



“MY FRIENDS WERE ALL GOING TO UNI BUT I KNEW I WANTED TO START MY CAREER DOING AN ELECTRICAL APPRENTICESHIP.”

KENDYLL BLISSETT

LIGHTING HER OWN PATH

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“I left school after Year 12 because I knew what I wanted to do”, says **KENDYLL BLISSETT**. “My friends were all going to uni but I knew I wanted to start my career doing an electrical apprenticeship.”

Kendyll took up her apprenticeship with Fonterra at their Lichfield site in Waikato, about midway between Putaruru and Tokoroa.

The 19-year-old is one of 13 apprentices who started with Fonterra in January 2021 as part of the firm’s commitment to expand its apprenticeship programme.

Fonterra recruits for a new cohort of apprentices each year during term three, with a start work date of the following January.

Currently, there are approximately 100 Fonterra apprentices who work across 28 manufacturing sites in New Zealand. The apprenticeships are spread across a range of disciplines – including Electrical, Mechanical and Heavy Automotive Engineering, Dairy Processing, as well as an Energy Centre Traineeship. There is a very high qualification rate of 95 per cent.

Kendyll really enjoys the mix of theory and practical work in her apprenticeship.

“You have your night-class learning and your on-job learning. Every week, I go to Etco and sit in a classroom and learn the theory behind electrical.

At work, you have on-job tasks to complete, and you need to be deemed competent in that and the theory in order to get your registration.

“I am doing domestic, commercial and industrial work, so I am quite lucky that Fonterra farm me out to other companies to do some of the work required. You are doing something with a purpose, for a purpose.”

Kendyll also enjoys working at the large Lichfield site as there are so many mentors and people to learn from.

Many more women have joined the trades industry in recent years. Kendyll is all for it and says there are so many opportunities for young women in the industry.

Of her experience as a woman in the trades, she says, “As a female I know where the line is between right and wrong, but I am not afraid to give a bit of banter back. It works well for me.”

Kendyll went to Hamilton Girls’ High School. She originally considered becoming a radiologist but taking the Waikato Institute of Technology (WINTec) Trades Academy class offered at Hamilton Girls’ was a key turning point for her.

“Once a week we would go to WINTec. We did eight weeks of plumbing and gasfitting, eight weeks of carpentry and eight weeks of electrical. That’s when I knew what I wanted to do, despite my friends and teachers wanting me to wait and go to university.

“Some people think that trades are for those who are less intelligent, but that’s just not the case and I wanted to show them that. I remember reading *Leaving School* magazine and most of my teachers were pushing for me to go to uni but I didn’t want to do that.”

In 2019, Kendyll was awarded a Prime Minister’s Vocational Excellence Award, which recognises the achievements of students excelling in vocational education.

“It was the final recognition I needed that this was the path for me – to go into the trades.”

Kendyll has talked to students at schools as part of her role with Fonterra. She says her focus was on getting the students to follow their hearts, noting that adults’ influence does have a lot to do with career decisions.

“The trades are for anyone. If you put your mind to it, you can definitely do it.”

KEY FACTS



- **KENDYLL BLISSETT** IS CURRENTLY COMPLETING AN **ELECTRICAL APPRENTICESHIP**. SHE BEGAN AT **FONTERRA’S LICHFIELD SITE IN WAIKATO** IN JANUARY 2021.
- SHE ENJOYS THE **MIX OF THEORY AND PRACTICAL WORK** OF HER APPRENTICESHIP – THE **DAILY ON-THE-JOB LEARNING WITH FONTERRA** AND THE **WEEKLY THEORY CLASSES** AT **Etco**.
- **KENDYLL** WAS AWARDED A **PRIME MINISTER’S VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD** IN 2019, WHICH HELPED HER TO MAKE THE DECISION TO PURSUE A CAREER IN THE TRADES.



For more information on career opportunities with Fonterra, visit www.fonterra.com/earlycareersnz and to learn about Fonterra’s partnership with Te Pūkenga across all its apprentice programmes, visit www.tepukenga.ac.nz

For more information on electrical apprenticeships through Etco, visit www.etco.co.nz