



Work experience options greater in the Hills

By **Lisa Pahl**

Changing careers or finding a new job can be tough if you don't have the right skills or someone willing to give you a go.

But luckily in the Hills there is plenty of support for job seekers looking to boost their training.

Only 5% of SA companies will take on job seekers for work placements, but that figure is four times higher in Mt Barker, according to community employment service CareerSystems.

Run through disability organisation Bedford, it helps the disabled and disadvantaged learn new skills and find work by partnering with businesses which offer placements.

Adelaide Hills Toyota is one Hills company that has taken on job seekers.

General manager Tom Gilbert said the program had "mutual benefits".

"We see it as an opportunity to help out someone looking to get extra skills, but it also helps us out as well," he said.

"We can always use an extra pair of hands around the place.

"We also believe in putting something back into the community and in being a conscientious member of the community and giving someone an opportunity."

The business recently took on Scott Kuchel through the program for six weeks of work experience.

Something new

Mr Kuchel joined CareerSystems 13 years ago after struggling to find work.

For the past 10 years he has worked as a night fill attendant in a supermarket, but wanted to try something new.

"It meant a lot to me working at Adelaide Hills Toyota because they allowed me to do jobs I have never done before and also to work with people I had never met before," Mr Kuchel said.

"They also gave me new working skills. I loved every minute of it."

Mr Kuchel also undertook 13 weeks of further training in motor mechanics through the Australian Apprenticeship Access Program.

While Mt Barker businesses were more willing to help job seekers than many others in SA, Bedford chief executive Max Dyason said there were many more in the area needing assistance.

People found it challenging to find work due to a lack of public transport and restricted access to training and health services, he said.

Many of the placements currently offered were also often general processing and laboring positions, rather than trades and apprenticeships, which were "desperately needed".

"CareerSystems has many willing job seekers eager to give their all to a new employer," Mr Dyason said.

To find out more about how businesses can get involved visit www.careersystems.com.au



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LEFT: Helping Scott Kuchel, right, learn some new job skills at Adelaide Hills Toyota were auto technician George Panagakis and general manager Tom Gilbert.