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Australian apprentices to fight for gold in international competition in Abu Dhabi

THEY'RE Australia's best young apprentices set to take on the WorldSkills championship in Abu Dhabi 'Skillaroos' vying for glory.

Melanie Burgess and Monique Hore

Video Image

THEY'RE Australia's best of the best and have gold medals in their sights but the Skillaroos are not a team of sports stars.

They are young tradies and vocational graduates who have been training hard for the past two years to compete at the biennial tradie Olympics, WorldSkills.

This year the event will be hosted by Abu Dhabi, where competitors from 58 countries and regions will compete in 51 skill categories from car painting and landscape gardening to beauty therapy and hairdressing.

It kicks off on Saturday with an opening ceremony then four days of competition, with projects completed under strict test conditions and time limits.

Australia will fight to improve its ranking from 12th in the world.

WorldSkills Australia general manager Brigitte Collins said representing their country was motivation enough for the Australian team, however other countries had further incentive.

The Korean Government, for example, rewarded its gold

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WorldSkills Australia general manager Brigitte Collins. Picture: Supplied Source:Supplied

For the first time this year, WorldSkills has introduced a 3D digital game art category and Australia will send a representative for heavy vehicle maintenance.

Ms Collins said this year would also be the first time most projects would not be unveiled until competition day.

This is designed to prevent competitors from simply practising the one task over and over. Instead, they must master all techniques within their trade and be ready for anything.

In some categories, however, the project will be known in advance but a 30 per cent change can be made on the day.

Ms Collins said there were two types of assessment.

The first is measured either right or wrong.

“In bricklaying, it needs to be within a millimetre, so you get it right or you don’t get it right,” she said.

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Bricklaying competitor Trystan Sammut assesses his work. Picture: Supplied Source:Supplied

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“It used to be subjective where it was a marking scale out of 10 so if I didn't like the colour or flavour (it would affect the score) but we have moved to a scale of zero to three that is benchmarking excellence against industry standards,” she said.

“**MOST READ FROM** Zero means, for example, in a bakery you wouldn't display it — it's rock hard and you couldn't sell it. One benchmarks industry standards, so for example all the bread rolls are the same size, nothing special about them.”

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Ms Collins said in jewellery, the difference between a one and three was the kind of products in Myer versus Tiffany & Co.

Earning a three in restaurant service, on the other hand, required interaction with diners.

“Making a cocktail, a three would be not just using the ingredients but talking to the customer while making it and (good) technique in shaking the cocktail,” she said.

“They put on a bit of a theatrical performance and the garnishes are fantastic.”

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MEET AUSTRALIA'S SKILLAROO

ALEX SCHMIDT (WA)

Category: 3D digital game art

Age: 21

Project: 3D modelling, texturing, rigging and animation based on a brief. Potential themes are weather, green planet and zero gravity.



Source:Supplied

“From seeing some of the other competitors, it's going to be very hard. They are very good.

Game art is a creative outlet. I can make anything I want but it is always challenging and has a technical component.

It's like painting or music, you can never be perfect at it but you can always get a little bit better.”

BRADLEY INGHAM (NSW)

Category: Industrial mechanical millwright

Age: 21

Project: Manufacture a pedal-powered water pump purification system using supplied engineering drawings, instructions, tools and equipment.



Source:Supplied

“I've got a rough idea but don't know the project as yet. It will be a bit of fitting, machining, welding and light electrical

Apprentice hairdressers Cairns TAFE C WorldSkills competition.



"I've been just covering the bases so no matter what they throw up I am ready for it.

"I'm looking forward to the atmosphere. It will be pretty big and full on."

BRAYDEN GALLIC
MOST READ FROM

Category: Wall and floor tiling

Age: 19

Project: I will work on wall and floor designs

including straight, circular and diagonal cutting. The design includes JAF's block national emblem the Eagle, The Grand Mosque and modern buildings.



Source: News Corp Australia

"When I was at school, I did a week's work experience in the holidays and my boss offered me an apprenticeship after the first day. I worked every weekend until I finished year 10 then graduated on the Friday and started my apprenticeship on the Saturday.

I have done it (the project) probably four times now and improved in time and quality each time."

BRETT McPAUL (NSW)

Category: Construction Metal Work

Age: 21

Project: The project will involve marking out, cutting and assembling, repairing and maintaining steel structures. While specifications are not revealed until competition, the 2015 project was a locomotive.



Source: Supplied

"We find out what we have to do on competition day one.

I've been using past international competition projects (to practice), which are essentially scaled-down models of trains and bridges.

