

"Stealing VCR's is opportunity recognition"

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Presenter: Matt East

A program in our region, which is about to begin, will set the benchmark as the very first in Australia to train Indigenous and at-risk youth for the workforce.

"If they're out there stealing cars or looking for a bed for the night if they're homeless, they've already got that resourcefulness.

"If they're running around the streets looking for open windows and they spot a VCR inside. That's opportunity recognition," Dr Louise Earnshaw told Matt East on ABC radio.

The Goldfields Chutzpah Factory College of Entrepreneurship is a project that facilitates the entrepreneurial skilling of Indigenous and at risk-youth, through accredited courses in entrepreneurship and enterprise skills.

Dr. Louise Earnshaw is the brainchild and creator of the project, which hailed from Louise's hometown of Brisbane and has been integrated across the globe. Chutzpah is a Yiddish term meaning cheeky, gusty, audacious or go-getting and works on the premise of Louise's PhD research into the similarity of traits between so called "naughty", young people and the world's entrepreneurs.

"If you think about Richard Branson, and all of the character traits Branson's got, and think about some of these gorgeous ratbag kids, they've got the Chutzpah factor," Louise explained.

In the Goldfields, staff at the Millen Street Youth Centre will operate the project, which is a Centrecare-run facility for young people.

The project sprouted from an idea and collaboration of research by Louise Earnshaw whilst she completed a PhD.



After running away from home at the age of 16, Dr. Louise Earnshaw was determined to help young people get skilled and start up their own business. She doesn't want young people to have the 'homeless' lifestyle she had as a child in Italy.



The venue for the project - Millen Street youth centre

“The truth be known, I only did the doctorate to give some kind of academic validation to my own life. I left school early, I ran away from home when I was 16 and ended up living on the streets in Italy. At a critical point in my life, I had a mentor who took hold of me and said ‘Hey look, sit down and let’s look at ways you can use your talents constructively,’ Louise said.

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Louise’s work has recently been the subject of a recent 7.30 Report on ABC TV and will soon feature in a national magazine.

Young people who successfully complete the project will gain a Certificate II in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, a nationally accredited qualification.

“The qualification teaches the young person skills of business start-up, so the young person can start a business from their own pattern.

“We say to the kids, ‘Hey, what do you love doing?’ Whether it’s skateboards, bikes or roo shooting, we can teach them how to start a business from what they love doing,” Louise enthused.

Louise said the students will graduate with a business plan, foundations for a business, and a nationally recognised qualification, which means the young person can graduate school.

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Even though some of the students might come from a low socio-economic background, abusive family circumstances or with a criminal history, Louise says it makes no difference to her or her staff who run the youth project across Australia.

“These kids are already very entrepreneurial.

“We’re not actually teaching them, we’re just harnessing the skills and abilities they already have. We focus it in a way that is constructive and not getting yourself into trouble and anyone else,” she said.

So, why was Kalgoorlie-Boulder chosen as a base for the Chutzpah education model?

“Kalgoorlie is an amazing city. It’s incredibly innovative. The people are amazing, there’s a very can-do approach. I’ve travelled the world with this work, I’ve strategically targeted Kalgoorlie to launch this, it has so much to offer,” Louise said.

The Goldfields Chutzpah Factory College of Entrepreneurship will commence shortly with an intake of Indigenous students – an Australia-wide first.

NB: The ABC has been notified that Earnshaw has not yet been awarded her PhD.