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## Kym paints herself out of a corner

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An apprenticeship in the building industry is not something every young woman considers but BMW's building industry apprenticeship scheme is producing outstanding results for female apprentices.

Several BMW female apprentices have received Master Builders Association Industry Training Program Awards in recent years and a number of employers have rated the girls as the best apprentices they have had.

Some of the female apprentices have overcome personal challenges to take part in the apprenticeship program, and none more so than mature age painting apprentice Kym Minoughan.

Kym started her painting pre-apprenticeship while at Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women after being interviewed by Industry Training Unit manager Imogen Wilmott, former manager Danny Ford and Nicole Thackray of Master Painters' Association (MPA) Skills – one of BMW's industry partners in the scheme.

MPA Skills employs and monitors painting apprentices under the Industry Training Program, which promotes and supports apprentice training in the building and construction, including funding part of their wages during their apprenticeship.

Danny and Imogen negotiated placement and day release for Kym after Nicole was satisfied that Kym would be suitable for the program and for ongoing employment in the painting trade, and she started her pre-apprenticeship program with MPA Skills in May 2008.

Kym says she has always enjoyed working with her hands and was doing maintenance work and manual work around the Centre "I knew I had to do something to start a new career," Kym said.

"I didn't want to go into retail or anything like that, I wanted something permanent."

Kym was escorted to the pre-apprenticeship course by Boronia staff and quickly won the trust and acceptance of the class of mainly young males, choosing to tell them of her background. She went on to assume something of a mentoring role with some of her young classmates, her depth of life experience enabling her to provide valuable advice to youngsters with issues of their own.

Nicole praised Kym's quality of work and attention to detail in the course as outstanding. Kym won early release from Boronia and finished the pre-apprenticeship program under her own supervision.

MPA Skills arranged her employment as an apprentice with Michelangelo Painting through the then Department of Housing and Works, working on the construction of high end new houses, with the prospect of permanent employment as a tradesperson.

"She's a lovely lady," Nicole said.

"Her work ethic is fantastic."

Kym's life isn't yet without troubles. Kym has still to acquire her driver's licence to make travelling to work sites less difficult, and her children demand much of her time. However, she is now in her second year of apprenticeship and should finish in June 2012 to enter the painting world as a tradeswoman.

Kym says that she is glad to be back in the workforce.

"I'm enjoying it more than I thought I would, " Kym said.

"It's satisfying to see the work through to the end."

Kym's ambitions don't stop with painting. In the future she hopes to have the opportunity to join Nicole in helping young apprentices into the trade, and guiding them into making good life choices along the way.

Nicole is enthusiastic about the Industry Training Program and its benefits not only to the industry, but to young apprentices, some of whom would find it difficult to find an opening in the trade by themselves.

"I think it's fantastic," Nicole said.

"I'm hoping we can do it all over again. The results have spoken for themselves, we've had great success."



Kym Minoughan at work on a Sorrento construction site