I'm pretty nervous about it because it's pretty different to all the other comps but I feel like I've really improved in the last three weeks of training.

The speed of everything I do, the accuracy and the overall skill level has increased over 50 per cent."

DOUGAL KING (ACT)

Category: Landscape Gardening

Age: 21

Project: In a team of two, lay out a small garden by preparing and using materials such as natural stones, concrete, wood, plastics, soil, lawn, and plants arranged according to specifications.



"Our competition is based on four separate

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about creating an oasis.

At a recent 'friendly' in China, we were about 45 minutes behind where we wanted to be and I was thro... a drop saw. The piece of timber stopped but my finger kept goin... ting six stitches in Chinese hospital.

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I'm nervous as hell about the competition but confident at the same time."

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Category: Landscape Gardening

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Age: 22
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Project: In a team of two, lay out a small garden by preparing and using materials such as natural stones, concrete, wood, plastics, soil, lawn, and plants arranged according to specifications.

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"We are training all weekend and half of Friday and studying theory on a Monday night.

It's about 22 hours of training a week, on top of our normal 40-hour work week.

You have to make a lot of sacrifices to get to the level we need to be at. It's 100 per cent worth it though.

We recently competed in China and it didn't go as well as we'd hoped. My landscaping partner, Dougal, put his finger through the drop saw and had to go to hospital. Hopefully he will be better by Abu Dhabi and we can really show them what we've got."

DUSTI-LEE FRANCHI (WA)

Category: Car painting

Age: 22

Project: Three car panels and one non-steel panel to illustrate masking, colour matching and blending, paint application and design.



Source: Supplied

"Your skills do really expand when you're involved with WorldSkills because you have to do all aspects of the trade, rather than the one specific to the shop you are working in.

I originally wanted to be a hairdresser but decided it wasn't for me. I then fell into the trade.

A lot of girls are getting into this line of work, there's more and more every year.

I love that a car comes in smashed up, it gets fixed and then we paint it back to factory standard. The satisfaction when it's about to roll out the door is the best part of it."

DYLAN BOLCH (NSW)

Category: Welding

Age: 22

Project: Interpret engineering drawings, standards and symbols and correctly

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“My category is tested over four days. For day one there are about 20 combinations I have been practising and I will have to do four or five of these days, I know what rough areas they will make up to a 30 per cent change. 2. ‘Most of my “friends” are people I’ve never met’ I do maybe 25 hours a week of training and every two months I will have a couple of weeks off work and do close to 70 hours a week of training. I generally do a 10-hour shift then go to TAFE for 5 hours each day. Once the competition is over I’ll miss it because I love what I do but a bit of extra time will be nice.”



Source:News Corp Australia

EMILIA MONTAGUE (QLD)

Category: Restaurant Service

Age: 20

Project: A casual dining module that may include napkin folding, wine identification, and table service of beverages; a banquet service module that may include preparing a banquet and silver service; a bar module that may include cocktail making; and a fine dining module that may include carving, filleting, assembling and flambé of dishes.



Source:News Corp Australia

“My grandmother who I live with was a chef and my mother does events so I grew up with food and things happening all around me.

I’ve been practising my crepe suzette — crepes with orange juice and sugar and butter and you set it on fire.

Prior to the competition I was extremely shy and introverted so this whole process has gotten me out of my comfort zone.”

GABY WARE (NSW)

Category: Hairdressing

Age: 20

Project: Modules based on long hair, short hair, perms, chemical straightening, colouring, fashion catwalk, hairpieces and ornamentation, beards, and designs based on an image.



Source:Supplied

“You have to be really well skilled in everything, a well-rounded hairdresser.

We don’t find out what we are doing before we start each style. You’ve got to be able to think on your feet.

That is also exactly what a salon is like, you just do whatever style on the day.

I always wanted to be a hairdresser, there was nothing else I wanted to do.

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JOSHUA MORRISSEY (NSW)

Category: Joinery

Age: 22

MUST-READ FROM

Project: Two modules requiring hand and machine skills. At least four different types of joints must be copied in each. Gunshot a brutal attempt to break up nuptials. I will spend 11 hours on each of two projects over four days. It involves setting out detailed drawings to be able to make a curved window sash and a lectern from scratch. They consist of traditional woodworking joints such as dovetails, mortise and tenons and bridles.



Source:Supplied

We are judged on our ability to create perfectly fitting, clean and precise joints measured within 0.3mm. Add the pressure of the distracting public watching, judges watching every move and a countdown clock.

