Women in trades

Challenger TAFE students like Charmaine Court are part of an increasing number of women taking up apprenticeships.  SEE PAGE 6
Welcome to the final edition of WAVES for 2007, and what a year it’s been! The last few months have seen the College continue to build on its impressive achievements for the year by attracting a host of accolades across several Centres.

Most recently, former Challenger TAFE Automotive apprentice, Dale McMullen, won Gold at the international WorldSkills competition in Japan. The 2007 Australian Skillaroos team member also received the Best of the Nation award. This fantastic achievement bodes very well for this year’s two WA WorldSkills Gold Medallists, Margarita Ramirez (Beauty Therapy) and Stacey Pitman (Floristry), who will travel to Sydney to represent WA at the National WorldSkills Competition next July.

The WA WorldSkills success didn't end there. Our Hospitality and Electrical Trades areas also picked up Silver Medals, with Bronze Medals going to Beauty Therapy, Floristry and Hospitality - a truly great range of achievements.

The hard work and professionalism of staff in the WA Maritime Training Centre - Fremantle, and Quinlan’s Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre was rewarded at the WA 2007 Tourism Awards in November. Maritime was awarded the Gold Medal in the Tourism Education and Training category, with Quinlan’s bringing home the Silver Medal - a fantastic effort from all concerned.

In addition, Quinlan’s Training Restaurant won the prestigious Gold Plate award for Best Training Restaurant Open to the Public, for the second time, as well as having one of their Certificate IV in Hospitality students, Sarah Richards, named as Student Waiter of the Year. Read about Sarah’s achievements on page 11.

As if that wasn’t enough, our training partnership with the Winjan Aboriginal Corporation in Peel was recognised as a Finalist at the recent Premier’s Awards. These awards are highly competitive and cover the entire public sector, and with only three finalists in the Regional Development category this was an outstanding result.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to all staff in these areas, particularly those who worked closely with the student winners. Your passion and commitment to the College is greatly appreciated. Congratulations also to all the worthy student winners.

For this edition of WAVES we’re proud to include a Women in Trades special feature, acknowledging the ground-breaking work of our female apprentices. With WA facing a severe skills shortage many women are heeding the call to take up the tools and are forging careers in traditionally male-dominated areas. This is an extremely exciting and encouraging development that promises to continue in 2008.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish all Challenger TAFE students, staff and their families a safe and happy festive season and all the best for the New Year. I look forward to seeing you next year.

Liz Harris
Managing Director
Challenger TAFE
As if that accolade wasn’t enough, as the only Gold Medallist in the 27-member 2007 Skillaroos team he was also declared Best in the Nation.

The Skillaroos placed fifth in the world out of 50 countries, up from ninth position in 2005.

Dale acknowledged that the quality of training he received at Challenger TAFE has contributed to his run of success.

“Challenger TAFE gave me a really good grounding in the trade, especially because the lecturers are all experts in the industry,” he said.

Managing Director, Liz Harris, said that Dale’s win further emphasises Challenger TAFE’s commitment to delivering international-standard training.

“Dale’s monumental achievement cannot be overstated. We are delighted for him and extremely proud to have played a part in his development. This award also highlights the fact that the College continues to provide training that is second-to-none,” she said.

Dale’s journey to Shizuoka began in 2005 with a win in the State WorldSkills competition, which he followed with Gold at the national titles in 2006. His passion for cars began as a young boy when he used to help his father with mechanical work.

Dale specialises in modern automotive diagnostics and still assists his father, who owns and runs G-Mac Auto Centre in Myaree. Of course, Dale is now a mechanic in his own right - and the world’s best at that.
Fashionable Opulence

Annmarie Carpenter, Perth Fashion Festival Ambassador and wife of the Premier, was a special guest at Opulence, this year’s fashion students’ end-of-year parade at the Fremantle Town Hall.

The 15 graduating students presented a unique interpretation of 16th Century Elizabethan costuming with a colourful and interesting collection of garments.

Each student took the theme and interpreted it in an original way that also incorporated the latest colours, trends and styles. This exciting and ornate fusion of looks and designs proved to be a grand indulgence in fashion concepts, with the elegant Fremantle venue adding to the “olde worlde” feel.

