



Department of
Education and Training

Media Statement

10 August 2009

Attention: News Editor / Chief of Staff

Innovation and hard work sees Midwest make the finals of WA Training Awards 2009

An engineering draftsman, an aquaculturalist, a business trainee, Central West TAFE and Jurien Bay District High School will be representing the Midwest at the prestigious WA Training Awards.

Geraldton's Simon Jacques is a contender for the WA Trainee of the Year sponsored by GESB; Zoe Peters also from Geraldton is a finalist in WA School-based Apprentice of the Year sponsored by the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre; Cape Burney's Jon Arlow is in line for the WA Vocational Student of the Year title sponsored by the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; Jurien Bay District High School has secured a place as a finalist in the WA VET in Schools category sponsored by Apprenticeships Australia, and Central West TAFE is a finalist in the WA Large Training Provider of the Year sponsored by *The Sunday Times*.

Central TAFE graduate Mr Jacques, 38, who retrained as a draftsman after an industrial accident left him with a permanent disability, said the doctors told him he wouldn't be able to return to his pre-accident employment.

"I had a dream of entering the engineering industry, but it took an accident at my work as a fitting and machining tradesman to force me to make that dream a reality," Mr Jacques said.

"I had a little formal training in engineering so I contacted organisations which would take me on as an informal trainee while I was recovering.

"Once I learnt to work with my disability I began a Diploma of Engineering – Technical at Central TAFE and I was the first person to study this course externally.

"I want to show others in rural and remote areas that a technical traineeship can be completed without having to leave their family or employment."

Aquaculturalist Jon Arlow, WA Vocational Student of the Year finalist, is never far away from the ocean and was keen to combine his love of the sea with his career.

"I'm aware of declining fish stocks in WA waters, and I'm keen to promote the benefits of aquaculture to the wider public and harness support for increased investment in the industry," Mr Arlow said.

"Finishing Year 12 was my goal but I wanted to fast-track my career.

"My school [Nagle Catholic College] had a program that combined a TAFE link program with Central West TAFE's Batavia Coast Maritime Institute and I knew that program was for me.

"I've finished my qualification and now I want to work as a fisheries officer."

Business trainee Zoe Peters started her school-based apprenticeship at Geraldton Senior College. She is currently studying a Certificate III in Business, and hopes to find a career in community services.

"I'm working with Joblink Midwest for my school-based traineeship because I enjoy working in the community, she said.

"Providing people with resources to improve their employment prospects is a large part of what Joblink Midwest does and that's important to me.

"I want to help people and give back to the community."

Working extensively with the community to provide a range of training courses to students in Years 10 to 12, Jurien Bay District High School has secured a place among three Statewide finalists in the WA VET in Schools category sponsored by Apprenticeships Australia.

Principal Trevlyn Geiles said the school was very pleased with its senior school training program which had increased students' commitment and attendance.

"Historically, a large number of students have left our school at the end of Year 10 to work in town or go to other schools elsewhere," he said.

"We wanted to provide a Year 11 and 12 program that would give families a real choice when deciding whether or not to send their children away to boarding school.

"I am pleased to say that we have been successful, with 24 students in senior school this year compared to 11 last year.

"We have developed partnerships with business and industry now that we have the varied course offerings in senior school."

The other Midwest finalist is Central West TAFE, which is among one of the finalists in the WA Large Training Provider of the Year sponsored by *The Sunday Times*.

Managing director Bert Beevers said it was fantastic to hear that Central West TAFE had been named as a finalist.

"This result is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and the professional development they have undertaken," he said.

"We have worked very hard to build connections and partnerships with industry and the local community in general.

"For example, we have a memorandum of understanding to provide or broker all training for Gindalbie Metals and we have a similar arrangement with Hostile Environment Services.

"I am proud to say that we deliver around 100 qualifications across 35 training packages each year across an area larger than the whole of New South Wales."

Department of Education and Training Director General Sharyn O'Neill said the WA Training Awards recognised the very high quality and standards of the training system in Western Australia.

"A highly skilled workforce is essential for our economic and social prosperity," she said.

"The high calibre of the finalists across all the award categories shows how flexible and innovative training delivers results for industries, employers, communities and training providers."

Winners of the WA Training Awards 2009 will be announced on Friday 4 September.

The winner of the WA School-based Apprentice of the Year, WA Trainee of the Year, WA Vocational Student of the Year, WA VET in Schools Award and WA Large Training Provider of the Year could go on to compete against the best in Australia at the Australian Training Awards in Canberra in November.

The WA Training Awards 2009 are a joint initiative of the Department of Education and Training and the State Training Board.

For more information visit: trainingawards.det.wa.edu.au.

(ENDS)

Media contact: Amber Gorrie on (08) 9264 4667 or amber.gorrie@det.wa.edu.au