



New initiative focuses on employment for newly arrived migrants and refugees

English language education provider ACL and AMES have joined forces to offer a program to better equip newly arrived migrants and refugees seeking employment by providing preparation courses in two popular employment areas that are confronting skills shortages.

ACL Group Managing Director Helen Zimmerman said two groups of students taking English classes at the ACL College Fairfield are studying either an Occupational Health and Safety and forklift preparation course or a basic computer course, as part of the new employment initiative.

“The OH&S and forklift course will help prepare the students for the WorkCover forklift licence and the computer course will provide a Statement of Attainment in Information Technology,” Ms Zimmerman said.

“For newly arrived migrants and refugees, finding work can be a lengthy process which starts with them undertaking English classes.

“While our students may be quite capable of doing the practical aspects of many jobs, they first have to develop the language skills to be competitive in the job market, even for basic entry level positions.

“This is especially the case in the forklift licensing process where they have to negotiate relatively complex language used in the WorkCover assessment.”

AMES is placing the students in the forklift course with a forklift training company to study for their licence and, in both courses, finding work experience placements for the students and then assisting them to find ongoing employment.

Ian McHutchison, Chief Executive Officer of AMES, acknowledged this partnership with ACL as an extension of work already underway in four areas throughout metropolitan Melbourne.

Mr Hutchinson said that AMES was pleased to be working with ACL in NSW.

“We are committed to working with our mutual clients to enhance employment prospects through language and skills development,” he said.

“Our clients represent migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who face multiple barriers to employment.

“Through dedicated training in English language and workplace skills development, our clients become 'work ready' and have a greater chance of finding a job.

"We have deliberately designed these pilots around local employers' demand for workers. In the current low unemployment environment, creating opportunities for our unemployed clients that specifically meets the needs of employers has many benefits for our economy and society."

To date a quarter of the students in the forklift course have gained employment and students from both courses have attended job interviews.

Ms Zimmerman said she anticipated this exciting program would be the first of many courses that will assist ACL students through partnership with AMES, and particularly with a focus on employment.

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