Models from Chadwick showcased the students’ original designs at the parade, which was officially launched by Mrs Carpenter.

An industry judging panel from Love in Tokyo, Gospel and ae’lkemi assessed the students’ designs and awarded the Attitude Magazine Award for the Best Range to Ebony Harding, with the Charles Parsons award for Construction going to Sonia Foster and the Martin & Savage Highly-Commended Award to Samantha Sumich.

The event rounded off a busy year for the fashion department who started training from their new ‘live-works’ studio on Cliff Street earlier in the year.
With the last bolts being tightened in readiness for the first intake of students in 2008, a number of high profile visitors have been drawn to Challenger TAFE’s new Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training (ACEPT) to check on the progress.

Most recently, the Minister for Education and Training, The Hon Mark McGowan headed a group that included Woodside’s Director of Enterprise Capability and Chair of the State Training Board, Keith Spence and member of Challenger TAFE Governing Council, Mike Deeks.

The group was welcomed by Liz Harris, Managing Director of the College, who was delighted to lead a tour of the brand new purpose-built facility and said the visitors represented the combined input into ACEPT from the government, industry and education sectors.

“ACEPT is the result of a forward-thinking partnership between Challenger TAFE, our industry partners and the State and Federal governments, and provides cutting-edge training to meet the needs of the oil and gas, petro-chemical and minerals processing industries.

“The Industry Management Board, chaired by Keith Spence, and including representatives from companies such as Chevron and Apache, will ensure that ACEPT continues to remain responsive to ever-changing industry demands,” she said.

Minister McGowan said ACEPT would deliver a multi-faceted training program to service WA’s resources boom.

“ACEPT will provide world class training unavailable anywhere else in Australia. Vital skills to meet oil and gas and other processing industry requirements will be delivered via an innovative mix of training formats, including “live” training on a process plant, a full-scale process train simulation, online and workplace-based learning.

“It is ideally located in the Australian Marine Complex in Henderson in the heart of a thriving industrial precinct, the perfect environment for cultivating a skilled workforce to meet the rapid growth of WA’s booming industry sectors,” he said.

The British High Commissioner and former British Energy Minister, the Rt Hon Helen Liddell, has also recently visited the ACEPT facility.

Her visit was designed to extend the transfer of knowledge and skills between Australia and the United Kingdom through the development of research and training collaboration.

Mrs Liddell was encouraged by the potential for strategic partnership between ACEPT and Britain’s oil, gas and petrochemical training program, the Global Training and Education Partnership (GTEP).

“I am very impressed with the Centre. It provides an excellent opportunity to continue developing the relationship between GTEP and ACEPT to partner in the delivery of process operator training to industry in both countries,” she said.

Mrs Liddell was accompanied by Philip Orchard, head of the British Consular Agency in Perth, and was welcomed by ACEPT Directors Rob Meecham and Greg Guppy who were pleased to highlight the Centre’s international significance.

“We are extremely excited about the ability of ACEPT to fill industry’s expanding demand for highly-skilled workers, and it’s a privilege to have the British High Commissioner so interested in and supportive of what we are doing,” said Mr Meecham.

“Clearly, if we can partner with the British process training system to offer British qualifications, as well as providing the Australian qualifications, the Centre will be truly international in its scope,” he added.

Mr Guppy said national and international interest in ACEPT had been extensive, and the Centre was set to engage in a number of potential partnering opportunities.

“ACEPT has hosted over 30 group visits from Australian and international organisations in recent months, all of which are looking at establishing training partnerships with the Centre,” he said.
“You’ll learn really useful skills, plus there’s lots of work available when you finish the training, and who knows, it might help you build your own house one day!”

Charmaine has a similarly optimistic and enthusiastic outlook on her construction-based career, though her pre-apprenticeship at Challenger TAFE was her first opportunity to get involved in hands-on, practical training.

“I’ve always enjoyed playing with tools, as I’ve never been a girly-girl, and my mum knew that I was looking to do something a bit different, so she kept an eye out in the local papers for details on TAFE courses,” she said.

