

# LINKING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH A STRONG WORK CULTURE AT PATTERSON CHENEY

**At Patterson Cheney, entry level training opportunities are not just about being a responsible business in the community, they also provide a source of good quality employees and contribute to its strong work culture.**

Patterson Cheney Toyota in Dandenong is one of Melbourne's largest Toyota dealerships. Like many successful family owned businesses in the area, it has a strong connection and high level of interest in local socio-economic issues.

Apart from selling vehicles, the dealership contains a large service centre with 40 employees. The workforce in the servicing division is skewed towards the 16-30 year old age bracket, they are likely to live locally and come from diverse backgrounds.

Patterson Cheney partners with Dandenong Valley Job Support to give suitable candidates, with disadvantaged backgrounds, an opportunity to complete a seven-week work experience program in areas such as cleaning, detailing and mechanics. Between its Dandenong and Berwick operations, 15 people with various types of disability and rehabilitation backgrounds have been given this opportunity, resulting in five full time employment outcomes.

It started when a customer mentioned that their son was on a DVJS program and looking for an opportunity. The Service Manager at Patterson Cheney talked to DVJS to outline job requirements and a normal interview process ensued.

Execution and service quality is a way that Patterson Cheney seeks to differentiate its business from competitors. It believes that building a strong work culture helps build employee engagement, lowers turnover and ensures a higher level of commitment to customer service.



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We get good people through the program. Everyone has their niche, and we do our best to find the right person for the roles we need filled. Some have had a rough trot, but they are eager to work and perform well.

**Danny Morrison**  
Service Manager,  
Patterson Cheney

I enjoy working at Toyota and am learning new things everyday  
**Michael (trainee)**

People with disabilities are very employable and Patterson Cheney is proof of that. We apply screening and training techniques and work hard with Patterson Cheney to match the right person with the right opportunity, giving them the chance to create a real future.  
**Andy Ernst**  
*Business Development Manager,  
 Dandenong Valley Job Support*

GROUP	BENEFITS
Trainees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided with an opportunity to develop skills and employment pathways in an area that is suited to their capabilities</li> </ul>
Job services provider (DVJS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to an employer that is familiar with the work experience system and has successfully integrated trainees into business-as-usual</li> </ul>
Patterson Cheney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job support process provides as good, if not better than usual, standard of trainee. Staff respond well and it is part of the strong culture that contributes to low turnover and superior performance.</li> </ul>

One reason for program success is that candidates have to proactively go to DVJS, which generally means they are keen to work. Over time, Patterson Cheney managers have learned how to better communicate to DVJS the skills and attributes they are looking for.

Senior people need to know the traits of the trainees and find right situation for them. Although some staff were initially wary about these positions, they were fine once they got to know the trainees.

GROUP	QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK OF YOURSELF
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this an avenue for improving the quality of your entry-level workers?</li> <li>• What is high turnover or poor skills matching costing your business?</li> <li>• Who could you be partnering with to try out new recruitment methods?</li> </ul>
Non-profits and community services providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which local businesses “get” the link between social issues and business performance?</li> <li>• How could their business performance benefit from partnership development?</li> <li>• How can I make it easy for them to benefit from our services?</li> </ul>

The Commercial and Social Sector Collaboration Series recognises and conveys learning from collaborations in our community.

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