

Media Release

Apprentice awards keep trade skills alive

- Trainee plumber Jackson Brocx wins 2019 Apprentice of the Year title
- Young business owner Ivan Darazs is the Ric New Rising Star
- Ric New Medal for Excellence won by regional builder Haydn Glendinning

The fall in apprentice numbers in recent years has sparked concerns about a future skills crisis but Master Builders WA is resisting the decline by championing the skills of the next generation.

Master Builders Apprentice of the Year awards celebrate new talent in the industry and are open to trainees in construction trades such as plumbing, carpentry, bricklaying and electrical work.

“The building industry trains more apprentices than any other sector of the economy but numbers have been dropping in recent years due to the long-term building slowdown,” said Master Builders Executive Director John Gelavis.

“This year we’ve seen 25 per cent fewer entries to the apprentice awards than last year, which reflects the low levels of work in the building industry.

“Builders who are struggling to survive can’t afford to take on apprentices but that’s exactly the time when we need to ensure the flow of skilled tradespeople continues.

“We all know building is cyclical. We can’t afford to let skills die during the downturn because we’ll need them desperately when the upswing comes.

“It is crucial to put a high priority on training in order to meet future construction demands and the good news for this years’ hard-working apprentice award winners is that they will be in a great position to launch their careers as the outlook brightens.”

Construction Training Fund Executive Director Alan Jackson, who was the chief awards judge, said plumbing and gas fitting apprentice Jackson Brocx was a worthy winner of the 2019 Apprentice of the Year title.

“It was difficult to narrow down the list of 11 high-quality finalists to just one but Jackson impressed us with his work ethic, trade skills and outstanding problem solving abilities,” Mr Jackson said.

“Jackson is a fourth-year apprentice and his supervisors give him the highest possible rating in every aspect of his work.

“He has a respectful, easy going manner and takes on every job with such confidence and skill that he is trusted to work unsupervised and get on with the task at hand.

“As well as the overall apprentice award, Jackson won the prize for most outstanding plumbing apprentice.”

The Apprentice of the Year awards were held on November 1 at The Westin Perth. Also presented on the night were the Ric New Rising Star Award for high achievers aged up to 25 and the Ric New Medal, which is judged on entrepreneurial flair and innovation up to the age of 35.

Ric New chief awards judge Michael McLean announced this years’ rising star was Veritruss founding director Ivan Darazs, who showed extraordinary levels of ability and self-belief in running a commercial construction company at the age of 23.

“Ivan holds a bachelor’s degree in construction management and is an active member of young builders’ groups,” Mr McLean said.

“During his short time in the industry, Ivan has already played an integral role in the delivery of a diverse range of commercial construction projects in both the public and private sectors. He has a genuine passion for the industry, which is evident in his achievements.

“As a young business owner, Ivan aims to lead by example and continue making positive contributions to the industry.”

The Ric New Medal for Excellence went to Haydn Glendinning, who runs a thriving building company in Albany.

“Haydn grew up in Albany but left to travel Australia after finishing his carpentry apprenticeship and ended up living in the Pilbara for 10 years,” said Mr McLean.

“While living in Karratha, Haydn flew to Perth twice each month for two and a half years to complete his builders’ registration. When he and his family relocated to the Great Southern, he quickly established a place in the market for his North 2 South construction company.

“In less than three years, he has built an enviable reputation as a quality builder of fine homes. His company has won numerous Master Builders awards for workmanship and customer service. He employs two tradies and two apprentices and provides an in-house design service with a focus on energy efficiency.”

Mr Gelavis added a tribute to employers who continued to invest in the future of the industry during the economic slowdown.

“Most builders who employ apprentices began as apprentices themselves and they deserve credit for passing on the opportunity to begin a career which was once offered to them,” he said.

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