

VPG

Work Experience 2026

St Augustine's College

Facilitated by VPG



Student Highlights

Rob, Cross Custom Meats

Raised on a family farm on the Tablelands, Rob has always been surrounded by hard work, agriculture, and the understanding that industries connected to food production will always be important. Keen to explore a trade pathway that plays an essential role in everyday life, he spent his work experience week with Cross Custom Meats in Atherton.

Working in the packing area, Rob quickly got involved in learning how to hang sausages, make rissoles, and pack meat, while gaining insight into the day-to-day operations of a busy butcher shop. Although it was his first experience working outside of the family farm, Rob settled in confidently and fitted in well with the team. His host employer was impressed with his attitude and willingness to learn, while Rob described the workplace as encouraging and welcoming for someone new to the industry.

For Rob, the placement provided valuable workplace experience, practical skills, and the confidence that comes from stepping into a new environment. It also reinforced his interest in exploring trade pathways and the opportunities they can offer in the future.



Malakai, Northern Heart Specialists

Malakai didn't expect to find himself scrubbed up in theatre watching heart surgery during work experience, but that's exactly what happened during his week with Northern Heart Specialists. Interested in medicine, Malakai spent time alongside Dr Greg Starmer, Dr Anthony Brazzale and the nursing team, gaining insight into the world of cardiology. A highlight was observing a keyhole heart procedure at Cairns Private Hospital, where he watched surgeons operate through the femoral artery and experienced firsthand the precision and teamwork involved in specialist healthcare.

Back at the clinic, he observed echocardiograms, ultrasounds and patient consultations, building his understanding of how technology and medicine work together to diagnose and treat heart conditions. He also had the opportunity to learn about the study and career pathways that led staff into the profession. What started as a week of curiosity ended with a much clearer understanding of where a future in medicine could take him.



Program Impact

at a glance



122
Students participated



113
Employer Champions hosted students



TOP 3 INDUSTRIES

Electrical **1**
Engineering **2**
Construction **3**

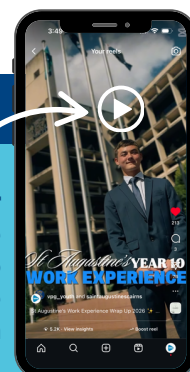


38 Vocations explored

Accounting
Allied Health
Architectural
Drafting
Automotive Trades
Aviation
Butchery
Cabinet
Making/Joinery
Carpentry
Community Services
Construction
Dentistry
Diesel
Fitting/Heavy
Engine
Drafting
Education
Electrical
Engineering
Engineering
Fabrication
Engineering Design

Finance
Graphics/Signage
Health
Health & Fitness
Hospitality
IT
Land & Animal
Systems
Legal Studies
Marine Science
Mechanical Trade
Media
Medical Imaging
Multimedia
Office Administration
Plumbing
Retail
Retail Pharmacy
Science
Tourism
Town Planning/Urban
Design

Click to hear what the students had to say about the program



Hugo, I-Lec Solutions

Hugo spent his work experience week with I-Lec Solutions, working alongside the electrical team on an emergency lighting upgrade project. Keen to experience life on a real worksite, he quickly got involved and gained firsthand insight into the trade. Throughout the week, Hugo assisted with replacing and wiring emergency lights, testing systems, and learning how electrical work is carried out on a worksite. He also learnt how to use equipment such as volt meters and breaker switches while gaining an appreciation for the safety requirements that underpin the industry. Before stepping onto site, he completed workplace health and safety training and obtained his White Card. For Hugo, the placement gave him valuable insight into the industry and confirmed how much he enjoys hands-on work and problem-solving. A highlight of the week was working alongside the supportive I-Lec team, who were always willing to share their knowledge and help him learn.

Sam, Cairns Supreme & District Courts

Aspiring barrister Sam spent his work experience week at Cairns Supreme & District Courts, gaining an inside look at the legal system and the many roles that keep it operating. Throughout the week, he observed jury selection, sat in on court proceedings and worked alongside registry staff learning about wills, probate and court administration. A highlight was watching barristers present arguments during a trial, where he was struck by their confidence, professionalism and ability to communicate clearly under pressure. Already interested in pursuing a future in law, the experience gave Sam valuable insight into the realities of the profession and the pathways available within the legal system. More importantly, it inspired him to start developing one of the key skills he observed throughout the week, effective communication. For Sam, the placement reinforced his interest in law while providing a clearer understanding of what it takes to one day stand in court himself.

