

**Friday 10 March 2017**

## **Top students from Class of 2016 awarded**

Bendigo TAFE held its annual Graduation and Awards Ceremony on Thursday 9 March at Bendigo's Ulumbarra Theatre to celebrate the students' achievements throughout 2016.

The ceremony recognised over 100 graduates and top achievers from a wide range of study areas including health and community, professional and creative industries, automotive, foundations, construction and industrial, food and fibre, and Indigenous education.

The top award – Vocational Student of the Year, sponsored by The City of Greater Bendigo – was presented to horticulture and landscape design student Kylie Blade who sought a career change after many years in the corporate world.

Kylie said "I always had an interest in gardens and design." After seeking a volunteer position at a landscape design company where she could gain hands-on knowledge in the field in exchange for her office skills, the arrangement blossomed into paid design work as an assistant and Kylie soon decided to pursue a diploma.

"Going back into the classroom as a mature aged student was daunting yet exciting. I work three days a week for KMLDesign on top of my studies. I also have two kids – a nine and a ten year old – and assist my husband with running of our plumbing business," said Kylie.

"At Bendigo TAFE I'm guided along the way in my studies. If I'm struggling, I can ask my very supportive teachers and get one-on-one help at any time."

Speaking highly of the support she receives, Kylie said "The class is very supportive and during workshops we have opportunities to share ideas, network and get to know other trades. All the theory is also online and we can work in our own time."

Award winners include:

- **Vocational Student of the Year & Gold Medallion (Food & Fibre) – Kylie Blade**  
*Vocational Student of the Year, Sponsored by: The City of Greater Bendigo*  
*Gold Medallion (Food & Fibre) Sponsored by: La Trobe University*
- **Gold Medallion (Automotive) – Hamish Fraser**  
*Sponsored by: MAS National*
- **Gold Medallion (Professional & Creative Industries) – Joel Maltese**  
*Sponsored by: La Trobe University*
- **Gold Medallion (Foundations & Pathways) – Cody Thompson**  
*Sponsored by: Mercedes Waratah*
- **Gold Medallion (Construction & Industrial) – Jake Chandler**  
*Sponsored by: Bendigo TAFE*
- **Gold Medallion (Health & Community) – Danny Baerken**  
*Sponsored by: Bendigo Health*

- **Gold Medallion (Indigenous Education) – Leticia Day**

*Sponsored by: BE Bendigo*

- **Koorie Student of the Year – Keana Kerr**

*Sponsored by: Bendigo and Adelaide Bank*

- **Foundations Adult Learner of the Year – Adam Hazelden**

*Sponsored by: Bendigo and Adelaide Bank*

- **Jan Lorimer Trust Award – Rebecca Simmonds**

*Sponsored by: Jan Lorimer Trust*

Full profiles of the award winners are available at: [bendigotafe.edu.au/2017awardwinners](http://bendigotafe.edu.au/2017awardwinners)

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## **About Bendigo TAFE**

One of Australia's largest government TAFE providers, Bendigo TAFE delivers courses at campuses in Bendigo, Echuca and Castlemaine. Metro courses are offered through Kangan Institute at campuses in Broadmeadows, Docklands, Essendon, Moonee Ponds and Richmond.