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# Step toe & Son

KEEPING A  
TALENT FOR  
TRADES IN  
THE FAMILY

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**MIGAS**  
APPRENTICES & TRAINEES

# Passing on a passion for trades

In an era where university is often presented as the golden ticket to success, the Steptoe family tells a different story—one of craftsmanship, mentorship, and the enduring value of trade careers.

**John Steptoe, a seasoned Fitter and Turner, and his son Harry, an up-and-coming carpenter, represent two generations finding fulfillment in the trades through MIGAS Apprentices & Trainees.**

"Since the age of eight, I've always loved building things and creating with my hands," said Harry, who is currently completing his carpentry apprenticeship with MIGAS and host employer, Clarke Constructions.

"That satisfaction of looking at something and being proud that you built it with your own two hands is an unmatched feeling," Harry said.

This passion for craftsmanship runs deep in the Steptoe family. John, who completed his own apprenticeship through MIGAS years ago, recalls being influenced by a lineage of tradesmen.

"My grandfather was a Mechanic, and my dad was a Panel Beater. I guess tinkering at home with them was probably my biggest influence," John reflected.

Now, he's watched with pride as his own son follows a similar path.

Despite attending an academically-focused school where university pathways were emphasised, both father and son found themselves drawn to the trades.

"I was always told university was the best pathway and a trade was considered as a 'backup' for if you were not good enough for uni," Harry said.

"But I could not go past my love for carpentry and being able to learn on the job."



*Harry and John are right at home in the family workshop together*

The apprenticeship journey, while rewarding, hasn't been without its challenges.

John remembers struggling with a difficult supervisor during his early days, while Harry admits to facing the occasional setback.

"As an apprentice, I do make mistakes... sometimes they are small but other times they are big," he said.

"I've learned to remember that I am still learning, and as long as I learn from my mistakes, I know that I am improving myself."

Both Steptoes credit MIGAS for providing crucial support throughout their apprenticeship journeys.

For John, the experience was so positive that when Harry showed interest in pursuing a trade, MIGAS was his first call.

"MIGAS is a fantastic organisation," John said.

"When it came time for Harry to need an apprenticeship, my first step was to call Linda Lay at MIGAS to see if they had any opportunities."

The younger Steptoe has already made his mark, competing in WorldSkills at both regional and national levels—an experience he describes as "an opportunity of a lifetime." His father couldn't be prouder.

"His achievements are enough to make any parent proud. I am beyond proud of Harry and forever grateful to MIGAS for their support of him," John said.

Their message to school leavers considering a trade pathway was stated in unison—"DO IT!"

"We have a massive skills shortage in Australia and there are very few non-trade jobs that have the job security that we have in the trades," Harry said.

"A trade pathway can lead to great things. Give it a try because you never know where it might take you."

When they're not on the job, both father and son share a love for the outdoors, spending time fishing, camping, and working on projects in their home workshop—proving that the apple truly doesn't fall far from the tree.

# Scholarships Fuel Trades Dreams

**MIGAS has relaunched its expanded MiScholarship program aimed at recognising excellence and supporting the next generation of skilled trades professionals.**

The program offers substantial financial support through various categories designed to celebrate achievement at every stage of the apprenticeship journey.

"As a non-profit organisation, we believe in reinvesting in our apprentices, trainees, and the businesses that support them," said MIGAS CEO David Hoey.

"This enhanced program reflects our commitment to not just training the next generation of trades professionals but supporting them through the financial challenges that can come with early career development," he said.

The scholarship categories have been designed to recognise effort and achievement at different stages of training progression. First and second-year apprentices can apply for the Rising Star scholarship category worth \$1,500 each, while those in their final years can aim for the Professional Excellence awards, providing \$2,000 scholarships.

MIGAS has also maintained its commitment to diversity in trades through dedicated categories. The Woman of Influence in Trades Award celebrates female leadership in traditionally male-dominated fields, while the Outstanding First Nations in Trades Award recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices excelling in their trade discipline.

Winners will be selected by an industry judging panel based on demonstrated achievement, professional conduct, and commitment to their trade.

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	PRIZE
Apprentice Rising Star	Awarded to up and coming apprentices who demonstrate exceptional work ethic and promising talent in their trade. Open to 1st & 2nd Year apprentices.	\$1,500 per scholarship
Trainee Rising Star (Trade or Non-trade)	Awarded to up and coming trainees who demonstrate exceptional work ethic and promising talent in their professional discipline. Open to 1st Year trainees.	\$1,500 per scholarship
Apprentice Professional Excellence	Awarded to talented apprentices demonstrating consistent work ethic, maturity and skillful application of trade skills. Open to 3rd, 4th and Final Year apprentices.	\$2,000 per scholarship
Trainee Professional Excellence (Trade or Non-trade)	Awarded to trainees showing attributes of one who is qualified in their field with dedication to achieving competency in their formal training. Open to Final Year trainees.	\$2,000 per scholarship
Woman of Influence in Trades	Awarded to a female apprentice who displays leadership qualities and the attributes of a role model to inspire others into pursuing a trade career. Open to 3rd, 4th and Final Year apprentices.	\$2,000 per scholarship
Outstanding First Nations Apprentice	Awarded to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander apprentice or trainee who has excelled in their trade, proudly represents their Indigenous identity and hopes to inspire others to do so. Open to apprentices or trainees in any Year.	\$2,000 per scholarship

Understanding that financial hardship can be a barrier to success, MIGAS will also introduce the 'We Stand up for Trade Apprenticeships' Fund.

This \$20,000 funding pool was established by the MIGAS Board to provide targeted support to apprentices and trainees experiencing personal challenges, with special consideration given to underrepresented groups.

In a first for the program, MIGAS is extending recognition to host employers through the new Empowering Apprentices Award. This category acknowledges businesses that create exemplary learning environments for apprentices and trainees.

Additionally, the prestigious Australian Apprenticeships Leadership Medal will recognise industry leaders who demonstrate exceptional commitment to apprentice development.

The awards culminate in a ceremony during National Apprenticeship Week (10-16 February 2025), to announce award recipients.

"Whether you're an apprentice showing promising talent, a seasoned trainee approaching qualification, or a host employer dedicated to developing the next generation of trades professionals, we encourage you to apply," Mr Hoey said.

"These scholarships represent more than financial support—they're an investment in the future of Australian trades." For more information about the scholarships and to submit applications, visit [migas.com.au/mischolarship](https://migas.com.au/mischolarship)

**APPLICATIONS  
CLOSE  
29 NOVEMBER 2024**



Clockwise from left: Isabella Bruce, Trainee of the Year Finalist, AEN NSW & ACT Awards; TAFE Qld Apprentice Awards category winners, Harry Steptoe and Lachlan Kemble with Linda Lay (MIGAS); and Jackson Peard, AEN NSW & ACT Awards First Nations Trainee of the Year Finalist with Grant Attard (MIGAS).



# frame-up

MIGAS apprentices and trainees have been making waves this month taking out several industry and training accolades.



Clockwise from above: MIGAS host employer, Bengalla Mining Company, was named Large Host Employer of the Year at the AEN NSW & ACT Awards; Tania Langton was named the Bob Marshman Trainee of the Year for the Darling Downs South West region in the Queensland Training Awards pictured with Shannon Maguire (MIGAS).

