



2017
**VICTORIAN
TRAINING AWARDS**



Education
and Training

Real Training for Real Jobs

LOUISE NICHOLAS

FINALIST - 2017 VOCATIONAL STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Louise finds a natural pathway to environmental career via Gordon TAFE

Working in an office, Louise Nicholas spent her free time bird watching, camping on her bush block, and sharing her nature photography on her website, Outside Four Walls.

While her office job paid the bills, Louise felt work lacked meaning and she was capable of much more.

"I finally realised that the things I loved doing as a hobby were what I should focus on as a career," she says.

A redundancy got her thinking about her true passions and she headed to the Gordon Institute of TAFE, completing a Diploma of Conservation and Land Management in 2016.

She recalls her first year of study as a big learning curve as she hadn't studied full-time since leaving high school. In her first year she achieved high distinctions and was awarded the George Alexander Foundation scholarship for academic excellence.

Her biggest fear was returning to an office job, which made her more determined to fulfil her dream of working in the environmental industry. To gain practical skills she secured a Bush Crew position at Flora Victoria alongside her TAFE studies and volunteered with her local environmental group Friends of Kororoit Creek.



Now as Leading Hand of a Natural Resource Management Crew at Melbourne Water, Louise is reaping the rewards of chasing her dream. She embraces opportunities as they arise, such as participating in Melbourne Water's International Women's Day video to promote gender diversity.

"I'm an example of life-long learning and that it's never too late to change your career."

Vocational Student of the Year

The Vocational Student of the Year Award recognises an outstanding student's achievement in a course of study leading to a nationally recognised qualification.

Recognise and honour outstanding achievements in training

ABOUT THE VICTORIAN TRAINING AWARDS

Each year, the prestigious Victorian Training Awards recognise and honour the outstanding achievements of Vocational Education and Training students, teachers, training providers and employers.

The Awards celebrate excellence in the training and TAFE system, highlight student achievements and the businesses' who train them. Showcases innovation and collaboration between industry and training providers - continuing to put Victoria's top achievers in the spotlight.

Through *Skills First*, the Victorian Government is delivering a trusted training and TAFE system that delivers real training for real jobs. The Awards bring confidence and pride to vocational educational and training.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Individual Categories

- Vocational Student of the Year
- Apprentice of the Year
- Trainee of the Year
- Koorie Student of the Year
- School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year
- Teacher/Trainer of the Year

Training Provider Categories

- Small Training Provider of the Year
- Large Training Provider of the Year
- Community Training Provider of the Year

Employer Categories

- Small Employer of the Year
- Medium Employer of the Year
- Large Employer of the Year
- Employer Award for Apprenticeship Development

Industry Collaboration Award

Lynne Kosky Memorial Award for Lifetime Achievement

Australian Training Awards

There are five Australian Training Awards categories open for direct entry:

- National Achievement Award
- Excellence in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Practice Award
- International Training Provider of the Year Award
- School Pathways to VET Award
- Australian Apprenticeships - Employer Award

WHY APPLY?

The Awards set the standards for vocational education and training in Victoria; promoting high quality training and workplace skill development.

Being a finalist puts organisations at the forefront, building brand recognition and a strong industry reputation. In turn attracting a better standard of employees.

Students have the opportunity to showcase skills and their journey within the training and TAFE system. Plus students have the chance to network with industry experts and employers from across the state to help build their careers.

Award winners receive \$5,000 prize money.

Winners go on to be ambassadors for the Victorian Training Awards and have the opportunity to represent Victoria nationally at the Australian Training Awards (in aligned categories).

For more information visit Victorian Training Awards www.education.vic.gov.au/vta

For all enquires email victorian.training.awards@edumail.vic.gov.au phone 03 9907 6635.

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