

LOCAL WINNERS IN QUEENSLAND TRAINING AWARDS

Seven of Brisbane South and the Gold Coast's local employers, students and workers have been named regional winners in the 2009 Queensland Training Awards.

The Queensland Training Awards, now in their 48th year, showcase Queensland's best vocational education and training achievements. These regional winners are outstanding examples of those who are furthering skills and strengthening communities at a local level.

The Queensland Training Awards regional finals comprise seven categories — Small Employer of the Year, Employer of the Year, School-Based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year, Vocational Student of the Year, Trainee of the Year and Apprentice of the Year.

Celebrated at the Brisbane South and the Gold Coast Regional Final on Friday 24 July 2009 at Dream world, below are the 2009 Regional Winners:

Craig Folker - Apprentice of the Year

After spending most of his weekends boating, fishing and playing watersports, Craig has taken to his Riviera Group apprenticeship like a duck to water, striving for high quality workmanship while helping build luxury boats for customers around the world.

He has already won the organisation's 2008 Apprentice of the Year title and the Prime Minister's Award for Skills Excellence in the electrotechnology category, and plans on joining the Volunteer Marine Rescue organisation.

Samantha Woods - Trainee of the Year

Samantha has always loved animals, so working at the busy Mudgeeraba practice of Greencross Vets has been a dream come true as she works towards her goal of studying veterinary science at university next year.

As a full-time surgical nurse, Samantha is gaining experience in all facets of animal healthcare including organising operations, helping with medical procedures and she has recently gained greater confidence in waking up animals after an anaesthetic.

Justin Power - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year

Justin left a high-powered job in human relations and sales management to follow his dream of starting a home business with his wife who is a beauty therapist.

While undertaking his traineeship with the South East Queensland Indigenous Chamber of Commerce he established procedures, documents and templates that help the organisation better understand the needs of its members, and found inspiration to continue his career journey.

Aaron Hall - Vocational Student of the Year

After working at Tradelink for 10 years in a host of roles, Aaron wanted to take on more responsibility, and successfully gained a managerial position at the same time as he embarked on his traineeship.

By using daily schedules and an electronic diary, Aaron made a smooth transition to a steep learning curve, and has been able to train new staff members while building his own skills.

Priyanka Luecke - School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year

Priyanka hopes to work for the United Nations in finance and international business relations, so undertaking her traineeship with an accountant has been a step in the right direction.

Learning skills, such as time management and communicating with clients, have strengthened her industry knowledge about issues such as superannuation, the stock market and helping others complete their tax returns, and she has also won Martin College's 2008 Academic Excellence Award for her efforts.

Stoddart Manufacturing - Employer of the Year

Tom Stoddart Pty Ltd boasts sales offices and warehouses throughout Australia, employing 360 people including 65 apprentices across three sites to create products that are seen everywhere from major fast food restaurants to sporting arenas, Parliament House and Virgin Megastores.

The company provides regular training because it believes a skilled workforce is critical to maintaining a competitive advantage, and has employed more than 500 apprentices and trainees in its 50-year history.

Stephen Dibb Jewellery - Small Employer of the Year

21 years after Stephen Dibb started making jewellery in his mother's garage, his enterprise has grown into an award-winning design company with two studios, seven tradespeople, three retail and administration members and a marketing manager.

Team members are trained in most aspects of the industry and after reaching the organisation's benchmark standards, they are encouraged to specialise in areas of interest, and an incentive system encourages further productivity.

Recipients now progress to the state finals at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre in September, where a further four awards will be presented — Public Training Provider of the Year, Private Training Provider of the Year, the Skilling for the Future Award and the Premier's Innovation in Skilling Award.

State winners will then go on to compete at the 2009 Australian Training Awards in Canberra on 19 November.