

Mandy proves mettle

SOME industries are difficult for women to break into. Historically, boilermaking has been a male-dominated career.

Often a trailblazer is needed, and Mandy Van Ee is certainly one of those.

Sharp Welding owner Lee Sharp says Van Ee is blazing a successful trail for other women into this metalworking trade.

Sharp says he wished he could have two or three more apprentices like Van Ee.

“She’s fantastic. She’s better than the blokes and she’s proved boilermaking is not a male-only trade,” he says.

“Not only is she working in a male-dominated trade, but she has also successfully overcome a hearing impairment to get where she wants to be.

“It’s all about attitude and Mandy has the right attitude to succeed in this industry,” Sharp says.

Van Ee says she loves what she does, and is thankful that Sharp Welding gave her a chance.

“I love a challenge and I’m determined to prove that I’m the best boilermaker apprentice that I can be,” Van Ee says.

Sarina Russo Apprenticeship Services general manager Kevin Jarick says Van Ee is a great role

model for women who want to enter traditionally male-dominated skilled trades.

“Mandy is fortunate she has a boss who understands the need to create a learning environment where she is treated as a learner, as well as worker,” he says.

“If employers want employees who are better educated and more aware, they need to contribute to their learning.

“The apprenticeship system is an effective vehicle for work-based learning. It gives people an opportunity to do real work and receive real pay while undertaking relevant training to take them another step along the route of their chosen career.

“Employers are now looking for ways to attract and retain bright, reliable and motivated people in their businesses to meet their skill demands.

“They realise that to ensure the quality and quantity of tradespeople they need to employ Australian apprentices and grow their own skilled workforce.

“Our priority is to educate employers about the need for apprentices to complete their training. It is crucial to their business and basic numeracy.

“Apprentices also have to be educated not to stop their apprenticeship for the lure of short-term, full-time money.

“The benefits of completing their trade will put them in a more advantageous position in the long-term,” Jarick says.