



CHARGED: Amelia O'Donald with Matt Thomson, Jacob Surjan and PEER's Peter Nolan at Albert Park. Picture: MIKE BURTON

Tradies hit field for 'sports academy' training

VALERINA CHANGARATHIL

A TRAINING organisation in South Australia has roped in former sports players to offer "academy-style whole of being support" for budding tradies signing up to its courses.

The not-for-profit PEER Group, which completed a recent \$2 million upgrade of its facility at Albert Park, has hired ex-Brisbane Broncos player Matt Thomson and former Port Adelaide player Jacob Surjan to drive elite per-

formance among apprentices. PEER chief executive Peter Nolan said the new academy program would set annual goals for apprentices while building on "aptitude, attitude, financial acumen, values, and motivation".

"No one else is doing what our academy will do. This is about making sure we are not just creating top of class tradies, but also highly-skilled high performers in whatever they choose to do," Mr Nolan said. "Matt and Jacob will take

on life coach/mentoring roles to motivate apprentices across the board to invest in themselves and their training to achieve sustainable careers.

"Their skills in each field will help push the boundaries and help apprentices realise their full potential with strong relationships and coaching support in and outside of the classroom."

The support will be offered to all students at no added cost.

Electrical apprentice Amelia O'Donald is likely to be

one of the early beneficiaries.

The TAFE SA competitor recruits, trains and employs up to 500 apprentices across electrical, plumbing, data communications, refrigeration and air conditioning and business administration traineeships.

It employed 500 apprentices at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital during the construction phase. The group's 60 staff provide training to more than 200 school students and up-skill more than 3500 tradespeople in the state.

Step up SA's PACE on mining

VALERINA CHANGARATHIL

THE mining industry is calling on South Australian political parties to commit to increased funds for a key exploration program to ensure a sustainable pipeline of projects and jobs.

SA Chamber of Mines and Energy chief executive Rebecca Knol said funding under the Plan for Accelerating Exploration (PACE) had been cut to approximately \$1 million per annum from 2018 through to 2021.

"This is at a time when mineral exploration expenditure in South Australia has declined to just \$49 million from a peak in 2011-12 of \$328 million," she said.

"PACE co-funded exploration projects realise real benefits to our state and should be on a trajectory of growth."

"All South Australians – whether political, investors, employers or community members – call for economic growth which increases employment and job security in our state, yet funding of a key program that has a proven track record of generating jobs has declined."

The PACE program – the first for any state – was initiated in 2004.

More than \$12 million has been spent through nine PACE Discovery Drilling Rounds, supporting 182 successful projects targeting a wide range of commodities.

"The PACE initiative has provided a 185 per cent return on investment and yielded major mineral discoveries such as Carrapateena," she said.

OZ Minerals' \$916 million Carrapateena copper and gold mine project, north of the state, is expected to start producing copper in late 2019.

It was discovered in 2005 by a junior explorer with a PACE-funded drill hole.

Beach Energy recently announced that drilling – part-funded by a \$6 million PACE grant – had discovered a new gas field south of Penola in the south-east.

"Given the substantial return on investment provided by PACE, along with the increased competition for mining investment from other jurisdictions, we advocate for the continuation of PACE Minerals funding," Ms Knol said.

SACOME wants \$4 million per annum to industry to support junior explorers.

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Rowlands in line for potential future frigates millions

VALERINA CHANGARATHIL

LONSDALE company Rowlands Metalworks is on deck to win a multi-million share of the future frigates work to be undertaken in SA, if its partner is part of the winning bid.

Rowlands has signed a memorandum of understand-

ing with Raytheon Anschuetz to make navigational bridge consoles for nine future frigates. Global navigation systems giant Raytheon, which has also approved SA's Redarc Technologies as a supplier, is part of UK shipbuilder BAE Systems' global supply chain.

BAE is one of three con-

tenders bidding for the \$35 billion future frigates contract – the other two are Spain's Navantia and Italy's Fincantieri.

Rowlands Metalworks managing director Cameron Johnston said that the deal with Raytheon was a "major milestone".

"We've been in operation

for more than 60 years now, supporting a broad range of industries and sectors, and are delighted with this opportunity," he said.

Raytheon's strategic purchasing and offset manager Oliver Welzel said it will work with Rowlands on future international programs.

It is anticipated each navigation bridge console will cost more than \$250,000, and with nine ships to be serviced, the contract could be valued at more than \$2 million.

Rowlands employs 45 staff and will potentially need to hire more staff to "service the new opportunity".



UPBEAT: Cameron Johnston.

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