

RILEY PAYNE

FITTER MACHINIST AND CNC OPERATOR

Senior School Subjects

- Year 11: English, Mathematical Methods Units 3+4
Early Advancement, Youth Ministry, Chemistry, Specialist Mathematics
- Year 12: English Language, Physical Education, Psychology, Product Design and Technology - Materials, Physics.



Why did you choose these subjects? In Year 11 my subject selections related to what I ‘thought’ would be important in the future, with an emphasis on mathematics due to my interest in aviation engineering and design. Family members also influenced decisions; in my case an older brother that was very maths orientated as well as the undeniable influence of friends. However in Year 12 I came to the conclusion that to perform at my best for VCE and maximise my potential for a decent ATAR I would have to choose subjects that I was interested in and that suited my lifestyle.

From there I shifted my focus from a heavy maths emphasis to Psychology, Physical Education and Product Design and Technology, which I scored reasonably well in due to the fact that I was genuinely interested in the content being taught. In the case of Product Design and Technology, it gave me a chance to combine hands-on skills with various creative aspects. This variation in subjects meant that I didn’t become overloaded in one specific area and allowed me to maintain interest and focus in my subjects.

What resources did you use to choose subjects? I discussed the subjects I was interested in with current and past teachers of the subjects. Students in the years above who previously completed the subjects also offered valuable perspectives on certain subjects. In saying this, you should be wary that one individual’s experience may not necessarily be a great representation of the subject as a whole or reflect your ability to perform well in that subject.

At the time I was considering university, so I also consulted the College Careers Adviser to see which subjects were prerequisites for the courses I was considering. Even if you are considering a trade, your Careers Adviser is still an extremely valuable and helpful resource when deciding which subjects will be most useful in the trade you are considering.

What did you enjoy about your apprenticeship? There are many enjoyable aspects of an apprenticeship including the people you meet and the hands-on learning environment. For me one of the most enjoyable aspects was that my employer was very diversified in the jobs he would take on. This meant there were many learning opportunities and that my apprenticeship covered a broad range of engineering. My employer and workmates were also very helpful with any projects or jobs that I completed outside of work.

I would strongly recommend visiting local employers and finding out what you would be typically doing as a first, second, third and fourth year apprentice as I know some people who weren’t as fortunate as myself in terms of work diversity, learning pace and how much support they received in order to progress at their own pace.

Finding a business that fosters your interests and passions is crucial to your overall experience as an apprentice. Having said this, you must be willing to work hard for an employer that offers this environment, as with any job it’s a two-way street.

How did your senior school subjects prepare you for your course?

- **Mathematical Methods:** assisted me in CNC programming and fabrication. Understanding plotting tool-paths in three dimensions via X,Y,Z coordinates, calculating materials required in various fabrication jobs, surface area, and volumes of particular components. Conversions from different measurement systems are also a common occurrence within my trade. The better your numeracy skills, the easier you will find many of these aspects.
- **Product Design and Technology - Materials:** assisted in preparing quotes and proposals for certain jobs whilst also providing a thorough understanding of the design process.
- **Accounting:** is very useful especially if you are considering starting your own business. It will quickly become obvious that what makes you money doesn't entirely happen 'on the floor' in the workshop, so having a well-rounded approach to starting your own business is essential and accounting skills come into this quite heavily.

You will often be surprised with what you have retained from your school subjects; I have found this very apparent throughout my apprenticeship but more recently whilst undertaking my CPL theory subjects.

What are you doing now in your trades position? I am currently primarily employed as a commercial pilot for an Albury based company. I also continue to run a prototype engineering business and Remotely Piloted Aircraft business (commonly known as drones) along with small amount of subcontracting as a fitter during my time off from flying.

My primary job involves low-level power line survey operations across the whole of NSW. The job entails 7-16 day periods of deployment to various towns and locations across NSW. The flying is both challenging and rewarding with some great views; the end focus is to gain enough experience to enter the crop-dusting industry. The flying season lasts approximately 7 months of the year allowing enough time for engineering and other business ventures in the off-season.

The engineering business allows me to continue to create and develop new products while utilising many of the skills and contacts I had developed whilst completing my apprenticeship. The drone business focuses on developing and utilising new technology to improve agricultural operations, aerial application, survey and custom aerial footage.

I am fortunate enough that the trade qualification I gained through completing my apprenticeship has given me the foundation and backup/confidence needed to explore my passions and interests in various areas.