



Sowing seeds of success

**Peta Wittig and
Zsa-Zsa Bowie Wilson**

Simon Buchanan is the quintessential apprenticeship success story.

At only 21 he is a qualified landscape gardener who has competed internationally and is now setting up his own business.

Buchanan, who went straight from school to an apprenticeship, won gold medals in 2005 and 2006 in WorldSkills Australia competitions.

Last year he was part of a team that took silver at the Melbourne Flower and Garden Show and gold at the prestigious 2005 Chelsea Flower and Garden Show in London.

An apprenticeship is definitely the way to success, said Buchanan.

"On-site training and being paid is a real bonus. I would advise anyone who gets a chance to do it," he said.

WorldSkills Australia holds

competitions around the country for apprentices.

Every second year it takes a national team overseas to compete in the WorldSkills International, which is hosted by

different countries just like the Olympics.

Chief executive of WorldSkills Australia Mark Callaghan said

apprenticeships offer some advantages over university training.

For example most apprentices get a job at the end of their on-

the-job and theory-based training and they are paid to train. University students start their careers with a hefty HECS debt.

Some apprentices go on to university later, Callaghan said.

"We have past competitors who have learnt trades and are

now doing business degrees so that they can start their own business," Callaghan said.

According to Australian Apprenticeships, there are 500 different types of apprenticeship.

A traineeship takes one to two years and an apprenticeship up to four years.

Resulting qualifications include a Certificate I and an Advanced Diploma.

There are several ways to find a traineeship or apprenticeship: from Centrelink and the Job Network, by approaching an employer directly, through the Australian Defence Forces or by contacting Group Training Australia.

GTA spokesman Ron Russell urged young people to spend some time researching their options so when they are interviewed for a job they know what they want to do and why.

"Just stating 'I want a job' is not enough," he said.

He said employers look for an enthusiastic employee with a can-do attitude.

Next week in *mX* we feature a guide to places that help you research career options.

For more career tips go to www.careerone.com.au



Former apprentice Simon Buchanan is a successful landscape gardener who has won awards for his work