huntlee Township.

Working closely with Huntlee Estate and its residents, our team works tirelessly to provide a variety of fencing to all blocks purchased which include modular walls, vogue and slimwall panel fencing, retaining, rural, bollard and special project fencing.

The biggest challenge for our fencing team is coordinating with residents, Huntlee Estate and other builders onsite to ensure a smooth installation and high-quality fence.

Specialised training has been given to

our fencing team following the recent purchase of equipment which has enabled us to take more control of the work required of us.

This includes:

- Laser leveller measuring device – to ensure accuracy of work
- Kanga walk-behind loader – for excavations of small areas and drilling holes for posts and plants
- Sonic location device that will be invaluable at detecting underground assets before breaking ground
- Core drilling machine which enables us to drill our own cement holes in retaining walls for fencing
- Star picket driver – to eliminate manual handling and fatigue

OUR FOOTPRINT

Always aware of how we affect the environment, the last 12 months have seen a reduction in waste from the packaging materials all modular fencing comes in. The Academy now returns the timber dunnage to the supplier for reuse and all metal is recycled at Newcastle Metal Recyclers recycling plant.

In an effort to reduce plastic waste on site ending up in landfill, the Academy has been in recent talks with the Plastic Police® Partnerships to investigate the possibility of becoming a member of the program and ultimately a collection point for soft plastic.

We have also reviewed our painting practices and are happy to report that the new adopted practice has seen a dramatic reduction in waste and potential environmental contamination.



Meet the Team

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BRAD WICKEN – *Fencing and Projects Supervisor*

Brad is a long-standing employee who has been with Huntlee Academy since its inception. Brad has worked in all areas of the business from clearing land to building fences and the Dog-Run to name a few. Any small project at Huntlee Estate was built by Brad.

LES – *Leading Hand*

Les came to us in early 2017 from Salvation Army looking for work that would give him a work/life balance for his family of 6. Les showed a real knack for fencing and leadership early on. It wasn't long before Les was offered a position of Leading Hand. Les is also an active member of the HSE Committee.

DYLAN – *Labourer*

Dylan came to us as part of a joint venture to complete his 4-week practical work experience component of his Certificate 2 in Construction. Following the completion of his work experience Dylan was offered a casual position in fencing. Dylan's quiet, reliable demeanour coupled with his strong work ethic lead him to a fulltime position in 2017.

STEVEN – *Labourer*

Steven came through Mai-Wel in 2016. Steven has worked in fencing, POS and has been the cleaner for both Huntlee Academy and Huntlee Estate Offices. Steven is hard working and always up for a chat.

THOMAS – *Labourer*

Coming through the Mai-Wel word splitting program, Thomas is our newest recruit. Outdoorsy by nature and a keen worker saw Thomas land a casual position in fencing and POS as a labourer moving out of the wood splitting program within weeks of joining.



If you would like to know more about **Huntlee Academy** and our services, please contact us!

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RETURN & EARN

Commencing in mid-January of this year our bulk collection point has really taken off. As of the end August, we have processed 491,415 cans and bottles. That's an average of 2 shipping containers every 3 weeks!

When you come to site you'll be greeted by Geoff and Peter who are dedicated to ensuring our collection point runs smoothly.

Both Geoff and Peter are favourites among the regular users of our Return and Earn who have been known to leave them baked goods and 5-star reviews on Facebook!

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

As we are a business first, collection point second, we do ask that prior to coming to site you:

- Pre-count your returns. We'll take as many as you can bring but you must pre-count!
- Check the returns are in good condition (not broken or crushed)
- The returns have intact labels
- Are clean and free of liquids and rubbish
- All bags/boxes are taken with you when you leave

WHY RETURN AND EARN?

Drink container litter makes up 44% of the volume of all litter in the state and costs more than \$162 million to manage. Return and Earn is the largest litter reduction scheme introduced in NSW and will help meet the Premier's goal of reducing the volume of litter in the state by 40% by 2020.

DONATIONS

As we are a not-for-profit charity organisation we accept donations from the community to assist with the purchasing of new equipment, providing training and upskilling of our employees and providing employment from nominated service providers such as Mai-Wel, Salvation Army and Joblink.

THANKYOU!

A BIG THANKS to the local community for all donations to date. Its always a pleasure to meet new people and everyone has gone out of their way to assist us with pre-counting and ensuring the bottles/cans are clean and in good condition. Please like our Facebook page and continue to share our posts amongst your friends.

Meet the Team

PETER - Yardman/Storeman

The efficiency of our yard is solely thanks to Peter. He is our go-to-man for anything that needs building or fixing. Peter also manages all stock and inventory within the yard, manages fuel distribution and, if you've been to site to utilise our Return and Earn collection point you would most likely have spoken with him. He is also a member of the HSE Committee.

GEOFF - Peter's righthand man and partner in crime

Geoff works alongside Peter 3 days a week and came to us from Mai-Wel after having time off work. Always bright and bubbly with a constant smile on his face, Geoff fitted straight into his role. Geoff is the face of Return and Earn here at the Academy, so you may have had the pleasure of meeting him.



Like us on Facebook!

OPERATING HOURS

MONDAY - FRIDAY

8am - 3pm

(excluding public holidays)