

NEWS



WORKING OUT WELL: Leigh Delaney, Michael McKern and Adam Bell. Picture: Bill Conroy

Apprentices ease skills shortage

TRADE skills shortages in Bendigo have prompted calls for employers to take on young apprentices.

Tradestart supervisor David Robinson said young people who were not reaching their full potential at school were given opportunities to learn new skills and start work through the program.

"There is a shortage of skilled tradesmen out there and therefore it makes sense to encourage and provide training in these areas," he said.

Michael McKern from McKern Steel in Eaglehawk has taken on new Tradestart students as employees and urged other business owners to do the same.

"I've put on a couple of young blokes who I can mould and train into productive tradesmen over the coming years," he said.

"The process was easy and I didn't have to go through the time consuming task of advertising or choosing someone."

Mr McKern said the industry

had a responsibility to ensure it had tradesmen for the future.

His new employees Adam Bell, 16, and Leigh Delaney, 17, said they preferred to go straight into the workforce than stay in school and were enjoying work and training and hoped to finish their apprenticeships at McKern's.

"The response from young people has been positive and they demonstrate that they are keen to learn, but it also has to be matched by industry to give the kids a go," Mr Robinson said.