

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11PM, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 3 2017

Apprentices Awarded for Mastering their Trades

South West apprentice cabinet maker, Nick Johnston, has won Master Builders' hotly contested 2017 Apprentice of the Year Award.

Master Builders received a record number of entries into its awards this year and it's the first time an apprentice from regional WA has received the top honour in the event's history.

Nick, who works for Studio Milton in Dardanup, beat nine other high-calibre finalists to take home this prestigious prize, which was handed out during a gala ceremony at Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on November 3.

It was a big night for Nick, who also took out the Most Outstanding Regional Apprentice Award just prior to discovering he'd been declared the best apprentice in the state.

His employer, Paul Milton, said Nick distinguished himself over his 3½-year apprenticeship by consistently submitting exceptionally well-crafted work.

"We call it hitting the bullseye," Mr Milton said.

"He is highly motivated, intelligent and has superb analytical and communication skills. Nick has grown to be a keystone of our business and we are extremely proud of his achievements."

Master Builders Executive Director Michael McLean said that it was important to recognise the future leaders of the building industry through the Association's annual apprentice awards.

"Although the building industry is currently experiencing a down-turn in economic activity, it is pleasing that the quality of apprentices being trained is as good as ever," Mr McLean said.

"With the high cost of HELP fees associated with tertiary education and the difficulty in finding graduate jobs, there are a lot of advantages in completing an apprenticeship to secure your career.

"Our most outstanding apprentice this year, Nick Johnston, has a very bright future in our industry, which is changing rapidly through technology and innovation.

"It's a credit to Nick's employer, Studio Milton, in harnessing his talents through such a nurturing apprenticeship,"

Other finalists for the Master Builders Apprentice of the Year were:

- Beau Simpson, bricklaying apprentice with BGC Residential.
- Jamie Stewart, carpentry apprentice with Everthought Education.
- Roan Spence, stonemason apprentice with Colgan Industries.
- Robert Mantellato, electrical apprentice with Skill Hire WA.
- Jessie Wilson, bricklaying apprentice with BGC Residential.

- Luke Lammle, wall and floor tiling apprentice with Skill Hire WA.
- Connor Duffy, electrical apprentice with E&M Electrical.
- Ryan Billingham, plastering apprentice with Tom Irvine.
- Terah-Jade Cross, painting and decorating apprentice with MPA Skills.

Master Builders introduced two new categories into this year's program – Most Outstanding Indigenous Building & Construction Apprentice and Most Outstanding Electrotechnology (Electrical) Apprentice.

Congratulations to bricklaying apprentice Beau Simpson, of BGC Residential, and electrical apprentice Robert Mantellato, of Skill Hire WA, on winning these inaugural awards.

“With more and more indigenous apprentices working in the building industry, it was great to see such a high calibre of nominations vying for our inaugural Indigenous Apprentice of the Year award,” Mr McLean said.

“Beau Simpson is a very deserving winner of both this award and our Most Outstanding Brick and Blocklaying Apprentice (Direct Indenture) award.

“I hope Beau's success will inspire more indigenous youth to pursue a career in the building industry as we need more apprentices to learn the skills of those who are retiring.”

For more information please contact:

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