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Media Release

25 DAYS TO GO UNTIL GAVIN PRESS TAKES ON THE WORLD IN THE TRADE OLYMPICS

Power drills, oxy torches, scissors and secateurs are usually amongst the many items you would not take on a plane, but in 25 days time the Australian WorldSkills team will be equipped with all the tools of their trades as they make their way to Calgary, Canada to compete in the 'Trade Olympics'.

The Aussie team, known as the Skillaroos, consists of 26 of the most skilful young tradies and apprentices from across the nation. Each team member, deemed to be the best in their chosen trade field, has booked their spot on the plane to Canada to compete at the International WorldSkills Competition beginning on September 1, 2009.

One of these seats is reserved for Kelso local, Gavin Press who will be vying for gold in the category of Electrical Installations.

Gavin's journey began almost two years ago at the Macquarie Regional WorldSkills Competition. A top of the table finish earned him a place in the WorldSkills National Competition in Sydney where a gold medal effort secured his place in the Skillaroos squad.

"Being a part of the team has been a terrific experience. Not only has it been a great boost for my career but it has been a lot of fun too. Through WorldSkills I have been given the opportunity to develop my skills and travel the world," Gavin said.

In 25 days time, Gavin and competitors from 50 countries world-wide will be stampeding to Calgary to determine who will be crowned the best young tradesperson in the world. Team Australia currently holds a world ranking of fifth and is the highest ranked English-speaking country. A swag of medals in the 2009 Trade Olympics will see the Skillaroos climb even higher.

"Nobody quite knows what to expect in Canada. We have all undertaken a lot of training over the last couple of years and our preparation couldn't be better, but the International Competition will be an experience like no other," Gavin said.

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Cheering the Aussie team on from the stands will be WorldSkills Australia CEO, Mark Callaghan who has been keeping a close eye on the progress of Gavin and the rest of the squad.

“The Skillaroos are now very close to the culmination of their years of hard work. In the past, Team Australia has been the benchmark for excellence in trade, and Canada will be another opportunity for us to show the world what Aussie tradies are made of,” Mr Callaghan said.

Until the team’s departure in August, Gavin is back in Kelso busily fine tuning his skills at TAFE NSW Western Institute, Dubbo Campus and mentally preparing for the biggest challenge of his career.

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WorldSkills Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that has been supporting youth in trade for over 28 years. WorldSkills Australia aims to raise the profile of skill-based vocations through a series of regional, national and international competitions, engaging industry, government and vocational education and training authorities to promote the benefits of skill development as a pathway to a career in trade.

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