

# Brendan

## Background

Brendan's parents separated before he started school, and he grew up with his mother as a sole parent, with continuing support from his father as a medium-income family. At 6 he enjoyed school and was 'quite an academic'.

At 12 he was having a range of problems including asthma, headaches and attention difficulties. He said he wanted to be a mechanic. At 15 he left school during Year 10 at a Catholic college. He had been unhappy at school and not doing well.

At 16 he was doing a pre-apprenticeship in mechanics.

## May 2007 (age 16)

The family had moved to an outer suburb. He had just finished a 6-month pre-apprenticeship at TAFE that week and was planning to get a part-time job, do VCE at TAFE the following year and then get an apprenticeship in mechanics.

## Leaving school

I left school in the middle of the year, last year. I hated it there. I hated the kids. The kids were all snobs. And the teachers, they didn't really listen to what I was saying at all. They just couldn't be bothered. After a couple of years I thought about it and I just decided. It took a while to convince my parents. But they usually support me in every decision I make, so yeah they were OK with it.

After I left I did a five-week camp. It was just a place that didn't have any technology or anything. I heard about it through my school, my old school. When I came back from that camp I decided to do the pre-apprenticeship. I kind of already knew about it. It wasn't too bad. It was pretty simple, because it was just the basics of it all.

I'm thinking of going to try and get a part-time job. Coles or something, Target. I'd just put in my résumé and apply for them all. At the supermarket up the road. Try and get a job there. I haven't had a job, other than work experience at my dad's work. That was good. I'm going to go back to get my VCE. Just do another course to get my VCE, at a different TAFE. I think I have to start it at the start of the year, next year. I'd hope to get my VCE thing. And start my apprenticeship.

My dad's got a business. So I was hoping I could one day take over that. I'd hope to do the apprenticeship somewhere else, but if I couldn't get it anywhere else, then I'd do it with him. My dad knows a lot of people. He'd probably help out. Or I could just look in the newspaper.

## November 2007 (age 17)

Brendan had not yet got a job and was now hoping to go straight into an apprenticeship.

## Since leaving school

When I left school, halfway through last year, I really wanted to leave. I had to convince Mum and Dad how much I hated it. I did, and they sent me to this camp. It's like a 'no-technology' camp. Real old school. For five weeks. There was a nine-day hike, that was pretty good. After that I just came back and then we moved at the end of the year in here. At the start of this year I did a TAFE course, pre-apprenticeship mechanics, and that finished during summer time. And I haven't done anything since.

## The camp

At first I didn't like it. It was like a group camp. It was pretty good I think. There was blacksmithing, woodwork stuff. Except we weren't allowed any technology, like no electronic stuff at all. Only really had lights in the main hall. We had to clean every day and chop wood, sweep up the main hall. We all had to sit down at the table for breakfast. It was really strict. You weren't allowed to stand up or reach across anyone or else you lost your breakfast. I did that for a couple of weeks. Then it came to the nine-day hike and I was just like 'Nuh', didn't want to do that. But it was good. I did enjoy it. We did walk, I forget how far, every day, but I think in total it was like 80 kilometres, with really big heavy backpacks on. We refuelled halfway through the hike and kept going. And that was that. Then we had a presentation, all the families came up and we demonstrated what we'd been doing and then I went home.

## Moving location

We moved here from the inner suburbs. Because I lived there my whole life it was weird. At first moving was like awesome, especially moving to a house with a pool. That was pretty much all that was on my mind. But now it's like, the area's too far out, away from everything. The other was such a convenient location to everything. I don't see much of my friend lately. Before we moved, if I wanted to do something with him, I'd just catch the train a couple of stations up and we'd go do something or we'd go into the city. But now, to get to his place I have to get a bus, go up to get another bus and then another bus to get to the station to get the train, walk a kilometre to get to his place. It's a bit much. I've moved away from most of my friends. For the ones I was already far away, I'm still far away. Lately they are busy with school. They've got exams and stuff. My friend is Year 9 this year. My other mate is Year 10. And all my other ones from school are Year 11.

