



Tradesman eighth in WorldSkills event

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KIAMA DOWNS tradesman Shane Ashton has returned from the International WorldSkills competition with an eighth placing.

Mr Ashton, 22, travelled to Calgary, Canada recently to represent Australia at this year's International WorldSkills Competition.

Individuals from 26 trade and skill categories, including carpentry, horticulture, hairdressing and plumbing were selected as part of the 29-member Skillaroos team.

Mr Ashton, who works at K&R Fabrications at Unanderra, competed in the "Construction Steel Work" category at the event, where more than 50 countries were represented.

However, Shane's father, Greg, said it was a "harsh penalty for a technicality" that prevented Shane from attaining a higher-placed finish.

"At the end of the third day Shane was in clear third place and very close to second with one day to go," Greg said. "With less than one minute left on the third day Shane removed a pin from his fabrication to fill a hole.

"When time was up that pin had not been replaced. Although the pin was supplied and had nothing to do with his ability at all, one of the judges protested that his work was not assembled.

"It took five seconds to replace the pin, however, one of the judges protested that time was up. The ridiculous penalty was six points in every 100, plummeting him from clear third to eighth. With only one



• Shane Ashton.

day to go it was impossible to make up that many points.

"It broke my heart to watch something like that happen to someone who worked so hard. It still hurts.

"Even on the last day of competition Shane gave it all right to the end. We are so proud of him and the manner in which he handled himself."

While somewhat disappointed with the result, Shane said he was "pretty happy" with the final outcome.

"You can't change what's happened," he said. "It seemed unfair, because it wasn't based on an actual skill, but you can't change it.

"I was very happy with my job; it was better quality than most of them and knowing that I could compete with the best was great."

TAFE Illawarra Regional Committee chairman Troy Everett said he was extremely impressed with Shane's performance.