



Apprentice on top in awards

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APPRENTICE jeweller Nick Mattiaccio, 18, has been selected to represent WA in a national competition next year.

The third-year apprentice, who is studying at The Balingup Goldsmith, was encouraged by his boss, Rick Thomas, to pit himself against his peers in the World Skills competition.

Jewellery apprentices from around the State travelled to Northbridge TAFE for the competition, which involved making a brooch from a small quantity of silver.

It took place in August but it was only a couple of weeks ago that Mr Mattiaccio learned the judges, a panel of three Perth jewellers, had chosen his brooch as the winner.

While his competitors included final-year apprentices, Mr Mattiaccio makes no great claims for his creation, which he said is circular with square settings, and a band from the centre to the outside.

"I think it was chosen because it utilises all the different skills we learn," he said. Those include the combination of soldering, filing, polishing and other skills that jewellers learn.

Mr Mattiaccio said he has been interested in jewellery since primary school.

Originally from Busselton, he says he chose the apprenticeship in Balingup to learn his trade with one-on-one supervision, the traditional way, rather than in a

workshop focused on mass production.

"Most things Nick does here are from scratch," said Mr Thomas, who set up The Balingup Goldsmith in 1996.

"It's unusual for a country jeweller to get an award like this."

WorldSkills Australia is a national, not-for-profit organisation that gives young Australians aged 23 and under the opportunity to gain new skills and compete against their peers to fast track their development.

The national competition will be held in Brisbane next year, on a date yet to be announced.



Jeweller Nick Mattiaccio at his workbench in Balingup.