

LOCAL WINNERS IN QUEENSLAND TRAINING AWARDS

Seven of Central Queensland'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 Central Queensland Regional Final on Saturday 18 July 2009 at Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre, below are the 2009 Regional Winners:

Adele Kirkpatrick - Apprentice of the Year

Adele chose a career in the automotive industry for its flexibility and to find out how things work, and now acts as a mentor to other apprentices in Mackay.

Since 2002, her achievements have included awards for best first, second, third and fourth year automotive electrician, and she became the first female to win the title of Best Automotive Apprentice.

Michael Pope - Trainee of the Year

Michael recently developed an audio/visual training package that describes how to maintain the organisation's spent liquor steam-powered turbines - he has even passed on his training processes to help his mother learn how to manoeuvre her caravan.

Jet Blurton - Vocational Student of the Year

Overcoming great loss at a young age, Jet studied via the School of the Air from his foster family's cattle properties in remote areas of Queensland. His artistic roots are shaping his future as he follows in the creative footsteps of his father, who was a visual artist, and his mother, a successful model in the 1960s.

Using the artistic name Jet James, further training is helping Jet build his art as a business.

Chloe Woods - School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year

Chloe is getting a headstart on a career in medicine by undertaking her traineeship at Moranbah Hospital, a rural facility that caters for a range of patients including the aged, terminally ill and those in recovery.

She was chosen to attend a 'Health Careers in the Bush' workshop in Brisbane, and her ultimate career goal is to study at James Cook University and one day become a neonatal physician.

Nigel Beer - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year

Nigel completed his plumbing training in honour of his father, and hopes his efforts will inspire his daughter, and eventually plans on offering vocational opportunities to other young Indigenous people.

Darumbal Community Youth Service - Small Employer of the Year

Darumbal Community Youth Service Inc. is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation that was incorporated in 1994 to help Indigenous people in the Rockhampton region with accommodation, support, advocacy and referral services.

The organisation encourages learning as a lifelong journey for both staff and clients, with Darumbal's employees achieving a 95 per cent training success rate through qualifications ranging from certificate to diploma levels.

Queensland Alumina Limited - Employer of the Year

Queensland Alumina Limited is one of Gladstone's largest employers and engages 1175 people and more than 300 contractors, operating 24 hours every day to run one of the world's largest alumina refineries. The company's attitude to training has changed from regarding it as a cost to acknowledging it as a source of competitive advantage with a centralised, systematic approach.

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 November 19.