My name is Jack, I’m in Year 11 and I’m studying VET Plumbing.

I decided to choose VET Plumbing because it is a good career path and both my brothers are doing plumbing currently and they were really enjoying it, which made me decide to go into that field. So, I’m doing VCAL and the way that my VET program differs from my other subjects is because I get to be more hands-on and learn more how to use the basic tools, like hammers, aviation snips, screwdrivers and stuff like that. And then the power tools that I have learnt to use are, like, drills, circular saws, impact drivers, reciprocating saws.

So, in this course we are doing general plumbing and the areas that we are studying are mechanical, roofing and drainage. Some of the units that we’ve studied so far is on how to draw a basic plan of a pipework, and then from the plan we would go into how to assemble the pipes and cut the pipes into the correct measurements. Then from there we would go into how to fixture them into walls and onto roofs and stuff. And then we would go into how to cut the fittings and the correct tapware onto the pipes. Levelling comes into it because you need to know the correct gradient that the water falls to get it down and away from certain pipes. Workplace safety is a compulsory subject, to learn how to be safe on the worksite and we also get our CI card.

In year one I’ve accomplished a lot but one of my most proud achievements was being able to weld two pieces of pipe together with an oxywelder. On some big job sites you need to be able to weld two pieces of copper pipe together to be able to ensure that the pipe won’t leak later on.

Recently on my work placement I got to watch one of my colleagues install a solar panel hot water system. The benefits of Structured Workplace Learning is that you get to go out in the field and get a more real-world experience of how the trade works. Some of the main experiences I took away from my workplace was, like, how to do a rough-in, which is putting all the pipes in the walls, and then I also got to learn how to do stacks, which is doing the drainage for an upstairs house. One that sticks out to me a lot is when I did a double-storey rough-in in Werribee, which was me and two other guys working on a double-storey house putting all the pipes through the walls. One of them was a fully qualified plumber and the other one was an apprentice plumber.

My colleagues and my boss that I have worked with were impressed with how I knew some basic tool smarts before going into the workplace and I’ve got some connections with some people there that will hopefully be able to help me get an apprenticeship down the line after I finish my pre-apprenticeship. So, my plans for the future are to become a qualified plumber and hopefully one day run my own business in plumbing and the next steps after I get my Certificate II is to hopefully get my apprenticeship, which will be my Certificate III, and then at the end of my apprenticeship, after the four years, I will go for my Journeyman’s and that will get me my Certificate IV, which is fully qualified.

I’m enjoying my VET program a lot because it is teaching me all I need to know to get my apprenticeship later on in the line and it’s also teaching me the proper skills I’m going to need to know when I get my apprenticeship.