

Pupils quick-set work skills

Visit to construction manufacturer helps cement theory and practice

GERMAN philosopher Friedrich Engels said an ounce of action is worth a ton of theory and some anonymous wit also declared that while theory may raise your hopes, practice raises your income.

The truth in at least one of those quotes was proved at the Warana factory of Tellam Civil Products last week.

The construction products manufacturer gave 20 Year 11 students from Kawana Waters State College a taste of the industry with a factory tour, opportunities to ask questions of workers and engineers, and even a chance to take up the tools and help cast concrete.

"We let the guys talk to the workers on the floor to get some first-hand feedback, tips and industry experience," Tellam sales and marketing manager Nick Walsh said.

"Talking to these guys is a lot more relevant than them reading about it in a book.

"Concrete is a pretty expensive product and all they have to work with is a few pavers up at the school, so to see a big amount of the product is slightly different.

"They were genuinely thankful of the opportunity to come down and have a look."

The 21-year-old business was approached by Cameron Quirke from Construction Skills Queensland to offer

WHO IS TELLAM CIVIL?

▶ A multi-million dollar Warana business with 70 staff and operations on the Gold Coast and Brisbane

▶ It started on Tandem Avenue before expansion drove it to buy larger premises on Main Drive

▶ When the recent downturn slowed traditional income streams from subdivisions and housing, the company diversified into manufacturing product for civil, plumbing, mining and electrical industries.

▶ "We probably supply about 70% of the civil market for the subdivisional side of things," Tellam's Nick Walsh said. "We regularly supply the Townsville army base and we are supplying a lot of the pre-cast components to the \$4.3 billion Airport Link tunnel in Brisbane."

the course, which ran for four hours over two days.

"It gives the guys a broader appreciation for what products are out there, where and how they are made.

"It gives them further options for a new career and if one of them comes back to work for us, that would be great.

"Pre-casting is a major



HARD WORK: Year 11 students from Kawana Waters State College get working at Tellam Civil Products at Warana last week. PHOTO: NICHOLAS FALCONER/SCN23021TELLAM

part of the construction industry and it's developing all the time.

"There are a lot of interesting aspects and you can make a solid career out of it.

"If these students don't get exposure to a real working environment, they might rule it out."

Senior school deputy principal Ian Miller thanked

CSQ and Tellam for their support of the program.

"This provided authentic learning for students seeking trade pathways post Year 12," he said.

Mr Walsh said the key to performing well in the midst of a crippling downturn was good customer service and a quality product.

"And that is genuinely true. We have kept up with

the times and added to the range, and all of that has kept us going," he said.

"The wet weather and the GFC created a stormy time.

"But we had good management, kept it lean and mean, and batted down the hatches.

"We also adjusted our market focus and moved into mining, industrial and electrical."