

TRAINING TALK THE NEW CREATIVES

By Anthony Gray, MIG Training



Every individual's hairdressing journey is their own and while the apprenticeship path is time honoured and well worn by many, even this educational journey can include many twists, turns and differing opportunities.

In a job market where competition for the best and brightest is at an all-time high, attracting new entrants to the industry and finding quality staff is the number one issue for salons. With this as the back drop it is timely to delve a little deeper.

- What does the journey look like for the emerging hairdressers of tomorrow?
- How are those new to the industry finding and entering the wonderful world of hairdressing?
- What are the types of education programs that are providing the attraction to those new to Hairdressing?

There is no better way to look at these questions than through the lived experience of someone

who has discovered a love for Hairdressing and has started the journey to become a senior stylist.

Caitlyn McMillan is an apprentice at the award-winning Brisbane salon Ella & Jade. Caitlyn's journey has been an incredible one to date. We sat down with Caitlyn at the beautiful Ella & Jade and spoke with her about all-things hairdressing.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR HAIRDRESSING EDUCATION JOURNEY?

I started at my local high school before moving to the YMCA school at Kingston. I liked school but got into a bit of trouble here and there. I found it hard to sit still in the classroom and eventually YMCA Kingston took me in.



RUMOUR HAS IT YOU CAME BACK FROM HAIR EXPO AND NEVER WENT BACK TO SCHOOL. CAN YOU CONFIRM OR DENY THIS?

No comment!

CAN YOU RECALL YOUR LIGHTBULB MOMENT WHEN YOU REALISED A HAIRDRESSING CAREER WAS YOUR CALLING?

I knew I wanted to continue Hairdressing and keep going and learning when I found that the salon was the only place where I felt at home and comfortable to be myself.

WHAT IS THE SCARIEST THING YOU HAVE DONE OR THE BIGGEST HAIRDRESSING RISK YOU HAVE TAKEN?

The biggest leap that I have taken so far would be participating in our GenNext showcase at Hair Expo in Sydney. I was in charge of making sure that our creative looks were completed. So on the day, I was in charge of all the sectioning and total looks. We had assistants come on the day that I had to take through the braiding and how to complete the looks, so that was a very big responsibility. It was definitely one of the scariest things I have done so far.

WHAT ARE ACHIEVEMENTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR CAREER TO DATE?

The very first one would be when I completed my Certificate II in Salon Assistant at YMCA and won Hairdressing student of the year at YMCA. From there it would be the GenNext showcase....getting through that day! And then recently completing my look for the futuristic Colour competition at the Brisbane Hair & Beauty Expo. Even though I did not place or anything it was amazing bringing my idea to life...I was very happy with it.

WHO HAVE BEEN THE MOST INFLUENTIAL HAIRDRESSERS IN YOUR CAREER?

There have been a few. The first one was MIG Trainer Mandy. She introduced me to Hairdressing. She took me in and was the first pathway into Hairdressing for which I'll be forever grateful. She always believed in me, backed me and told me to follow my dreams. She told me I could get an apprenticeship and work wherever I want.

And then of course Alannah for giving me the best opportunity of my life so far, an apprenticeship at Ella & Jade. She has always been there for me. Both her and William have both pushed me to enter competitions and have always backed me through my training. They have been the best so far.

Also my aunty. I am very lucky to have such a great aunty. She is also a Hairdresser at Joey Scandizzo Hair Salon. She inspires me and backs me 100%.



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NAME THREE HAIRDRESSERS YOU FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM FOR INSPO?

Renya Xydis - @renyaxydis
@renyaawydis_editorialhair
Natalie Anne @natalieannehair
And a page called @Bangstyle. This page reposts other hairdresser's images and is amazing.

WHAT ARE YOUR HAIRDRESSING DREAMS OR ASPIRATIONS?

I am not sure of the end game. Instead of big dreams or goals I've got small goals that I would like to reach. I would love to be able to create a collection before I finish my apprenticeship. Entering Apprentice of the Year at Hair Expo is probably my biggest dream or goal at the

moment. I would also like to enter Brisbane Hair & Beauty Expo futuristic Colour again next year after competing in the event this year.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN?

Probably just to be myself and to try and not fit into anyone else's version of me."

As evidenced by Caitlyn's journey, a creative's path can be difficult to navigate within an education system geared toward academic achievement and performance. Unfortunately, this can often be at the expense of those with creative and emotional intelligence.

Caitlyn's story is inspiring and brings together a passion ignited through a school-based Certificate II in Salon Assistant program with wonderful mentors and employers who have been willing to invest and support a young Hairdresser on her journey.

The challenge for us as an industry is to take every opportunity to connect with fellow creatives in order for them to taste and feel our wonderful trade. The more we do this the more chance we have of finding diamonds like Caitlyn McMillan.

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