

Nurturing entrepreneurs of future

By GREG ELLIS

A NEW program for future entrepreneurs is progressing well at WEA Illawarra with an impressive line-up of entrepreneurial speakers helping 32 teenagers before they leave school.

Every week, Year 11 students interested in being mentored and receiving accredited training have been listening to an inspirational story from an entrepreneur.

The Inspire My Future pilot is funded under the NSW Government's Better Futures Program and features a different speaker every week.

Last week Carly Garrard talked about her career and provided many insights into what makes a successful entrepreneur.

Ms Garrard is only 24 but runs four companies in the construction industry.

She is halfway through a masters degree in strategic management and marketing at the University of Wollongong but originally started a crane business at 18 after receiving an inheritance from her late mother's estate.

Ms Garrard was raised in a single-parent family in



Inspiring: Rebecca Evans, 16, entrepreneur Carly Garrard, 24, Parrys Raines, 16, Rohan Gibbs, 16, and Christina Sun, 16, enjoy the Inspire My Future project. Picture: ANDY ZAKELI

Alice Springs, until her mother died from cancer when she was 12.

She spent the rest of her childhood living with her maternal grandparents in Liverpool.

An uncle working in the construction industry encouraged her to invest in a tower crane six years ago.

WEA Illawarra chief executive officer Gareth McKeen said it was amazing to hear businesspeople

such as Ms Garrard who were so humble about what they have achieved.

"It is really interesting the four entrepreneurs we have so far are all so different as people but all possess the common thread of drive, ambition and overcoming obstacles," he said.

"We evaluated the program last week by surveying the students and the response has been very positive, exceeded our ex-

pectations to date," Mr McKeen said.

Seven entrepreneurs are participating in the 10-week program, including Geoff McQueen from Internetrix, Brett Kitely, founder of Touchdown helicopters, and Lube Markovski, a multiple franchise holder.

This week Garry Pinch, of Accounting Professionals, will talk about specific business issues.

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