Fletcher, Citizens of the Reef

Fletcher's keeping his after school options open and used his work experience placement with Citizens of the Reef to investigate a field that aligned with his interest in the environment. Throughout the week, he split his time between the office and the reef, helping analyse coral imagery and reef census data before heading to Moore Reef for a reef recovery day. There, he helped plant coral fragments onto restoration frames and experienced firsthand the work being done to protect and restore the Great Barrier Reef, a definite highlight of the week. The Citizens of the Reef team were impressed by how quickly Fletcher picked up new skills and embraced every opportunity, even joking that they didn't want him to leave. Through conversations with staff, he discovered there isn't one pathway into environmental work, with people from a wide range of backgrounds contributing to reef conservation. For Fletcher, the placement reinforced the value of staying curious, exploring different opportunities, and keeping an open mind about where his future career journey might lead.

Ashton, Dawson's Engineering

Ashton got to experience multiple trades during his placement with Dawsons Group. Rather than spending the week in just one area, he worked alongside mechanics, fitter and turners, and workshop staff, gaining exposure to everything from truck maintenance and gearbox servicing to steel fabrication and workshop operations. Having previously worked in retail, the placement introduced Ashton to a completely different working environment and the pace of a busy industrial workshop. A highlight was getting up close to the heavy vehicles and equipment and seeing firsthand how they operate. Throughout the week, Ashton embraced every opportunity to learn, building connections with staff across the business and gaining insight into how different teams work together. By the end of the placement, he had developed a greater appreciation for the variety of skills, trades and teamwork that come together to keep a large operation running.

Yuri & Louis - Nautilus Aviation

What does it take to get a helicopter into the air?

For Yuri, that question was answered from the operations side of the business, learning about flight scheduling, maintenance planning and the coordination that happens behind the scenes each day.

For Louis, the answer was found inside the engineering hangar. Working alongside helicopter engineers, he assisted with maintenance tasks, inspections and aircraft testing, gaining firsthand experience in the practical side of the industry. A standout moment was joining a helicopter test flight — his first time in a helicopter.

Although they spent the week exploring different parts of the business, both students walked away with the same outcome: a better understanding of the many career pathways available within aviation and a clearer picture of where their own interests may lead.



Ben, Total Auto Fix

Interested in mechanical pathways, Ben spent his work experience week alongside an experienced mechanic and business owner John at Total Auto Fix. Throughout the week, Ben gained hands-on experience completing vehicle safety checks, inspecting tyres and fluids, replacing brake pads and assisting with general servicing tasks. One highlight was helping replace a valve cover gasket on a vehicle with an oil leak, carefully removing the old component, preparing the surface and installing the new gasket under supervision.

For Ben, the placement was an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of vehicle maintenance while gaining practical skills he hopes to use both in the workplace and on his own vehicles in the future. Working alongside John, who has spent more than 50 years in the industry, also gave him valuable insight into life as a mechanic and the opportunities available within the trade. John was full of praise for Ben's attitude and willingness to learn, rating him "10 out of 10" and describing him as an outstanding work experience student. Well done Ben!



Finbar, Greencross Vets

A love of animals led Finbar to spend his work experience week at Greencross Vets, where he gained a behind-the-scenes look at the work involved in caring for animals. Working alongside veterinarians and vet nurses, Finbar observed consultations, patient care and a range of surgical procedures, including routine surgeries and the removal of a growth from a dog's eyelid. He also spent time learning how veterinary teams work together to support both animals and their owners throughout treatment and recovery. One of the highlights of the week was observing surgeries and watching patients wake from anaesthetic, giving him an understanding of the skill, care and attention involved in veterinary medicine. The placement also gave Finbar the opportunity to learn about the university pathways required to become a veterinarian and explore where a career in the industry could lead. For Finbar, the experience was an opportunity to turn curiosity into experience, gaining a deeper understanding of animal healthcare while exploring where his interests in veterinary science, medicine and engineering might lead after school.



James, Jetstar

We didn't get the chance to catch up with James during his work experience placement, but his family let us know just how much he was enjoying it. After spending the week with Jetstar, they sent through these fantastic photos along with a message - James loved it and didn't even mind the 4am starts! From time in the cockpit to behind-the-scenes access around commercial aircrafts, the experience gave James an unforgettable glimpse into an industry he is passionate about.

