

# SWP FOCUS: BRENTON SAUNDERS



Recently, Brenton finished his time with Steve and the fantastic team at Mitre 10 in Camden. Brenton was in his element amongst the hardware, tools and paint!

“My favourite work placement has been Mitre 10 in Camden. I did a lot of stuff there, like getting the tools down off the shelf, pricing the stock for sale and sweeping up the floors. I enjoyed talking to the customers and spending time with the people who worked there. It’s the kind of place I’d like to work at when I finish school” says Brenton.

This week, Brenton commences his latest Structured Work Placement (SWP) with our generous host employers, Mark and Julie, at Poplar Caravan Park, Elderslie. Like Mater Dei student, Peter, before him, Brenton’s duties will include lots of ‘hands-on’ manual tasks, such as gardening (weeding, planting, hedging, mowing and watering), hazard reduction (clearing gutters and waterways, rubbish removal and sorting) and general facility maintenance (minor building repairs and looking after ‘the ute’).

Garry and Kathleen, Brenton’s parents, commented on how confident Brenton has become as a result of his involvement with the SWP Program over the last two years. This has certainly not been an overnight transformation. Brenton has gradually progressed from school-based SWP tasks, to small-group teamwork in a supported workplace environment (Australian Foundation for Disabilities [AFFORD], Ingleburn, working with the immediate support of a familiar Mater Dei staff member), to eventually venturing out semi-independently into the local businesses.

Without the support, generosity and mentorship of host employers such as these, the long-term transition into post-school life for our students, whether in employment, training or a Community Participation program, would be far more daunting. SWP gives our students regular, secure and supported opportunities to confront any anxieties they might have, to build on their skill-set in readiness for future change, and to help them clarify their personal goals and preferences for their future vocation.

*If you would like to know how you can help our students by participating in our SWP Program, please contact Alison Meani.*