



Department of
Education and Training

Media Statement

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Attention: News Editor / Chief of Staff

Indigenous trio represents the Pilbara at the WA Training Awards 2009

Two apprentices and one trainee from the Pilbara are finalists in the WA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year category of the prestigious WA Training Awards 2009.

Newman apprentice heavy duty mechanic Clinton Stack; Rio Tinto business administrator Leanne Councillor; and Woodside Energy electrical apprentice Salathiel McKay are vying for the top honours in the category which is sponsored by The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation.

Mr Stack said after completing an open cut mining traineeship with Macmahon Contractors, winner of last year's WA Training Initiative Award, he decided to go on to do a heavy duty mechanic apprenticeship.

"I'm very proud that I am the first Aboriginal trainee at Macmahon Contractors in Newman to start an apprenticeship," Mr Stack said.

"Completing a traineeship before beginning an apprenticeship was really beneficial to me and now I have a clear direction for my career."

Leanne Councillor of Paraburdoo completed a business administration traineeship and is working as part of Rio Tinto's project engineering team.

"I really want to let other Indigenous women know about the importance of training," she said.

Four-time Woodside Energy Apprentice of the Year/ High Achiever award winner Salathiel McKay from Karratha completed his electrical apprenticeship in January this year.

"Doing an electrical apprenticeship through Woodside Energy and Pilbara TAFE has set me up for life," Mr McKay said.

"Being a finalist in these awards is very humbling and it's important to me to promote training and the success that can be achieved."

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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year will 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.

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