

HEAD START WITH PRE-TRADE SWITCHED-ON APPRENTICESHIPS AT FONTERRA

writer **PETER WHITE** // photographer **SARAH MARSHALL**

For **MIGUEL SHORTLAND-MENDEZ**, gaining a New Zealand Certificate in Electrical Pre-Trade (Level 3) (NZCEP) has helped him advance quickly through the early stages of his apprenticeship.

Miguel (18) is an electrical apprentice based at Fonterra's Kauri site, near Whangārei. He started his apprenticeship a year ago, after leaving school at the end of Year 12 to do a pre-trade course at NorthTec.

"Doing the pre-trade course has put me ahead on my paperwork so I am really well into the second year of my apprenticeship," says Miguel.

"It is like getting a head start and gives you an advantage over others who may not have done a pre-trade. It was very important as it allowed me to begin getting hands-on experience in the theory and practical.

"It meant when I came to Fonterra, I wasn't as green as they initially thought which meant I could learn more complicated theories."

The standout, white walls of the co-operative's plant at Kauri contain some of the most advanced processing equipment in the world.

Miguel says being able to work on that equipment is hugely beneficial.

"It may be looking at flow meters, or a whole range of electrical motors, and recently during our winter maintenance shutdown I got to install some new Variable Speed Drives (VSDs), which are like motor-control computers."

Miguel says all the variety of work he has working at the Fonterra site gives him an advantage over being a residential electrician — particularly working with the Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs).

"It is a sought-after trade, so later on after I finish my apprenticeship it gives

me greater options for future job opportunities. I would like to stay on with Fonterra, as it is such a good company to work for, with a goal to pursue more industrial work in the future."

Miguel appreciates the support he has received from his managers and peers at the co-operative.

"They have given me so much support and allowed me the opportunity to be flexible with increasing my hours, particularly in the shutdown when there is no milk, and we are not making any product.

"I was able to learn more about the plant and get to help install some of that world-leading technology."

Miguel studied Maths, English, Physics, PE and Music in Year 12 at

Excellere College in Whangārei. He was head boy that year, an honour he is immensely proud of.

"Although at work I am there to learn not lead, I do believe it gives me an opportunity to carry the responsibility of what it was like to be head boy at work and understand that people are depending on me to do what I need to do."

Career opportunities across the trades are positive for young workers with the right attitude and qualifications.

Miguel's advice for school leavers — practise listening more than speaking.

"Nowadays we like to input our ideas, but we don't always know what we are talking about. So, it is better to listen more than you speak."



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MIGUEL SHORTLAND-MENDEZ

KEY FACTS



- **MIGUEL SHORTLAND-MENDEZ** IS AN ELECTRICAL APPRENTICE BASED AT **FONTERRA'S KAURI SITE**, NEAR **WHANGĀREI**.
- DOING AN **ELECTRICAL PRE-TRADE COURSE** HAS HELPED HIM ADVANCE QUICKLY THROUGH THE **EARLY STAGES OF HIS APPRENTICESHIP**.
- **MIGUEL** SAYS THE **VARIETY OF WORK** HE'S GETTING WITH **FONTERRA** GIVES HIM AN **ADVANTAGE OVER A RESIDENTIAL APPRENTICESHIP**.

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