## Training: the pre-apprenticeship

I liked it because I was doing what I enjoy doing, pulling apart stuff and putting it back together. Except for my teacher, he was an idiot, he kept telling stories that no-one wanted to hear, and then when we actually got work done it was like, 'Oh, you're going too fast for me'. That went for six months, and it was fun. I wasn't too thrilled about going, cos I was frightened I was going to get stabbed or something.

But the kids were pretty nice. But that's just me, I'm paranoid about everything. I didn't learn heaps, but I learnt pretty much the basics. I'm not sure what you need to learn going into an apprenticeship. At the end they just helped us do résumés and made us look in the paper or something, for jobs. They had classes dedicated to learning that stuff. Going into interviews, the proper way to go for an interview, dress nice and be polite and stuff like that.

## Looking for work

I've been trying to get a job at Coles, just up there. Just for like night-time work. My brother's mate works night-time shift and he says the money's good, so I thought I'd give it a go. You had to create an account at Coles Myer online. Fill in forms. They sent me an email saying there should be no problem getting a job. But haven't sent anything since then. That's the only one I've tried for.

## The apprenticeship

I only realised the other day that I was allowed to start my apprenticeship. I was supposed to still be doing the course next year, the VCE one, but Mum decided, 'No, you don't need that...' I might get sick of it if I did it. Sick of the whole apprentice thing. It was Mum's idea. Because that pre-apprenticeship ... we thought, before doing it, that was supposed to be the course that got my VCE. And it was supposed to take a bit off my apprenticeship, but it wasn't. It was the wrong course. There are jobs for mechanics. I know that one for sure. Apparently they're having trouble hiring.

It's really the only one I know. Pretty much what I'm going for. I want to do stuff I enjoy, like mechanics. I just like hands-on stuff. I never really liked bookwork. But my dad, he runs a mechanic business and I've been interested in all his bookwork. All the payments and stuff. That stuff I'm interested, but not like other bookwork, like schoolwork. But hands-on stuff, it's just fun, fun to do. I know with my apprenticeship there's going to be schoolwork involved. But that's as far as I want to go with that. I don't want to do any more schoolwork than that.

The apprenticeship would be just like being a mechanic. Get up early, go all the way down by car. One week every month I'd have to do a week at school. That's the only part I'm not looking forward to. Yeah, should be good. And I'd be getting paid for working which hasn't really happened. It's crap wages – I don't know, I think first-year apprentice is like \$250 a week. Not good. But since I'm living at home it doesn't really matter. I want to get somewhere close. Hopefully I'll have a car. I think it would be better if I could get a car before I did my apprenticeship, just for getting around.

## Assistance

I'm all right, pretty well with all that stuff. Like Mum and Dad. They're just supportive, in everything. My friends, not really. I don't really talk to them much. They are at school. My dad, he hasn't done anything yet, but he's going to. Because he's a mechanic he knows a lot of people and he's trying to get an apprenticeship.

Well we've only just decided I'm doing it, so I haven't really needed help yet. I could do the apprenticeship with Dad, but Dad doesn't want me doing it there. He thinks like a dealership, Holden dealership maybe, because they've got all the technology. He doesn't have all that stuff. It's fine.

There was a career adviser at TAFE. I only had one session with her. I didn't really use it that much. It was just about my résumé.

## Money

I tried applying for Youth Allowance. But by the time we figured that one out, the course was over. Dad gives me \$100 a week. I have enough. I never leave the house, hardly. I just keep it. I go out sometimes, but when I do I just spend it all. But when I go out, I've got heaps of it. Are things hard to afford? Other than computer games, no.

## The future

The next year or two? Do my apprenticeship. Maybe just get a job up at Coles, just to earn a bit of money so I can get a car, because I'll be needing that for my apprenticeship.

## Advice for services to help young people

I don't know. Like for someone who's not well off or something? I don't know, I'm not in that situation. I suppose if you can find their interests and work on that.