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## **Fiona Shewring from Illawarra TAFE named Trade Teacher of the Year** **The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence Recognises Excellence in trade skills teaching**

Fiona Shewring from Illawarra TAFE, New South Wales has been named the Painting and Decorating Trade Teacher of the Year at a ceremony in Sydney.

The Trade Teacher of the Year Awards are in their inaugural year and recognise excellence in training and teaching across the eight industry groups of focus for The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, covering the: Automotive; Building and Construction; Electrical; Manufacturing; Metals and Engineering; Hospitality and Personal Services; Rural and Farming; and Mineral Resources.

The awards have been developed by The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, which is funded by the Federal Government and led by three industry groups: The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the National Farmers' Federation; and the Australian Industry Group.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, Brian Wexham said that the Trade Teacher of the Year Awards were an important initiative.

“The Institute has been established to promote and advance learning, teaching and training in Australian trades education. One of our three key purposes is to foster and recognise excellent standards and teaching in trade’s education and training.”

Mr Wexham also said that the Awards enabled teachers to further develop their teaching.

“The Trade Teacher of the Year Awards are an excellent way to recognise teachers who excel in their chosen fields, amongst their peers and also provide the teacher with some funding to further develop the teaching practices in their industry, which in turn will also reward the

students. This is an important initiative as this specifically recognises and awards teachers within the vocational trade training arena” said Mr. Wexham.

A total of 18 awards were presented across 18 categories in the inaugural Trade Teacher of the Year Awards, each with prizes of \$10,000 to individual teachers or teams of teachers who work in a trade area. The prize money was awarded as a \$5,000 cash prize and a \$5,000 developmental activity or program that will contribute to industry and teaching.

Fiona Shewring was named the Painting and Decorating Trade Teacher of the Year in recognition of her tireless efforts to encourage and support women in non-traditional female trades.

Fiona is one of only two female painting and decorating teachers in New South Wales and has recently completed a report on women in skilled trades, which she said she planned on turning into a documentary with the prize money.

“I’d like to use the prize money to create a documentary about women in non-traditional female trades and the history of women in trades at Port Kembla. I’d love if the documentary could then be used to encourage employers to take on women apprentices and give an insight into women interested in entering a trade” said Ms Shewring.

Fiona said that The Trade Teacher of the Year award was a nice thank you for her years of dedication to painting and decorating.

“I was absolutely thrilled to win, as I felt that it validated all the hard work that I had put in over the years, firstly as a tradesperson and then as a trade teacher, particularly in regards to the work I have done to help other women” said Ms Shewring.

**ENDS**

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