

Supernova of job passion

By Callan Lawrence

DANIEL THOMAS, 42, was until recently working a full-time job for \$3 an hour and relying on a disability pension to make ends meet.

A colleague of his – Samantha Darnell, 25 – was fed up with the bar and catering work she was doing before finding work she now loves.

Together, they prove that people with disabilities can be valuable members of the workforce.

Their employers, Robert and Victoria Hesling at Western Labels in Blacktown, couldn't be happier. "They're very conscientious and really want a job," Mr Hesling said. "They're *very*

motivated and just want to try hard."

Mr Thomas and Ms Darnell both have some intellectual disability and found their jobs at Western Labels through Nova Employment.

Nova consultant Janina Parry said Mr Thomas had been working for a food-packaging company for \$3 an hour before he went to her for help.

"Daniel didn't want the disability pension any more when he came to me," Ms Parry said.

"Both get the award wage now and earn \$19 an hour and Daniel doesn't get the pension any more."

Mr Thomas is very happy with his increase but is pragmatic about his role. "The job's got to be done and someone has to do it," he said. "It may as well be me!"

Ms Darnell is more emotional. "They're the best bunch of blokes to work with," she said. "Everyone looks after everyone. I *love* my job."

Nova Employment Blacktown wants more employers looking for similarly dedicated staff.

Details: Nova Employment, novaemployment.com.au.



Hard at work: Daniel Thomas and Samantha Darnell