“Of all the trades to choose from, I decided that ceiling fixing was my best bet, as it seemed the most artistic of all the trades.

“I’m really enjoying taping in, but cornicing is proving to be a bit of a challenge, though I know I’ll get there, because overall it’s not hard work.”

Two of Charmaine’s five brothers are working in building-related careers, one as a bricklayer and the other as an architect, so construction careers seem to be in her blood.

“Yes, my girlfriends weren’t that surprised when I started this training, as I was never likely to become a beautician!” she jokes.

“But, like Tegan, I’d encourage all women to have a go at taking up a trade, because it’s good to try new things, and there are plenty of career opportunities available.”
Challenger TAFE Construction Lecturer, Kevin Williams, is extremely pleased with the girls’ commitment to their training and says they are just as keen and focussed as the boys.

“Sometimes physical strength can make a difference to what people can achieve in trades roles, but a lot of the time it’s more about working smarter rather than harder,” he explained.

“Like any hands-on job, there are times when it can be physically demanding, especially in roofing work, but there are plenty of roles in the industry where people can make a good living without having to be big and burly.”

Challenger TAFE Managing Director, Liz Harris, is thrilled to welcome Tegan and Charmaine to the College’s Peel Campus.

“We’ve been trying to encourage more women into trades training for some time, and to see Tegan and Charmaine taking up the tools is very exciting for the region’s development,” she said.

“A trades career can be both flexible and satisfying, and Tegan and Charmaine are great role models for other young women considering this as a career option.”

Challenger TAFE Composites apprentice, Samantha Jones, is at the forefront of an industry set to experience unprecedented growth.

Samantha’s pathway to the College’s Composites apprenticeship involved two years industry experience. She initially helped build water tanks before starting with her family business, Westcat Marine.

Samantha now has her sights firmly set on a boatbuilding career following the strong growth of the business.

“It started in the back shed where we built a 7.5 metre catamaran that we displayed at Hillary’s Boat Show. It was so well received that before long we were approached to custom-build other catamarans,” she said.

Samantha said the best aspect of the work was transforming raw materials into a finished product.

“I enjoy seeing something come in on a pallet and watching it leave as a boat,” she said.

Challenger TAFE Composites lecturer, John Cartwright, said that Samantha was a fantastic example of someone who combined industry experience with formal training to achieve their career goals.

“I initially assessed Samantha in the workplace to determine her suitability for the apprenticeship and was very impressed. Her hands-on skills are very good and she has a lot of confidence because of her previous experience,” he said.

“She’s certainly not intimidated by the boys. She’s more of a leader if anything,” he added.

Samantha said the best thing about the Composites apprenticeship at Challenger TAFE is that training is tailored to the demands of industry.

“The skills we learn in training are exactly the same as those used on the job, so we have a really good idea of what it takes to work in the Composites industry. The lecturers and industry partners have great experience to draw on, and the whole environment is really friendly,” she said.

Apart from boatbuilding, composites are used in a variety of applications including boom resource industries such as the oil and gas sectors. Although fibreglass is the most familiar composite, the wide range of materials includes carbon-fibre and Kevlar.

The vast array of products made from composites include industrial pipes and tanks, lifestyle items such as surfboards, skateboards and musical instruments, and a number of solutions in the transport, defence and aerospace industries.
Jaime-Lee Oliffe has found a new love of learning thanks to the dedicated support and mentoring of her Challenger TAFE Automotive Lecturer, Jim Hope.

After struggling through high school, Jaime-Lee wasn’t too sure what to expect from an Automotive pre-apprenticeship at the College, but within days she knew she had found a place that would encourage and nurture her passion for an Automotive career.

“When I first came to Challenger TAFE, I was really shy and afraid of asking questions,” she said.

“But once I started classes with Jim, I developed a new-found confidence and felt that I could ask him anything without worrying if it was a stupid question.

“Whatever I asked, he would always take the time out to explain how and why I could work problems out, and that made learning so much easier and more enjoyable.”

Jim is modest about his impact on Jaime-Lee’s experience at Challenger TAFE.

