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Sloan cuts in on skill test

Zsa-Zsa Bowie Wilson

Shareena Sloan, 20, spends most of her nights training for the Olympics of trade skills.

In November, Sloan will fly to Japan with the Australian team competing at the 39th World Skills competition.

The event features 29 categories – Sloan will test her skills in “painting and decorating”.

“I’m pretty much training every night,” Sloan said.

“It’s going to be a great experience. I find working in front of so many people exhilarating,” she said.

“Cutting in” or painting in

straight lines is her strength, while marbling is her challenge.

“Many of the other countries do marbling as part of their job. I just do it at TAFE,” Sloan said.

Working in painting and decorating grew out of a conversation about career choices that Sloan had with her dad at the end of year 12.

“I remember saying I wanted to meet new people, work in different places, be creative and, lastly, that I did not want to be stuck in an office.”

Her dad organised work experience, “because he thought I’d enjoy it,” Sloan said.

A pre-apprentice course followed and Sloan’s top marks

led to a job at Housing Institute of Australia.

“HIA is a group training organisation, so they hire people for four-year apprenticeships and place them with a host employer. They look after you during the apprenticeship.”

In the first year of her apprenticeship, Sloan got an exciting call from her TAFE tutor.

“He was selecting students to get involved in the regional World Skills Australia competition,” Sloan said.

She won the Victorian regional competition and qualified for the 2006 nationals.

The three-day event included 16 competitors from around the

country in Sloan’s section.

“We were given our own cubicle with three walls and had to work on a set project.

“On one wall, we wallpapered and glossed the door.

“On another, we had to draw a design and paint it in 16 different colours. Sign-writing, colour matching, marbling and greening – the decorative finishes – were all involved.”

Next thing she knew, she was on the team going to Japan.

“I did (World Skills) to prove to myself I could do it. It has made me more mature plus I have made lots of new friends.”

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Ready to reveal her true talents at the 39th World Skills competition, Shareena Sloan trains every night