

CLEAN-UP NOT JUST FOR A DAY

WORKERS across the nation may have kicked off this year's Clean Up Australia activities last Tuesday but they are urged to take a longer view and help make lasting changes.

Business Clean Up Day was held on March 2, ahead of Schools Clean Up Day yesterday, and the nation's largest community-based environmental event, Clean Up Australia Day, is to be held tomorrow.

Thousands of volunteers take part in the annual events to clean up rubbish strewn in their communities. But Clean Up Australia's focus is as much on preventing rubbish entering our environment as it is on removing what has already accumulated.

Clean Up Australia chair Pip Kiernan says in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the use of single-use plastics and disposable items in the workplace, such as takeaway coffee cups, food packaging, masks, and sanitised wipes. All of these are polluting parks, bushland, streets, waterways, and beaches.

Kiernan says now is a great time for workers and businesses to refocus and demonstrate local and industry leadership by tackling waste issues.

"This year, we want Australian businesses to step up and think about the positive changes they can make for the environment every day, whether that's reducing single-use plastics, using packaging with recycled content or reviewing procurement policies – every small change helps," she says.

"Of course, anyone who is unable to join a Clean Up this year can Step Up by donating to help us all year round."

All funds raised through Step Up are used to provide free resources and clean up materials to schools, youth groups and community organisations. Clean Up events can still be organised to be held on any day of the year.

CLEANUP.ORG.AU/BUSINESS



Master Plumber SA third-year plumbing apprentice Jaimee O'Sullivan, working on site for Jordan Plumbing, says a trade is a skill for life. Picture: Mike Burton

WOMEN CHOOSE TO TRADE UP

More women are making trades their own, writes Lauren Ahwan

WOMEN are signing up to the trades sector at much faster rates than men but advocates say more needs to be done to achieve gender equality.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows the number of women employed in the trades and technical sector increased by 10.6 per cent in the past five years, compared to a 0.9 per cent increase for men.

However, men still heavily outnumber women – with 1,493,900 male tradies employed compared to just 285,600 women.

Crucial Women in Construction Committee spokeswoman Leah Boyce says dedicated women's change rooms and amenities, and more inclusive workplace safety practices, are helping to attract women to the industry.

"The stigma that trades are for men is slowly breaking down, however it does take time to change the way people think," Boyce says.

"Women bring a different perspective and therefore can be a fantastic asset to the construction industry because they approach things differently to men and offer a different angle and opinion.

"The perception is that women will feel excluded or harassed. In reality, if you are a good worker with the right attitude you will be respected just like any other worker in the industry, regardless of gender."

Build Like A Girl founder Jo Farrell says that, like any other sector, there are good and bad employers.

"You can still get some fairly sexist remarks, which is just appalling given that this is 2021," Farrell says.

"I've been in the industry 24 years now and there have been times I have wanted to walk away – but I turn up because I love what I do.

"Construction is genderless. "It's not based on gender, it's not based on strength.

"Anyone with the right attitude can do construction."

Farrell says female tradies are generally more safety conscious, able to multitask and problem solve, and have good conflict resolution skills that benefit worksites.

She says school-based apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship programs and pathways courses allow potential workers to road test a construction career, adding that many people are surprised at the level of creativity involved.

"We forget sometimes that construction is actually art," Farrell says. "We create amazing things from a whole bunch of other things, based on some lines on a piece of paper."

Jamiee O'Sullivan, 21, is part way through a plumbing apprenticeship with Master Plumbers SA and says she enjoys the variety of tasks, as well as the ability to work with her hands.

"A trade is a skill for life and that's very rewarding," she says.

"(Host employer) Jordan Plumbing has made me feel equal and welcomed from the first day on the job."

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

email questions to careers_qs@news.com.au



HAVE YOU NOTICED A BIG INCREASE IN PEOPLE APPLYING FOR JOBS THIS YEAR?

LISA MORRIS
DIRECTOR, HAYS

The new year did mark a turning point for the job market, with employers more confident and headcount approvals being granted. As many organisations now return to growth and look to invest in their workforces, there are lots of opportunities for skilled and experienced jobseekers. There has certainly been a considerable lift in job applications in 2021. There was also the annual increase in candidate mobility that occurs just after new year. If you are looking to apply for jobs, our advice is to present a strong CV personalised for each role you apply for.

JUSTIN HINORA
EXECUTIVE CONSULTANT,
HENDER CONSULTING

In general, yes. There are, however, still skill shortages in very technical, specialist and clinical leadership roles. The commercial and corporate services-type roles are the ones that we have noticed the most significant increase. For example, in just seven days of going to market, we received over 130 applicants for a senior finance role. Competition is strong and clients are blessed with choice. That is why it is so important for candidates to tailor each and every application specific to the role they are applying for.

ANDREW SULLIVAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
SULLIVAN CONSULTING

The start of a new year is often a time when people may be looking to change careers or explore new opportunities, but there's also no doubt the job market has been disrupted by COVID. We have noticed an increase of applications for a range of positions, such as in hospitality, administration, customer service and management. The silver lining is with a rebounding economy new job opportunities open every day, and there are many positions in regional areas which are in need of even more applicants.

ALEXANDRA ROSSER
HEAD OF ORGANISATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTING,
STILLWELL MANAGEMENT
CONSULTANTS

There has been a dramatic increase in job applicants in some industries while, in others, employers face a shortage of supply for the jobs they have on offer. Some people who may otherwise have been on the job market are holding on to their jobs due to the uncertainty of a COVID-19 environment. It is anticipated the phasing out of JobKeeper at the end of the month and changes to JobSeeker obligations will produce an overall increase in applications.