

Media Release

Northern Territory Delivering Teaching Excellence

Brian Heim is announced the 2008 Australian Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year

Friday, 21st November 2008 -Dr. Brian Heim, a resident of Katherine NT, was named the National Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year at the Australian Training Awards Gala Dinner which took place last night at the Darwin Convention Centre.

Dr Heim competed against fourteen winners from eight industry categories to take out the title of National Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year 2008. The Awards were presented by Deputy Prime Minister The Hon Julia Gillard MP.

Dr. Heim works as the NT Manager of Primary Industries & Community Services with Charles Darwin University. He tackled the shortage of VETs in an unique way. He leads a team of teaching professionals and provides hands-on involvement by skilling cattle producers in testing animals for pregnancy prior to live export.

He was interviewed along with three other candidates at The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year event on the 31st October. At this event he was awarded the Agriculture Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year Award.

Aaron Devine, Director of Vocational Education Training (VET) at CDU understands clearly the reason why Dr. Heim was recognized.

“Brian’s fulfils all the qualities we look for at CDU in our trainers and leaders: hard working, industry respected, and resilient. This award is a credit to his commitment to his industry and the indigenous communities in which he works”.

Dr. Heim is a firm believer in the importance of these awards. “I believe that there are many VET teachers out there who are also deserving of recognition and thank the Institute for identifying and providing a pathway for teachers in a wide variety of trades and skills areas to demonstrate just how good they really are”.

“Winning the overall 2008 Australian Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year award on top of the Trade Teacher Award for Agriculture is a huge honour for me”.

Mr Brian Wexham, Chief Executive Officer of The Institute emphatically reiterates the importance of regognising Australia' s trades and skills teachers and explains the concept behind the awards.

“This award acknowledges leadership in developing tomorrow’s trades and skills professionals. It was established to give deserving teachers like Brian Heim in the trades and skills arena the opportunity to implement professional developmental projects, that otherwise would not have been possible without funding.

“The awards also demonstrate a commitment to excellence providing quality outcomes for industry and importantly, the students”.

Mr Duncan Fraser of the NFF says the Award, which pits winners from eight industry categories against each other – including Automotive; Manufacturing; Building and Construction; Metals and Engineering; Electrical; Mineral Resources; Hospitality, Tourism and Services; and Rural and Farming – is important recognition for agriculture teachers.

“We know the vital and growing role skills-based education and training plays in modern farming’s ability to be competitive and sustainable,” he said. “The farm sector is screaming out for not only more employees, but a higher skilled and more qualified workforce than at any time in our history”.

“We congratulate Dr Heim, for his excellent work in not just leading a team of teaching professionals, but for his hands-on involvement in skilling cattle producers”.

Brian Wexham further states that the Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year Award recognises teachers who dedicate their lives to ensuring tomorrow’s trades and skills people are armed with the very best skills through their innovative teaching methods.

“The Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year Award derives its success from identifying teachers who are able to move beyond delivering only to curriculum and who meet industry standards to ensure Australia continues to turn out the most highly skilled men and women,” said Mr Wexham.

Please go to www.skillsone.com.au for further information on the Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year Award winners.

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For Further Information

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Some Comments from last year's Winners

The 2007 Australian Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year was Marion Fitzpatrick from Northern Sydney TAFE in Ryde New South Wales, who was awarded for her commitment to developing and improving the quality of teaching in the Cookery field.

“Since being named the Australian Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year I have had the unique opportunity of participating in the recent 2020 Summit and contributing my views on how education and skills development might look by the year 2020.

“Winning the Australian Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year has enabled me to further my skills and development in the Hospitality Industry,” Ms Fitzpatrick said.

Gary Sewell was named the 2007 Bakery Trade Teacher of the Year. Gary used his prize money to further develop his e-learning program to train bakers by distance which has now been implemented by a number of top baking franchises across the country including Bakers Delight and Tip Top. Gary said that he would never have been able to launch such a program if The Institute hadn't awarded him Bakery Trade Teacher of the Year.

“There's no doubt about it, the \$5,000 project money received from The Institute was the impetus for this project...with the \$5,000 we ran pilot classes, were able to set in place the resources and framework to then roll out the Fast Track Apprenticeship Project.

Gary used the prize money from The Australian Trades and Skills Teacher of the Year Awards to further develop his project and apply for a \$50,000 grant from the Federal Government.

“Without the prize money from The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence we wouldn't have been able to approach the Government for Federal funding for the program,” Mr Sewell said.

About The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence

The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence promotes the importance of trades and skills and recognises excellence in trades and skills education and training through:

- Skills One – an integrated platform of television programming, interactive website and media partnerships;
- the Star Rating Scheme, which awards high performing training organisations with gold star ratings; and
- the Trades and Skills Teaching Awards which recognise excellence in trades & skills education and training.