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West Australian Trade Teacher of the Year revolutionising training for students

Conservation and Land Management Trade Teacher of the Year Winner, Andrew Nicholson from Great Southern TAFE in Albany Western Australia is putting his developmental prize money to good use and has commenced rolling out his project this week.

Mr Nicholson was named the inaugural Conservation and Land Management Trade Teacher of the Year by The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence in November 2007 and has been quick off the bat to start implementing his developmental project.

As part of winning the Trade Teacher of the Year award Mr Nicholson received a prize of \$10,000, \$5,000 of which was to put towards his developmental project.

Mr Nicholson is a veteran teacher in the Primary Industries portfolio of courses, having taught at the Great Southern TAFE in Western Australia for the past twelve years across agriculture, horticulture and conservation & land management areas. Mr Nicholson also believes in using horticultural teaching to reach marginalized groups and extend their skills sets and has worked with local at risk kids, prisoners and Aboriginal communities.

Mr Nicholson said that he had chosen to develop a holistic training program with The Institute's prize money.

"I have developed a Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) training model for the Forest Product Commission (FPC) that has enabled their employees to be trained and tested for applied knowledge in the field, rather than in the classroom.

"In total we have developed 9 modules which enable employees of FPC who are deployed to work in the plantations and in regeneration to complete the self assessment worksheets. The modules are designed so that if employees are unable to complete a section they can organise

a training refresher course to ensure they are up to date with the latest practices” said Mr Nicholson.

The module that Mr Nicholson has developed has been incorporated into FPC’s employee performance reviews and provides an easy and clear development guide for both the employer and supervisor.

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About the Trade Teacher of the Year Awards

The Trade Teacher of the Year Awards were first awarded in 2007 and were established by The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence to recognise excellence in training and teaching across the eight industry groups of focus for The Institute: Automotive; Building and Construction; Electrical; Manufacturing; Metals and Engineering; Hospitality and Personal Services; Rural and Farming; and Mineral Resources.

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.

The awards are run by The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, which is funded and led by it’s three industry groups 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.

About The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence (The Institute):

The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence promotes and advances learning, teaching and training in Australian trades education and elevates the status of traditional trades and trades education as a career choice. The Institute is an industry led, Federal Government funded group that promotes the advancement of learning, teaching and training in Australian trades education. The Institute is owned through its key stakeholders Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), the Australian Industry Group (AI Group) and the National Farmers Federation (NFF).