

THE GORDON CARBON FIBRE COURSE

An Australian first TAFE course in carbon fibre manufacturing is helping put Geelong workers on the world stage.

Developed with industry and delivered by The Gordon, the Use of Carbon Fibre in Composite Manufacturing course provides a pathway for workers to learn skills and techniques to gain employment in the growing sector.

For former Ford employee Luke Gillett the course offered a change of direction, much-needed confidence boost and entry to an exciting new career.

After 20 years with the automotive manufacturer, mostly as a fitter and turner, the Barwon Heads father of two was retrenched. During those uncertain weeks, an information session about the composites course piqued his interest.

"It was quite a stressful time because there were not too many jobs out there unless I was prepared to commute or move to Melbourne!" Luke said. "But I wanted to stay in Geelong and this was too good an opportunity to let go."

Managed by Skilling The Bay and delivered by The Gordon's Advanced Manufacturing Technology Team, the program promotes and supports growth

of the existing and emerging carbon fibre sector in the Geelong region through targeted skills development and training.

Now in its second year, the course produces graduates ready to step into advanced manufacturing industry roles making lightweight, high-performance composite components for the sports, aerospace and automotive sectors.

Luke, whose passion for motorbikes and racing cars fed his curiosity for carbon fibre composites, said the course gave an insight into different manufacturing techniques while letting students "get their hands dirty" making things and testing durability.

Thanks to networks made within the course, the 39-year-old stepped into his first role one day after graduating. Luke spent three months with Quickstep Technologies as a production operator, before taking on a position as fitter and machinist with Carbon Revolution in February this year.

"The nice thing about this company is that they have big plans for expansion and increasing production volumes and are aggressively chasing new customers in Australia, Europe and the US," Luke said. "It is exciting to be working in a company that is looking to grow rather than downsize."



Ex-Ford worker Luke Gillett has a new career working with carbon fibre composites.

Students gain skills and knowledge focused on the different processes used for the manufacture of products using carbon fibres.