High time for tree change as teachers chalk up new jobs

By LUCAS FORBES

THERE'S one lesson this fresh intake of teachers can teach our city: how Armidale's marketing campaign “Experience the Highs” is really working.

Three new teachers at The Armidale School have opted for a tree change, while Rachel Rich is chalkling up her first year as a qualified teacher, after graduating from the University of New England.

They all hope to “experience the highs” in their chosen profession in this university town, just named as one of the nation’s hottest places to visit by Australian Traveller.

Armidale is already known as a seat of learning, with its university and TAFE services by two public high schools, eight public primary schools, three independent schools and one Catholic school.

But “Experience the Highs” is attracting a wider cohort of workers here and our schools are the beneficiaries.

David Drain, Karl Selber and Andrew Junge are the new faces in the staff room as TAS.

As well as teaching, they are tasked with looking after students staying in the boarding houses. Mr Drain used to work at St Joseph’s College, Hunters Hill in Sydney and said he was looking forward to working in an independent school in a rural setting.

“I’ve enjoyed moving to a rural area and my wife and I have two children now so we’re keen to live a different lifestyle,” he said.

"Sydney didn’t have the community feel that I’m told Armidale does - DAVID DRAIN

“I am looking forward to a new environment and being part of a new community. Sydney didn’t have the community feel that I’m told Armidale does.”

Each of the three teachers will look after boarders of different ages while living on campus.

Mr Selber, who is the new senior visual arts teacher, says combining the start of high school with living away from home can be a challenging experience for young boys.

“I think the first day for year 7 it can be very intimidating, it can be for any student,” he said.

“But then you throw boarding into that too and it can be very daunting.”

Mr Junge has worked at TAS previously and has returned after several years teaching in Queensland.

He said he and the other teachers were eager to jump into the school year.

“It’s a bit like any game of sports; we’ve been preparing and training and now we just want to get in and play,” he said.

Meanwhile, Rachel Rich is settling into her own class at Drummond Memorial Public School.

This is the first time Ms Rich has been in a classroom though, having done her internship at the school last year and has volunteered there for four years.

She said she was a little nervous to finally have her own class, but was mostly excited.

“Having 20 children who are your responsibility and you can watch them grow and change, it’s exciting,” Ms Rich said.

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