



Put skills to the test

AUTOMOTIVE
NATHAN MAWBY

Key dates

THINK you're the best? Young mechanics, vehicle painters, auto electricians, auto-body repairers and heavy-vehicle mechanics have the chance to prove it in the coming weeks.

The WorldSkills automotive competitions for Victoria will put Victoria's best automotive trainees and apprentices through their paces to find our No.1.

The winner in each category will go on to the national competition, followed by the international competition if they are successful.

Automotive vehicle painting state convenor Peter Johnson says it's voluntary, but well worth it.

"It's a competitive experience, it places them under great pressure, and it's good to see who can perform like that," Johnson says.

Those looking to compete as vehicle painters will face a series of challenges from being given a design and planning how to implement it to laying the base coat, applying a clear top coat then a more complicated graphic design — in only eight hours.

"You've got to be confident in planning and organisation as well as

- WorldSkills dates are:
Automotive Mechanics, Oct 30, 31; apply by Oct 23.
Vehicle Painting, Nov 6; apply by Oct 30.
Heavy-Vehicle Mechanics, Nov 6; apply by Oct 30.
Automotive Electrical, Nov 13; apply by Nov 6.
Autobody Repair, Nov 21; apply by Nov 14.

For times and locations
 ph: 9249 1000 or visit
www.worldskills.com.au

painting skills," Johnson says. "It's achievable for someone who plans it out."

The task can be tough, but finding the winner is simply a matter of waiting to see who can handle the pressure over the entire test.

"There will be eight to 12 participants and they'll be the pick of the crop," Johnson says.

"Generally the winner comes out in how they apply themselves and their overall approach."

Auto-electrical category state convenor Joe Farrugia says appli-

cants in his field should expect to face skills tests including wiring diagrams, detecting lighting faults, testing electrical components and manufacturing a wiring harness — all while following strict occupational health and safety standards.

It's nothing they wouldn't encounter in a normal day, Farrugia says.

"They'll go through projects specific to the trade, and they just have to be methodical."

AUTOMOTIVE mechanic section chief judge Grant Petch says the competition will be broken up into six tests of about 1½ hours on brakes, vehicle servicing, electrical, engine tuning, steering and suspension and diesel.

Fresh from accompanying Australia's last international competitor to Canada (Perrin Bouna placed eighth in the world), Petch says there's no reason not to have a go.

"What have you got to lose?"

In recent years, Australian WorldSkills entrants have brought home gold and silver — and anyone who reaches the top tiers will receive job offers from around the globe.

Competitions are also open for heavy-vehicle mechanics and auto-body repairers.

Visit www.worldskills.com.au for information and application forms.



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Page 2 of 2



Expert eye: judges Joe Farrugia and Peter Johnson. Picture: TIM CARRAFA