My name’s Alex, I am doing VET Furnishing in VCAL and I’m in Year 11. I’ve always had a love for timber, I’ve always had a love for woodwork, I’ve done carpentry with my cousins ever since I was 14 years old and just thought it’d help further my skills.

Yeah, I would love to pursue carpentry and Furnishing does help with that, it helps with all the hand skills, all the chiselling work, all the power tools, it just adds extra hours, extra practice.

A lot of the skills that I’ve picked up are just the fine sanding work, all the slow hand skills with chisels and how to sharpen a plane, how to use the tool for its intended purpose, like even a little block plane for cross-grained areas, and just learning to use power tools, learning all the planted tools as well with the power tools and what they have to do and how to set them up. It teaches you a lot about that.

In the furnishing sector there are a lot of subcategories, there’s upholstering, polishing, and we do all of that here at school, so it really does help open everything up in that industry and even more industries after that.

Last year I made a plant stand, just a little one of those for the first year, and made a couple chopping boards with that. This year I’m currently making a hall table. One of the most rewarding and difficult was last year we had to make the tabletop for our plant stand and the way we did it was, it’s called a herringbone top and you get little blocks and you stagger them differently. And that took me two hours just to get it how I wanted it to look and then I had to glue it down and wait two weeks for it to dry and then another week for me to sand it and then put a border on it. It took time but once it came up, it came up beautiful.

Furnishings has given me that appreciation for everything, like it shows you if you put in that extra 10 minutes what more can be achieved instead of just rushing that work and trying to finish that 10 minutes early so you can leave for the day but that extra bit really just helps with all the fine detail and it really shows at the end.

I’m currently finishing off the tabletop for my hall table. So, I’ve been sanding that for the past hour this morning just trying to get it ready before I bolt it on to the frame. Once we finish the tables, we get to actually take them home, they’re ours once we’re done. I did take my plant stand home and that is currently sitting in my kitchen at home actually with a plant on it. My mum loves that thing now, takes so much pride in it.

I have done some work placements with a carpenter and he was also a furniture maker at the time so I did help him with a lot of that, we made a couple tables, little stools, just for some of his clients personally. He taught me how to use a lot of power tools properly and a lot of safety requirements for using other power tools, a lot of the planted tools as well he taught me how to use, and they do transfer over.

Yeah I do feel confident that I will be able to go out there, find a job after all the skills I’ve gained here and once I finish my Cert. II in Furniture Making Pathways – I get that certificate for completing all my theory work and all the practical activities that have to be done – I’ll be able to have that as well and that can further help me find a position in the workforce. The subject is also available for VCE if you want to get a score with that one as well.

I am thoroughly enjoying this subject. I always look forward to a Monday and a Tuesday when I have to come to the trade centre. Even if you don’t have an interest in the furnishings but you have an interest in timber and all that handcraft, you will pick it up and you will love it. I was sceptical coming into it my first year and I’ve come out now halfway through second year and I’m enjoying every second of it.