“I think everyone can be a teacher and pass on their knowledge and experience,” he said.

“But as a professional lecturer, it is my duty to ensure the next generation is prepared to meet the ever-changing demands for skills, knowledge and abilities.

“I am passionate about automotive training and make a special effort to communicate to students at their level.

“It is particularly rewarding to see female students like Jaime-Lee entering trades training and doing so well.”

Jaime-Lee is something of a trailblazer in her family, as her love for motor vehicles overrode any concerns she had about establishing a career in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

“I’ve just always been interested in cars, and my family and friends were really supportive of me going into this field,” she explained.

“There’s nothing better than trying to fix something that’s wrong with a car, and if it’s a Holden, it’s even better!”

Jaime-Lee has just started her apprenticeship at Melville Holden, and is thrilled to be embarking on her career surrounded by her favourite cars. She hopes to eventually focus on suspension work, and thanks to the support and training she received at Challenger TAFE, she has the best possible chance of realising her dreams.
Nothing fishy about students' success

Challenger TAFE and North Lake Senior High School have delivered an innovative concept in VET that also ensures a promising future for refugee students from Africa and Afghanistan.

North Lake Senior High School students, Megi Fedid, Mohamad Yousef, Antoine Emoko and Anicet Irako recently completed the ‘Fishy Logistics’ program through Challenger TAFE, which saw them develop a host of skills to help them build better lives and contribute to their new community.

Fishy Logistics involved planning the harvest and delivery of yabbies from a College aquaculture facility in Gingin to a retail seafood outlet.

The Program Manager of Challenger TAFE’s Aquaculture department, Jean Menzies, said Fishy Logistics represented a new method in developing work-based skills in students ahead of further TAFE study or entering the workforce.

“It’s an innovative project-based, pre-vocational training method that exposes students to a broad range of transport and logistics skills in an aquaculture environment,” she said.

North Lake Senior High School Program Coordinator, Hannah Bremner, said that apart from developing practical skills the program also aimed to increase English language proficiency.

“The students were specifically chosen for the program through our Intensive English Centre, and we couldn’t be more pleased with their progress and commitment. What Challenger TAFE has achieved with the students is just fantastic,” she said.

For Anicet Irako, the program was unlike anything he had experienced in his native Burundi.

“In my country there was nothing like this program. It has helped me learn a lot about seafood and also helped with my English language and with understanding Australian culture,” he said.

Anicet was excited by the opportunities Fishy Logistics presented and full of praise for all the training staff involved.

“It was so good, so much fun learning in class and at Gingin. I hope to make my career in seafood,” he said.

Aquaculture Lecturer, Tony Bart, was highly impressed with the students.

“They’ve all shown a strong desire to learn and have gained an enormous understanding of the processes involved. To see them develop so much in such a short period has been very fulfilling.

Kevin White, the proprietor of Melville Fresh Seafoods, was thrilled to take delivery of the live yabbies and was full of praise for the program.

“I’m a former Challenger TAFE aquaculture student myself and I’ve since built a very good working relationship with the College, taking on work experience students and helping with Royal Show exhibitions. This program is an extension of that relationship and it’s a win-win situation with positive outcomes all round”, he said.
Large hands might not be the ideal tools for a career involving delicate flowers, but a love of working with natural elements has seen Kaj Britschgi develop award-winning floristry skills.

Kaj explains that, despite having broad European hands, his creative side blossomed after spending many school holidays with his grandmother, a florist.

“My nan was always putting flowers in front of me and telling me to have a go at arranging them whilst she was working on a job,” he explained.

“After a while I started to develop a bit of a knack for knowing what would look right in an arrangement, and once I got more involved in it I found that it was a great way to express myself artistically.

“I love working with arum lilies, tropicals, and anything that is evocative of a walk through bushland or rainforests.”

Kaj completed the Certificate II in Floristry at Challenger TAFE’s Murdoch Campus and found it easy to integrate into the flexible part-time studies.

“The training was a great way to finesse my floristry skills and I’ve enjoyed it so much that I’m hoping to move on to the Certificate III,” he said.

