



A cut above the rest

PORT Macquarie hair-dressing teacher Donna DeMaria has been chosen as an expert to train the lone Australian hope for the 38th International WorldSkills competition in Japan this year.

Labelled the Skillaroos, team Australia was announced by the nation's WorldSkills body at a Sydney function after the 2006 National WorldSkills event in Melbourne.

The Skillaroos, which is made up of competitors

skilled in 25 trade categories such as hair-dressing and hospitality, will compete in front of several hundred thousand people over four intense days.

"It will be a great opportunity for us to experience an international European competition," Ms DeMaria said.

Her job includes drawing up a training plan and organising a team of stylists to give competitor Candice

Faranda the best chance against hairdressers from 45 countries.

"I have established a team which includes some of the best hairdressers across Australia," Ms DeMaria said.

The TAFE teacher, who has been working with hair for more than a quarter of a century, said competitions like this enticed much-needed youngsters into an industry which was in the midst of a skills shortage.

"Changes to legislation now enables students under 21 who have completed our fast-track hairdressing program at TAFE to work as a hairdresser and not have to enter an apprenticeship," Ms DeMaria said.

She travels to Japan in November.

Anyone interested in TAFE's fast-track hairdressing program can phone 6581 6200.



A cut above: Donna DeMaria will train Australia's only entrant in the WorldSkills competition in Japan this year.