



GippsTAFE's gold star performance

By **STEPHANIE CHARALAMBOUS**

THE automotive faculty at GippsTAFE's Yallourn campus has been recognised as one of Australia's premier training providers.

The faculty was awarded a gold star rating of two out of three by the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence (ITSE), which highlights the performance of training providers in accordance with industry standards.

The rating allows employers, industry, students and career counsellors to identify the standard of education offered to trade students by GippsTAFE.

GippsTAFE chief executive officer Dr Peter Whitley said the star rating recognised the "terrific work" the TAFE was doing at a local level.

He said the automotive faculty had embraced new technologies and had a good relationship with businesses in the automotive industry.

"They're seen as credible technicians and they've embraced technology which has assisted learning," Dr Whitley said.

"The students themselves have seen the relevance (of training in the automotive industry).

"The ITSE is a national independent body so we are judged against the rest of Australia.

"It means this faculty is comparable to other training providers all over Australia and Gippslanders should be very proud we have such a great facility."

The rating scheme, an Australian Government initiative, aims to help combat the trade skills shortage by encouraging organisations to improve their teaching strategies and better prepare students for real workplace situations.

ITSE's Automotive Industry Reference Group representative Lisa Farchione said GippsTAFE's automotive faculty was assessed on its use of contemporary

resources, its focus on the needs of both enterprise and learners, and their empowerment.

Training faculties can be awarded up to three stars after being assessed by the ITSE.

Ms Farchione said GippsTAFE Yallourn's two gold star rating was a great achievement as there was only one automotive faculty in Victoria with three gold stars.

She said training plans at the Yallourn campus were developed for each apprentice in consultation with their employer, which contributed to the TAFE's success.

"Employers have the option for training to be delivered in the workplace at a time, place and pace that best suits the needs of the learner and the enterprise," Ms Farchione said.

"Teaching staff are aware of the need to match the teaching program with tasks being undertaken in the

workplace, and actively seek this information from employers through informal and formal contact.

"Staff have a strong industry background and maintain an active engagement in state-wide automotive networks, which allows them to keep abreast of current industry issues and implement innovative teaching programs."

Ms Farchione said more than 100 registered training organisations applied to be part of the star rating scheme this year.

She said she hoped the new scheme would help highlight employment opportunities in traditional trades for the new generation of workers.

Automotive team leader Jackson Long said the faculty was now focused on increasing the quality of its service to obtain a three star rating.

"We've been given a rating now to work from and it gives us something to strive for," he said.