

YOUNG WOMEN EMBRACE regional QLD mining apprenticeships

YOUNG WOMEN WILL comprise half the mining apprentices taking part in a unique work readiness program in central Queensland.

Thirty-one apprentices have started a four-week BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) Work Readiness Program, which is run by the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA), learning trade skills in an environment that replicates practices on mine sites.

Moranbah State High School's Coalfields Training Excellence Centre will host the program before the apprentices – 16 who are female – then embark on their fulltime roles at six (BMA) sites across Central Queensland.

Sean Milfull, general manager at BMA Peak Downs Mine, says the health, safety and wellbeing of its people is central to

the organisation and the program.

"This program ensures that from day one our new apprentices will work safely and be productive members of their maintenance teams," Milfull says.

"BMA is excited to be investing in the future, with the induction of 31 trade apprentices in 2017. In partnership with the QMEA we look forward to collectively providing a supportive learning and mentoring environment for our new apprentices, with the Work Readiness Program offering the perfect starting point."

QMEA is an education partnership between the resources sector represented by Queensland Resources Council and the Queensland Government through the Gateway to Industry Schools Program.

QMEA Director Katrina-Lee Jones

says the initiative, in its second year, is breaking new ground in the education and training sector, ensuring a safe, seamless transition from school to regional sites.

"The BMA Work Readiness Program was a logical extension to our schools program with a number of BMA apprentices participating in QMEA experiences over the past few years," Jones says.

The QMEA finds it significant that all of the apprentices in the program come from regional towns, which is a measure of the support and engagement that QMEA has with the local communities.

"This initiative to quickly integrate apprentices to add value for their employers almost from day one, is of enormous benefit," she says. **RP**

31 Moranbah apprentices
will undertake work
readiness on BMA sites

