



■ CULCAIRN: Employer Luke Howard, with first year plumbing apprentice and regional WorldSkills prize winner Tom Hughes and Lachlan Hunter at Blueys Plumbin' and Diggin'.

## Top Riverina apprentice

Tom Hughes, 17, a first year apprentice plumber at Culcairn is the Riverina regional winner of the WorldSkills Australia competition.

A team of 18 apprentices from all trades in the Riverina attended a training camp with mentors and trainers at Mount Bogong at the weekend.

Tom works with his employer Luke Howard and attends Albury TAFE where he is instructed by teacher Ian Berry for three days each month.

Mr Howard runs a plumbing and earthmoving business at

Culcairn, employing Tom and fourth year apprentice Lachlan Hunter, his wife Lauren as the book keeper and a number of casual labourers.

"Tom is very good with his hands, does good precision work, listens to instructions and carries them out during the day without further instruction," Mr Howard said.

The former Billabong High School student knew he liked plumbing after working with Luke Howard during Year 10 work experience.

From a career perspective, Tom

said, "I always thought I would do a trade but wasn't sure about which one."

"Tom came back during his holidays and was signed up as an apprentice in February the next year, Mr Howard added.

The WorldSkills Competition challenges young people, their teachers, trainers, and employers to achieve world class standards in work skills and to promote vocational education across Australia.

As the top plumbing apprentice in the Riverina, Tom will progress to the national competition in 2010.