It is rewarding to put all your effort into a project and be fully satisfied with a finished product you can be proud of.”

LILY CAMPBELL (NSW)

Category: Beauty therapy

Age: 21

Project: Modules including spa body treatment/manicure, express facial, spa pedicure, eyelash extension, warm wax and sugar wax for women, fantasy makeup and nails with an Arabian Nights theme.



Source:Supplied

“Mum is a hairdresser and I work in her salon so I was always going to be interested in hair and beauty. When I did work experience doing both, I decided beauty is more my side.

It was definitely interesting to see differences between countries. What is acceptable in one country is not in another, for example, in Australia we might do waxing and have someone’s leg exposed and that’s fine but in Abu Dhabi for instance it’s not a common thing. It’s little things like that.”

LOUISE AZZOPARDI (NSW)

Category: Heavy vehicle maintenance

Age: 21

Project: Seven modules with tasks involving the maintenance, diagnosis or repair of components or systems relating to diesel engines, hydraulics, electrical and electronics, drive trains, pre-delivery inspection, steering, brake and undercarriage systems, and precision measuring.



Source:News Corp Australia

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“When I finished year 10 I started working and did my apprenticeship. I just love being able to really see what I have achieved with the trucks. I love when you see the look on the driver’s face when they see the truck is truck running right.”

MOST READ FROM

I’ve got my mum, boyfriend, sister and aunt coming to Abu Dhabi with me and a cousin coming from Malta and meeting us there.”

MARY GEORGE (NSW)

Category: Patisserie and confectionary

Age: 20



Source: News Corp Australia

Project: The theme is ‘street art/graffiti’ and must be visually apparent. Competitors will have 16 hours over two days to complete modules on miniatures, individual cakes, and petits fours; cakes, gateaux and entremets; modelling including in marzipan and sugar paste; confectionery and chocolate; chocolate as a presentation piece; and a mystery task.

“My mum has been with me since I was 13 (and I started a cupcake business), taking me to work at 3 or 4am. She said ‘it doesn’t matter, it’s worth it if I am going to see you one day on the top’. I said ‘Don’t worry, I will be on the top’.

All this work has gone into this one point. My heart and soul has gone into this competition.”

NATHAN McHUGH (QLD)

Category: Refrigeration and airconditioning

Age: 21

Project: Three modules including fabricating a copper tubing part; installing the refrigeration system for a small-scale ice skating rink; and finding and repairing faults in an air conditioning system.



Source: News Corp Australia

“I am part of the WorldSkills family now so plan to become a trainer for the next one. It’s something I enjoy, training and helping people out and giving them the opportunity I have had.

After Abu Dhabi, I will finish my electrical apprenticeship so I will have a dual trade. It goes hand-in-hand in my industry. I want to give myself an open license so anything I come across I can have a go at.”

NICK JOHNSTON (WA)

Category: Cabinetmaking

Age: 20

Project: A freestanding cabinet with two hinged doors and a drawer to be made to specific criteria.

“The day before, we have a ‘familiarisation’ so we know the plans and will then have

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All the competitors are the best in their countries so it will be really tough.

It gives us a chance to prove ourselves against the world.

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Source:Supplied



Source:News Corp Australia

RYAN GRIEGER (SA)

Category: Carpentry

Age: 22

Project: For example, a base structure, wall structure, and roof. Other structures may be included such as stairs, guard rails, trims, decking and cladding.

“When I was about 13, my mum and dad were getting renovations done by a family friend. He saw my passion to work and by Year 10 he offered me a job but I finished school first.

I’m a perfectionist. Even during school doing (industrial) technology, with all my projects I’ve always been very particular. I think it is a good thing to have in a trade and at WorldSkills. I am probably a bit over the top and put too much pressure on myself though.

I’ve taken from the start of the year off work just to train for this. I was prepared to do that because this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

TRYSTAN SAMMUT (VIC)

Category: Bricklaying

Age: 20

Project: Three walls independently designed, requiring as many as 600 bricks. It may require render, paving, block work, arch set out, and advanced detail.

“They will give us 22 hours to build the three projects to the best of our ability.

Previously you had the plans three months



Source:News Corp Australia

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I like bricklaying because of what you can do with your hands and tools. All the decorative stuff you can do with the bricks fascinates me.”

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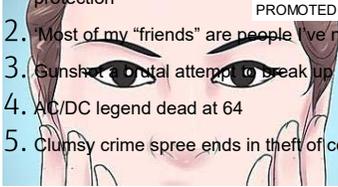
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