As well as the wedding posy, Kaj had to complete four other designs, including an Anzac Day wreath, a gift and flower basket arrangement, and a wedding bouquet with a trail — all under strict guidelines and time constraints. He impressed the judges with his professional attitude, strong focus and commitment to excellence.

While Kaj is humble about his achievement he says it has given him a confidence boost to continue developing his skills.

“Winning the award has given me that extra bit of encouragement to move on with my studies,” he said.

“I’m also finding that working in industry is complementing my TAFE training by giving me the opportunity to learn on-the-job customer service skills, and feed off my colleagues’ experience.”
Sarah Richards has had her passion for providing an excellent dining experience recognised with two awards.

The Certificate IV in Hospitality student not only took out first prize in the Food and Beverage Guild of the WA Catering Institute of Australia’s Student Waiter of the Year Award, she also gained third place in the Hospitality and Food – Restaurant Service section of this year’s WA WorldSkills Competition.

Sarah’s Student Waiter of the Year prize included $300 for furthering her career development and an Australian Fine China Dinner set which she says has gone into her ‘glory box’.

The competition involved both theoretical and practical assessment, with special emphasis placed on the latter due to the hands-on nature of hospitality work. For the entree dish, Sarah had to prepare a caesar salad with guéridon service, which meant assembling the dish at the tableside.

“Leading up to the competition I was quite nervous, as the guéridon service requires considerable dexterity and skill, and a fair bit of showmanship,” she explained.

“But then I realised that I do this work every day, so it was just a question of keeping focussed on the task to demonstrate my skills and knowledge.”

Sarah followed the entree with a silver service main course of rib eye of Linley Valley pork with fresh seasonal vegetables, and for dessert she presented a crepe suzette, again using guéridon service that required careful and precise use of table cooking equipment.

“The crepe suzette was a great dish to present, as it’s so visual,” she continued.

“You’re dealing with flaming liquor and cascading sugar, so you’ve got to put on quite a spectacle!”

The Student Waiter of the Year competition is designed to showcase and raise the standard of service within the industry and to encourage young people to achieve professionalism in their chosen career. It also aims to establish the image of wait staff as professionals who require extensive skills, knowledge and training to perform at their best in an industry where they are challenged to exceed customer expectations on a daily basis.

It was through working in a café during her school years, that Sarah realised a career in the busy and social hospitality environment was for her.

“It’s great to be in a job where you’re interacting with so many different people every day,” she said.

“I really enjoy making my customers’ dining experience a satisfying and happy one, and it’s good to be in a workplace where you get to play a part in people having a good time.”

Sarah’s hopes for the future include getting into hotel management or running a restaurant, so she can build on her hands-on experience, and make more of an impact in the hospitality industry.
Chinese Institute explores Challenger TAFE partnership

Challenger TAFE underlined its reputation as a world-class training provider when it hosted a delegation of Chinese engineers from the Shenyang Institute of Engineering (SIE) recently.

The 10 member group, plus an interpreter, visited WA to explore the potential for educational and training partnerships with local institutions.

The delegation was hosted by Greg Guppy, Director of Defence and Resource Industries training, who said he was honoured to receive the international guests and delighted to explain how SIE graduates will benefit from a partnership with Challenger TAFE.

“It’s a privilege to welcome the delegation from the SIE. Our strong links with industry and our ability to provide practical hands-on training encourages learning-by-doing, which is something I’m very proud to show our guests.

“We will continue to pursue this relationship and the potential for further international training opportunities,” he said.

Sun Xiaoyu, the Director of International Education at the SIE said he was encouraged by the potential for partnership with the College, which would see SIE students gain practical hands-on training to accompany their strong theoretical knowledge.

“The training delivery of Challenger TAFE and the focus on practice was most impressive. Our Institute is famous for engineering subjects, and this is what we can learn from you. For our part we look forward to any collaboration between us,” he said.

The group visited a number of the College’s training centres, including the Rockingham Campus, the WA Applied Engineering and Shipbuilding Training Centre, and the new Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training (ACEPT), which is scheduled to receive students from 2008.