



TAFE's building and construction school receives three stars

Great Gordon rating

BRITT SMITH

THE Gordon TAFE's building and construction school has received a top rating for excellence in trades education.

The three-star rating is the highest given by the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, a new Federal Government funded body which promotes and advances learning, teaching and training in the trades sector.

The institute's CEO Brian Wexham said the scheme recognised high performance in eight disciplines.

"In this case, it was building, plumbing and carpentry," he said.

"What we are trying to do as an institute is improve the outcome of training, and I am delighted at the outcome this TAFE has produced. It is exemplary."

Federal Minister for Vocational and Further Education Andrew Robb presented a plaque in name of the impressive achievement yesterday.

He said the rating system was similar to that which ranked universities and would help change the nega-

tive stereotypes about trade careers.

"Many organisations around the country will be looking to get this rating," he said.

"Trades and universities are equal and we need to recognise this. It's important for people to hold their head up and be proud."

Mr Robb said a change of mindset was occurring slowly, but more work was needed.

"There are still parents out there who think if their children don't go to university they have failed, but that is so wrong."

The Gordon's head of Building and Construction Fred Baltetsch said the rating meant the Gordon had satisfied the highest possible requirements of the program.

"A significant factor in this award is the extensive connection we have with industry, to ensure that what we teach is what is required out in the workplace," he said.

The Federal Government also announced yesterday \$530,000 for the Australian Technical College Geelong to introduce new trade courses in 2008 including automotive diesel, bricklaying and plumbing.



NAILED IT: Andrew Robb, from left, Gordon CEO Grant Sutherland Trade Skills CEO Brian Wexham and Gordon's Fred Baltetsch.