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A Local Solution to Youth Employment Issues

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YouthNow has been providing work experience to students in Melbourne's western suburbs for 19 years, but it's BizE Centre in Sunshine is where the organisation has really hit the mark.



The not-for-profit organisation provides a unique setting that lets young people develop their skills and confidence in the workplace, while assisting staff with real and meaningful work.

The organisation won the 2015 Learn Local award for Excellence in Creating Local Solutions last year for their BizE Centre.

'We used to have one or two young people come in and work in our office and we realised it was really beneficial to them,' said YouthNow chief executive Colleen Bergin.

'Now, instead of two young people, we can have 12 young people working in the office at any one time and they're all doing on-the-job training. We have a local solution to youth unemployment.'

When a young person comes into the centre, they sit at their own desk, log in to their own email and update their own calendars as they carry out tasks like database entry, reception duties or cold-calling businesses.

Key Business Advisors (KBA), a local HR business that offers nation-wide advice covering HR solutions and services, gives pro-bono support to the BizE Centre, providing additional training and links to employers.'

Through KBA, we now have employers who approach us when they are looking for staff,' said Colleen.

'This is a win-win for the employer and for our young trainees.'

More than train young people with the skills they need to find employment, the BizE Centre offers an inclusive work environment. When receiving feedback from previous clients, Colleen said she often hears it was the atmosphere that made the biggest impact.

'They've all said they thoroughly enjoyed their time at the centre because they're part of a team, they actually feel like they've been listened to and have real work experience to add to their resumes,' Colleen said.

At the 2015 Learn Local Awards ceremony, Colleen said she was humbled to have her hard work recognised by the ACFE community.

'ACFE and Learn Local are fantastic to belong to because all of the organisations work so hard for their local communities.'

Nominations for this year's Learn Local Awards close 3 June.

Learn Local organisations offer pre-accredited and accredited training with courses in literacy, numeracy, communications and job search skills. Run by the ACFE Board, the awards celebrate the hard work and efforts of these organisations across five categories.

For more information about the awards, see: [Victorian Learn Local Awards](#)

Pictured: Colleen Bergin and Colin Wilson from Key Business Advisors

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