

HWLLEN Case Study: El Jannah Restaurant Structured Workplace Learning Partnership



Context

In January 2025, El Jannah Charcoal Chicken partnered with the Hume Whittlesea LLEN to create work-based learning opportunities for students in Years 10, 11, and 12. El Jannah, a well-established and fast-growing restaurant chain specialising in charcoal-cooked chicken, is known for its focus on quality, customer service, and a high-energy team environment.

In partnership with HWLLEN, the Craigieburn El Jannah Charcoal Chicken restaurant was selected to pilot the Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) program, offering two initial placements. Following early success, El Jannah's HR department expanded the program in March 2025 opening SWL opportunities across all 17 Victorian stores with HWLLEN as the key contact to facilitate placements.

Strategy

This SWL opportunity provides students, undertaking VET Hospitality, an opportunity to gain experience and skills in a structured and supported real industry environment. El Jannah offers a range of workplace experiences aligning with their Hospitality VDSS course including:

- Guest Service:** Greeting customers, assisting with menu choices, taking orders, and responding to enquiries.
- Hygiene & Cleanliness:** Maintaining a clean and safe environment while adhering to workplace safety standards.
- Kitchen Assistance:** Supporting kitchen staff with food preparation and general kitchen tasks in line with hygiene and food-handling regulations.
- Teamwork:** Working collaboratively with supervisors and team members to deliver a positive guest experience.

Students participate in an interview process prior to their engagement and obtain valuable practice in the restaurant whilst gaining skills and building confidence in workplace communication and teamwork and. At the completion of the placement, HR reviews store vacancies and may offer ongoing paid casual employment at the host store or at an alternative location.

Outcomes

Since the launch of the initiative, El Jannah has received 20 student applications across its Victorian stores. Student engagement has been strong, and feedback from both participants and store managers has been overwhelmingly positive. Early outcomes indicate that the SWL program is helping students build confidence, develop employability skills, and gain insight into the hospitality sector.

Feedback

Store managers have praised students for their enthusiasm, willingness to learn, and contribution to team culture. Students have reported gaining valuable real-world experience, particularly in customer service and communication, while feeling supported by supervisors and staff. The structured nature of the placement has been highlighted as beneficial in developing workplace readiness.

Future Directions

As El Jannah continues its rapid expansion, with a goal of operating 200 stores by 2027, the SWL partnership has proven to be a meaningful and low-risk recruitment strategy. The program is helping build a pipeline of motivated young workers while providing students with authentic industry experience. El Jannah's commitment to supporting local youth not only strengthens its workforce but also reinforces its role as a community-minded employer. HWLLEN continues to play an important role in maintaining El Jannah as a valued host employer across the state of Victoria and intends to continue coordinating a collaborative approach for students to engage in meaningful work experience at their ever-increasing restaurant outlets.