

## 'Realising Design' at Holmesglen TAFE

*"We're taking a big step forward and aligning ourselves closely with the real needs of our Industry"* That's how Philip Ashley sums up the latest moves afoot at Holmesglen TAFE's Furnishing Industry training centre in Chadstone Victoria.

Recognising that Design and Quality are key drivers of the Australian Furniture Industries future meant a shift in focus and direction to ensure the TAFE's role as a supplier of relevant training and assistance. *"We're offering industry design skills and advice to help them develop new designs and then we can prototype and manufacturing process test these for them."*



Central to this is Holmesglen's new integrated manufacturing cell based around the latest technology from Weeke, the CNC specialist of the German Homag Group.

*"Today the CNC work centre is the core machining process. If you invest in a machine with real flexibility and combine this with design skills and operator training you have a real advantage. We see our role as helping local manufacturers 'realise design' into their production to give them this advantage to combat the flow of imports."*

Holmesglen also see their role as ambassadors for the introduction and uptake of the cutting edge of new technology so local industry can see what can be achieved with the right equipment and training.

*"We consider Weeke to be at the leading edge of CNC technology and that was a big factor in our decision when deciding to upgrade our CNC."*

Examples Philip gives are the LED setting of the position of the cups and rails and the Homag Groups 'Flex 5' unit which is essentially a 5<sup>th</sup> axis you pick up from the tool changer. *"We thought about a standard 5 axis machine but decided Homag's solution was more in tune with industries 'real world' needs, giving virtually the same flexibility yet easily programmed through the standard software and something you can upgrade to as and when required"*

The Homag Groups 'WoodWop' operating software is also taught as part of Holmesglens CNC Machining module. *"Again this is right at the forefront of CNC technology worldwide and gives our students an excellent understanding of what is possible and just how easy, fast and flexible modern programming is"*

Holmesglens focus on the CNC machining centres role in manufacture sees all Wood machinist and Cabinetmaking students completing their CNC module. The Weeke and Holmesglen's Holzma Beamsaw are both 'online' to the computer room where the latest Optimising and CNC programming from Homag is taught alongside AutoCAD and Design programs from third parties.

*"Because the CNC is core to what we do the reliability of the machine and the back up service was another big factor in our decision. Our previous Weeke performed absolutely faultlessly during the 2 years we had it and we've been very happy with Homag Australia's training and backup".*

The new Weeke will also be put to work making components for refurbishments underway at Holmesglen and other campuses. *"That gives our students 'real work' to undertake and of course cuts the funding costs of running the TAFE"*

New focus, new course structures to suit today's demands – and the latest in CNC technology to realise the design and manufacture aspirations of the industry. It's fair to say Holmesglen have reshaped themselves to meet the Furniture Industries training and allied service requirements and are ready to add some real value through their new design focus.

*Photo captions: Philip Ashley. Manager Furnishing Industry Training Centre*