

**12 March 2024**

TAFE NSW Shellharbour and Woolworths has opened the doors to a new Mini Woolies site supporting people with disability to gain real-world skills to jump-start a career in the retail industry.

Working in partnership with Woolworths and Fujitsu, the site will assist students with disability at TAFE NSW to learn in a simulated retail workplace and build job-ready skills in point of sales, receiving and handling stock, and communicating with customers.

Students will work towards completing nationally recognised units from Certificate II in Retail and connect with local employers to support a successful transition to employment.

TAFE NSW Director of Skills in Innovative Manufacturing, Science, Robotics and Supply Chain Daniel Severino said the new training facility will offer more people with disabilities the opportunity to grow their skills and explore a career in the retail industry.

"We know that only 48 per cent of working-age people with disability are employed," Mr Severino said.

"In the Illawarra, skilled retail workers are in high demand, and these state-of-the-art facilities will provide students with the skills and confidence to transition to the workplace.

"We're excited to see our TVET and Certificate II in Retail students start training in the new facilities. We're also working closely with disability service providers and employers to establish pathways to help connect students with future training and job opportunities."

General Manager of the Mini Woolies Program and Enterprise Operations, Woolworths Group, Sarah Corey said we are excited to expand our footprint of Mini Woolies sites with the TAFE NSW team after an initial trial at the Loftus campus last year.

"The Mini Woolies program was developed in 2018 to build the confidence and independence of young Australians with disabilities, and we hope that the students at Shellharbour will be able to take new hands-on learning experiences with them as they prepare for the workforce," Ms Corey said.

The Mini Woolies site simulates the operations of a real-life Woolworths supermarket, with fresh food baskets, grocery shelving, ticketing, signage, Woolworths branded uniforms, and fully operational Fujitsu registers to create an immersive training experience.

The new Mini Woolies site at TAFE NSW Shellharbour joins over 53 locations in Australia, with Mini Woolies learning spaces set up at specific schools and post-school providers to support students from Kindergarten through to tertiary level education.

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