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Australian tradies head to 'tradie Olympics' at WorldSkills competition in Abu Dhabi

A SELECT group of Australian tradies are competing in a global competition dubbed the 'tradie Olympics', where they are showcasing skills to beat their rivals.

Melanie Burgess

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TWO years of intense training and sacrifice have led to this moment for Australia's best young tradies.

International 'tradie Olympics' WorldSkills 2017 began in Abu Dhabi with an opening ceremony where 18 Skillaroos proudly wore their national uniform and waved the Australian flag in front of visitors from 77 different countries.

The already multicultural city will now bring its new melting pot to boiling point, with the competition heating up for day one of events.

Carpenters will begin sawing, web designers will begin coding and pastry chefs will begin baking.

Australia is currently ranked 12th in the world at WorldSkills based on total medal points earned at the 2015 competition in Sao Paulo, but the team hopes to break into the top 10 this year.

If it can, it will join the ranks of leading countries Brazil and Korea.

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Brett Judd, chief executive of WorldSkills Australia, said the Skillaroos were in a good position to see results.

[MORE: Aussie tradies reveal WorldSkills uniform](#)



Trystan Sammut is set to compete in Abu Dhabi in an international bricklaying competition. Picture: Jake Nowakowski Source: News Corp Australia

“The quality of the competitors and their experts and mentors is first class and the amount of opportunity our current competitors and their experts have had to train in overseas environments in competition conditions has been unprecedented,” he said.

“This year we know China and Russia will be super competitive as well as the traditionally competitive countries.”

Mr Judd said different teams tended to excel in different areas, depending on their country’s major industries.

Germany, Italy and France were the countries to beat in skills such as carpentry and joinery, for example, while the USA tended to dominate welding and metal works.

WorldSkills Australia chair and SkillsOne chief executive Brian Wexham said Australia traditionally performed well in bricklaying, restaurant service and jewelry.

Australia’s bricklaying and restaurant service competitors both came home with medals at three of the last four international competitions.

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Waiter Emilia Montague is about to compete in the restaurant service category at the trade skills competition WorldSkills. Picture: Darren England. Source: News Corp Australia

This year, Australia will be represented in these skills by Victoria's Trystan Summut and Queensland's Emilia Montague, respectively.

Ms Montague is from Brisbane but moved to Sydney to focus on training at the beginning of the year.

She left family and friends and gave up work to train full time.

Australia's cabinetmaking competitor Nick Johnston, from WA, and hairdressing competitor Gaby Ware, from NSW, said they also made sacrifices to be part of the WorldSkills team - and did not regret it.



Gaby Ware, a WorldSkills Australia skillaroo competing in Abu Dhabi. Picture: Supplied Source: Supplied

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“I’ve taken a bit of time off work and not played as much sport as I normally do but it’s all been worth it,” Mr Johnston said.

“I didn’t play basketball, to save my fingers.”

Ms Ware also gave up sport as she worried she was “a little bit accident prone”.

“I gave up a lot but have a very patient family and partner,” she said.

“I had a lot of time off (work) because I went to China three times for training and the UK. It’s good knowing the competition and competitors before I get here so I’m not nervous and I have some friends on the floor.”

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