



# Training bright sparks

**Anthony Cini**

**A** Dubbo man who was the recipient of a prestigious community service award has worked hard not for a specific cause, but to be recognised by the community.

Recent winner of the Tony McGrane Public Services Award Dave Arnold's work with TAFE Western has turned many heads in the Dubbo community for his commitment and passion to the work he does.

Mr Arnold, electrical programs teacher at TAFE Western, has taught many students the ways of the electrical industry, and said as a teacher, the skills that are instilled in students will stay with them for life.

"In 100 years, these skills will remain, only to get better with advanced technology," he said.

"If you look at what is taught, the skills need to constantly be re-emphasised time and time again for years to come."

Mr Arnold's work with TAFE Western began in 1978, and for more than 20 years he has been involved in the World Skills Competition, dedicating an enormous amount of his own personal time and resources to supporting competitors involved.

The recent gold medal-winner Ben Houghton helped Dave build

an electrical training board in Mr Arnold's garage, where together they put a great amount of effort into training for the October World Skills Competition in London.

Mr Houghton, whose older brother Josh made it once to the World Skills Australia National Competition in 2008, was inspired by his efforts, which made him work the hardest he had ever worked in his life.

"Josh now works for JDC Electrical in Dubbo. In the Nationals, Josh did some of his best work, and it was actually quite immaculate," Mr Houghton said.

"But he made one error that lost him quite a few marks, and I guess the pressure just got to him," he said.

"If you keep the mentality right, and constantly think of how to avoid losing marks, then you'll be fine.

"I did my personal best in London. Once I had finished my part of the competition, I had a look at some of my competitors' work, and I immediately thought I had no chance of winning. So you can imagine my surprise when my name was called as the winner."

Mr Arnold also taught his son Hugh all he knew about electrical installation, and Hugh followed

in his father's footsteps and participated twice in the national competition.

"I first competed in the national competition in 1999 and came third, but came sixth in 2001 in electrical installation," Mr Arnold said.

By the time the next competition came about in 2003, Hugh was over the age bracket to compete again.

The younger Mr Arnold worked as an electrician for a few years in his own business, but found it hard to remain in the industry due to financial issues.

"I still do bits every now and then at home, so the skills I learned from TAFE Western and my father are still there," he said.

The elder Mr Arnold thought Hugh was too young to realise there was any alternative than going into a competition of that nature.

Both father and son agreed that the World Skills competition had more nations competing than ever before, and like an exam, the temptation to see where the work went wrong was always there.

Mr Houghton will help train the next competitor in the World Skills competition, as well as joining the judging panel in Sydney next year.

