MEDIA RELEASE

Tocal College Full Again in 2012

‘Tocal College at Paterson enrolled over 100 full time students in its Certificate III in Horse Husbandry, Certificate III in Agriculture and Certificate IV in Agriculture programs this year. This demonstrates continued strong interest in rural training’, Dr Cameron Archer, Principal, Tocal College said.

According to Dr Archer, ‘Most students come from around NSW to study at the College with some from as far as Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland. Tocal and has an excellent reputation for preparing people for careers in the agriculture and horse industries. College graduates are sought out by employers and many have jobs even before they finish their course’ he said.

A majority of Tocal students come from urban areas but have a strong interest in agriculture. Most have friends or family on farms and have spent their holidays enjoying life on the land. Others have gained their interest in agriculture through studies at high school, particularly those schools that have agriculture or primary industries as part of their curriculum. Dr Archer said that Tocal is one of the few colleges in Australia that is helping reverse the trend of country people moving to the city. ‘There are very good job opportunities in Australian agriculture for well trained people,’ he said ‘and our students are keen to take up these challenges. Working on the land and in other rural businesses offers many benefits and is very rewarding’.

Tocal’s courses provide students with the practical skills they need to work with livestock and machinery. They gain experience on the college’s large commercial farms and also work on farms around the Hunter Valley and further afield in western NSW, Qld and New Zealand. Certificate IV students spend four weeks at a time on large properties in other parts of Australia. Some even travel to New Zealand to gain experience on thoroughbred studs or beef and sheep properties.

Dr Archer said that ‘well trained, enthusiastic students are snapped up by employers because of the shortage of skilled employees in rural areas. Australia has some of the most efficient farms in the world and technology is changing rapidly,’ he said. ‘Our students will be involved in these developments and are the future managers of our farms, which still provide a significant proportion of Australia’s export income.’

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