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## SP AusNet skilling for the future in Bairnsdale

Gippsland electricity distributor SP AusNet continues its dedication to skilling for the future with the employment of its newest Apprentice Lineworker in Bairnsdale, Giles Morgan.

Giles was introduced to the energy industry and SP AusNet through the Victorian Energy Education and Training Program (VEET). The program has played a crucial role in his Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) completed through Bairnsdale Secondary College, and his future as a lineworker with SP AusNet.

SP AusNet Design and Business Planning Manager Gareth Downes said SP AusNet continues to have a strong commitment to its skilling for the future program. Across the Gippsland region SP AusNet is the proud employers of seven new apprentices and trainees in 2011.

"We believe our program goes a long way to ensure that new and young talent gets the opportunity to be drawn into the energy sector on a regular basis," Mr Downes said.

"A number of the new starters in 2011 have completed the VEET program, which not only exposes participants to the energy industry, but enhances important life skills such as networking and applying for jobs," Mr Downes said.

"We see considerable benefits in the VEET program. There is a recognized skills shortage in our industry; the VEET program helps students learn more and enhance their interest in the energy sector as well as offering employment opportunities within their local communities," Mr Downes said.

The VEET program commenced in East Gippsland in 2009 through a partnership with SP AusNet, Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) and a number of local secondary colleges. The program was initiated to introduce students to the energy industry and in turn assist with recruiting by encouraging high calibre candidates to apply for local apprenticeships and traineeships.

Gippsland East LLEN Partnership Broker Michelle Weatherall said the partnership plays an important role in forging relationships between local schools, businesses, community groups and parents to improve education outcomes and respond to the skills needs in local industries.

"We appreciate the support of SP AusNet and look forward to growing this partnership in the future," Ms Weatherall said.

"It is with passion and dedication to our industry that SP AusNet continues to support the VEET program in partnership with East Gippsland LLEN. Learning about the different occupations available within the industry, gaining practical work experience and expanding their networks helps young people make informed decisions about their future," Mr Downes said.

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