



Steve McLay and Elizabeth Ruri.

## First female apprentice aluminium boatbuilder

South Island boatbuilder McLay Boats has taken on New Zealand's first female apprentice aluminium boat builder.

**APPRENTICE ELIZABETH RURI** is into her third year of a National Certificate qualification in production (alloy) boat building and is doing extremely well in all aspects of boat building.

Elizabeth is a very good mig and tig welder, a valued member of McLay Boats' staff and a great example of girls can do anything and an inspiration to others. Two other ladies have started the same apprenticeship since Elizabeth started.

"I got into this career by chance," explained Elizabeth. "With three little girls and a mortgage I realised my 20-hour-a-week barista job wasn't going to cut it, so I went home one day and googled jobs in NZ that pay well. Engineering came up. I had no idea what an engineer was, but I stayed up and researched it, then went to work the next morning and gave them my notice. I told them I

was leaving to become an engineer which got a lot of stunned looks and a lot of laughter.

"That night I applied for a pre-course, went to an interview later that week and was accepted straight away. I started that course two weeks later and never looked back. I love welding, especially tig welding, and I love being pushed to use my brain every day.

"Finding out I was the first female boat builder is one of the proudest moments in my life. My daughters don't realise how cool that is yet. They still think hairdressers are the coolest!"

"Elizabeth is a very good mig and tig welder..."



Elizabeth hard at work in McLay's Milton aluminium boat building plant.