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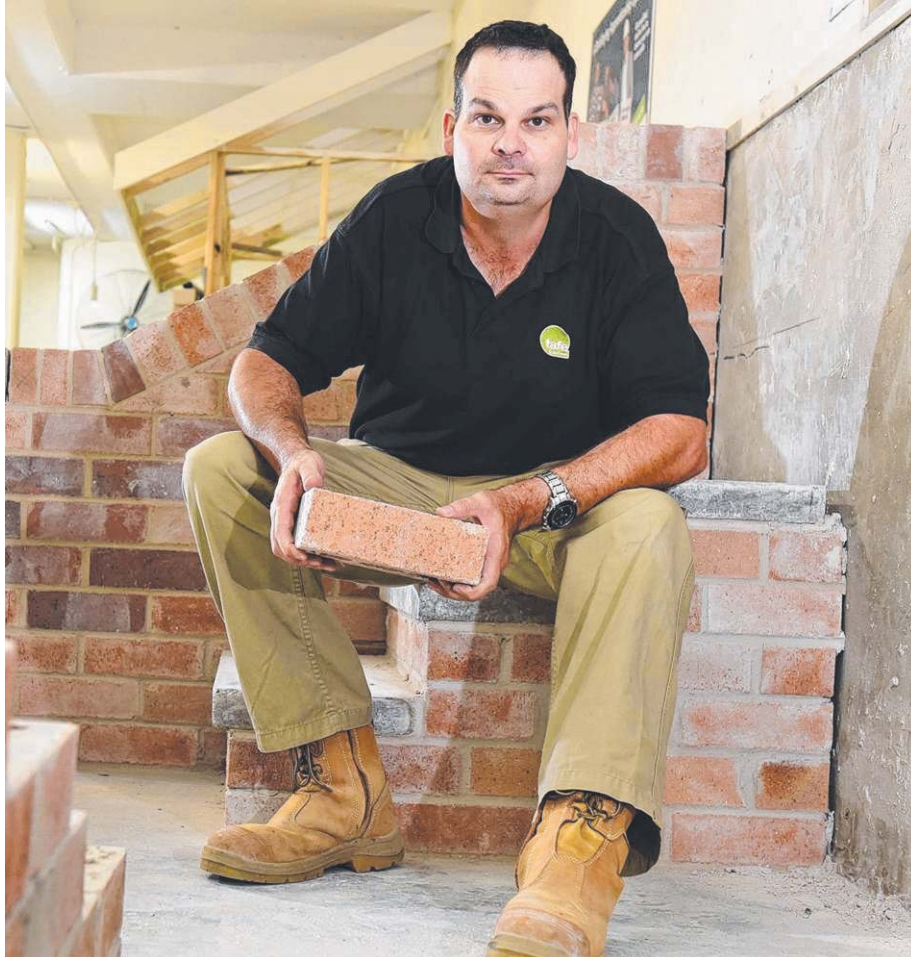
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Graham Huxtable says there's been a surge of interest in bricklaying.

Picture: JOHN GASS

## BUILDING CAREERS, BRICK BY BRICK

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WHEN Graham Huxtable talks about career building blocks he means it literally.

He is, after all, the bricklaying instructor at TAFE Gold Coast's Ashmore campus.

Recently he has noticed a surge in interest for the trade, which, he said, normally came second best to trades such as carpentry.

He began last year with 50 students and ended up teaching 90. So far this year he has more than 80.

"I started during the GFC when it was quiet but demand has really picked up and the trade is growing," Mr Huxtable said.

"Right now it's the best it's been in a long time.

"There also was a big shortage of bricklayers so now is a good time to be a bricklayer."

Pay rates vary but bricklayers can command \$35 an hour on housing sites and \$45 an hour on commercial or union-run sites, the Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training organisation said.

TAFE students complete

a four-year apprenticeship, which costs \$1800, with the final year in the workforce.

Mr Huxtable is one of the presenters at the Gold Coast Careers Festival next week, organised by Study Gold Coast. Other exhibitors include Gold Coast Health, City of Gold Coast and Minter Ellison.

The festival will feature workshops and presentations from business leaders for students looking to enter the workforce. It will be held on May 10 and 11 at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.