

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Gardening trainee turns over a new leaf

Having a full-time job and the full pay packet to go with it feels pretty good for 23 year-old Djarwyn Burns.

Finding employment in the past has not been easy but his hard work will pay off when he graduates from a traineeship next month, which was funded through the Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative.

Djarwyn was selected in the six-month traineeship program along with five other young people from Toowoomba.

The trainees are on track to be the first group to all graduate from the program with a Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management and secure full-time jobs.

"It feels really good to be working full-time and earning a proper wage," Djarwyn said. "I never really considered this type of work before but I have enjoyed it and it has been good working with the other trainees."

Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) has been mentoring the trainees who are independently assessed by Rural Training Queensland.

"They don't realise it but they have already achieved so much," said QMDC Training Supervisor David McCarthy. "They've worked hard and shown a lot of initiative."

"The most encouraging part is they're all on track to graduate which is a terrific achievement for them and the program."

The hands-on program has also delivered benefits for Toowoomba not-for-profit organisation YellowBridge QLD, which manages more than 130 community housing properties.

Some of their properties have been used as training sites, helping the trainees to get experience in weeding, mulching and planting.

"It made sense to partner with YellowBridge QLD so our trainees could get the practical experience while their gardens enjoy a spring makeover," said Mr McCarthy.

The trainees also cleared five tonnes of prickly pear and lantana from a public reserve at Gowrie Junction and installed park benches and plant identification signs.

QMDC will host a barbeque at the reserve and the trainees will be the honorary tour guides to show guests what they have accomplished.

"I had mowed lawns before but now I know so much more about native plants, removing weeds and preparing garden beds," Djarwyn said.

"When I graduate from this traineeship my next goal is to keep working and get a full-time job doing this type of work," he said.

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***YellowBridge QLD is a local, independent, not-for-profit organisation that provides housing, disability support and home services across the Darling Downs.***