



ACTION4YOUTH CASE-STUDY: WHAT DOES A CAREER IN FISHING LOOK LIKE?

Action4Youth's [Explore-Connect-Support](#) is a National Careers Institute (NCI) funded project that provides a three-step supported process to transition young people from all backgrounds and experiences into meaningful careers in agriculture.

The Explore-Connect-Engage model takes students on the journey from awareness to employment through a structured pipeline that creates greater access to agriculture opportunities. A key component is our mentoring program that ensures students are genuinely supported to thrive in the workplace.

Program partners from the dairy, wool and fishing industry will offer schools work experience opportunities to participants who complete the program.

SO, WHAT DOES A CAREER IN FISHING LOOK LIKE?

With vessels operating in the Gulf of Carpentaria for prawns, the Timor Sea for snapper and the depths of the sub-Antarctic for Patagonian Toothfish and Mackerel Icefish, [Austral Fisheries](#) recruits over 200 sea-going crew across their fleet of 19 vessels.



NORTHERN PRAWN FISHERY IN ACTION (CLICK TO WATCH)

Austral strives to create leadership in seafood sustainability by providing high quality wild-caught seafood to the domestic and international market, while minimising their impact on the environment. Austral was the first seafood business in the world to be certified carbon neutral. With sustainability high on their agenda Austral has created the [Austral Academy](#) to create awareness of fishing as a desirable and professional career.

Lesley Leyland is Austral's Chief Operating Officer,

We are trying to reach a school-based cohort, from Year 9 onwards, who would like to start their careers at sea as a deckhand and grow through the organisation," she says. "We go to schools and show students our industry."

And Austral has the best example of how this process can work - CEO David Carter began his working life as an Austral deckhand forty years ago.



Legally, a person must be 18 years old before they can go to sea on an Austral vessel and,

We believe it is essential to connect with students in Years 9, 10 and 11, to plan their pathways, and to be supported by Austral," Lesley says. "We have a virtual reality program that covers both life at sea and the scientific concepts of by-catch and sustainability, As a sustainable fishing company, this messaging is important for all staff, to feel they are part of a purpose lead business."

Early engagement through the [Austral Academy](#) can pair students with peer mentors such as [Bryan Van Wyk](#), and create TAFE pathways, where they can gain qualifications in ship-board safety, fire and emergency management and first aid; qualifications they will need to be ready for sea at 18. The transition to sea life can be attained by starting on 14-day trips with the snapper division in Darwin followed by 60-90 trips with the prawn division in Cairns.

Then if they feel this is a career for them, we can send them to the sub-Antarctic," Lesley says.



The Austral Academy currently works with schools in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. With the help of Action4Youth we look to roll it out to schools in NSW.

Action4Youth can value-add to the awareness programs, like the Austral Academy, by empowering young people to:

- Identify careers with purpose.
- Take a deep dive into the fishing industry.
- Ascertain if the fishing industry meets their aspirations.
- Connect with young people already working in the industry like [Bryan Van Wyk](#).

All the while being supported by knowledgeable careers advisors and having access to real-world employers and work experience opportunities.

WHAT DOES A CAREER IN FISHING LOOK LIKE?

Through these impactful connections between employers and much needed potential employees, Action4Youth is part of the solution to supporting young people to enter a career in the fishing industry.

WANT TO KNOW MORE:

- Read about Austral Fisheries [here](#).
- Hear from Austral Fisheries CEO David Carter [here](#).
- Lesley Leyland shares how Austral Fisheries is well ahead of the curve when it comes to attracting, developing and retaining the best people [here](#).

YOUNG FARMING CHAMPION BRYAN VAN WYK, HEAD OF OPERATIONS FOR AUSTRAL'S NORTHERN PRAWN FISHERY FLEET

Seafood and the ocean is my passion, so being able to work on both in the fishing industry and also have the opportunity to contribute to a more sustainable and affluent future has been a highly satisfying part of the day job. I also love the people I work with on both land and sea. They are such a dedicated, strong and diverse group of individuals which I continue to admire.

Finally, the best part of my job is that no day is the same. The learning opportunities are endless and I have had to overcome many difficult challenges on this journey so far which has only excelled my growth."

- Read more of Bryan's story [here](#).

