

# TONY PHILLIPS

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT/ECONOMICS HOLMESGLEN INSTITUTE

### Senior School Subjects

- Year 11: English, General Mathematics, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, Sociology, Religious Studies
- Year 12: English Language, Further Mathematics, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, Legal Studies

**Why did you choose these subjects?** During high school, I was more dedicated to my job than I was my school studies, so I chose subjects which would keep me motivated and enjoying my time in secondary school. The first of these was Outdoor and Environmental Studies, which enabled me to do something outside the classroom, and break up my year with trips, and a new type of experience. I loved Outdoor and Environmental Studies- it enlightens your time at CCW by giving you an outlet, and an opportunity to go outside your comfort zone and appreciate a different type of education- while still being heavily based on ecological, sustainable and environmental factors.

For my course, I did not require Mathematical Methods, only General Maths and therefore I chose an option I would be able to achieve a higher score in- being Further Mathematics. This provided me with the necessary skillset and mindset to be able to work out complex (but overall 'useful') mathematical formulae, definitions and I could understand more freely the basis for which you 'nut things out'.

As a professional, I now understand the benefits of doing English Language. Understanding the types of colloquial language used by different groups, and having a different perspective on how people utilise language to engage in different environments is underrated within the curriculum and in the Construction Industry; communication is one of the key skills to being able to manage lots of different personnel.

Overall my subjects were 50% based on enjoyment and motivation and 50% based on meeting the objectives of my prerequisites for the Industry as a whole. I did not plan on a specific 'course' so to speak until I had recognised what I wanted to specialise in. My field (Construction Management and Development Contracting) relied on a basis of understanding people's needs, financial data and how they are applied in a holistic way to provide useful and reliable information to clientele.

Overall my one piece of advice in choosing subjects in Year 10 and 11 is to avoid advancing in subjects you do not love, just because your grades reflect a high level of knowledge. The sequence of exposing yourself to 11 & 12 level curriculums can be a burden on how you enjoy your time at school. Motivating yourself to enjoy your time and embrace subjects you enjoy rather than what you see yourself as good at, can really help you to make decisions later.

Sometimes fast tracking things in high school can burn you out before you get to Year 12. Your ATAR should be the focus of Year 12, and you shouldn't burn yourself out prior. I think that's extremely important. Consider how much you love a subject, and how well you do in it- it's not about how smart you are, it's about what you want to do in the future.

**What resources did you use to choose subjects?** I had been working within the industry (work experience) each school holidays in Melbourne. This enabled me to gain a rapport within the industry early on. Through working for a main stream commercial builder in Melbourne, I was able to ask questions, gain knowledge around the subjects required, and then could also talk to my parents (also in the industry) about what basic expertise I would need to be able to continue on within the construction management sector. I also had the College Careers Advisor help me establish options. It is important within the construction sector (particularly talking about corporate and executive engineering, design and management roles) to know people, become exposed and make yourself known to people who already work within the Industry. Word of mouth is still the best possible method for gaining insight into the industry's professional requirements.

**What is your course like?** My course provides the best possible exposure and education when approaching construction management, contracts administration, financial development skills and building surveying skills. The Problem-Based learning style of the institute becomes an integral part of achieving your professional competency. The construction industry is a hard industry, and the corporate roles played by project and construction managers within construction is based around financial background, people skills and an ability to envisage structures, their components, characteristics, architectural style and land surveying and regulatory practices.

**What do you love about your course?** I love my course. I really do- it's not the university lifestyle some people recognise as 'standard' work loads, and the course is demanding and quite advanced (for example I was the youngest applicant to the degree by 17 years). The course reflects values that are handy to have already- such as a background of the industry, some basic experience and a passion for building, evaluation, cost in use and management of people and works.

We often do retreats to learning centres, where we carry out studies and team building exercises, and professional competencies around programming are carried out regularly, and the overall framework of these trips are to teach us as young professionals, the hardships of an industry where every job is unique (unlike manufacturing where processes are repeated for instance).

We do weekly if not more often trips to sites around the Greater Melbourne area, as well as new suburbs and large-scale developments to understand the layouts, components, conditions and overall structure of the development as it unfolds, and complete journal's and professional case studies and tools to better understand the nature of a residential development. The course teaches you to manage, direct and perform construction management and financial economic skills from sites \$500,000 through to \$100 Million.

**How did the subjects at school prepare you for your course?** The most effective way my schooling helped me to prepare for the intense university course I chose, was the organisation, routine and the overall ability to ask for support where needed more so than the subjects themselves.

If you choose to do a degree which is very demanding, focus on choosing an English which teaches you the skills of syntax, report styles, different professional terms and how they are utilised within different scopes of writing, and then how those scopes are applied - for instance referencing, italics, sums and the structure of essays and writing skills alike. English Literature would assist in this.

If you are not a strong communicator- take on **English Language** as your choice of English. English Language opened my vocabulary to understand different logistical characteristics, particularly those utilised by different groups, professionals and particularly slang terms and how the slang is utilised when understanding and relating to different groups of people. This is very important in a diverse industry like construction.

**Accounting** is handy to learn the minimum (or basics) associated with how more complex cash flows, ledgers and structures are utilised in the Life Cycle Costing associated with larger building projects- it's very handy to understand how the sums you utilise in this course are calculated from basic accounting structures.

Take up **Further Mathematics**. Methods is only required if you apply it to an engineering background. If you are thinking about perhaps taking up an engineering area within the industry, and you are not fantastic at maths ensure you are tutored and have applied yourself well during the Year 11 Mathematical Methods. Making the choice to take up Methods over Further is better than narrowing your options later on. Personally, I found more benefit out of taking up Accounting and Further Mathematics, rather than focusing only on the mathematical side of the prerequisites.

Find a subject that doesn't relate to your course! Outlets are every important, and the university side of this course is a challenging lifestyle, and you must have the ability (prior to enrolling within a double degree) to find an outlet you love and apply it to your routine to help you refresh and avoid burning out. Outdoor Education for me was that outlet. It was a completely different field of learning where I could apply different skills and take my mind off the bigger picture for an hour each day or so.

Remember, if you love something enough you'll fight for it. It's not about how good you are at a subject but rather how much you enjoy it!

**Course information:** Bachelor of Building Surveying, Holmesglen Institute, <http://bit.ly/29EL1XJ>