



# Nathan joins Skills Squad

BY GEORGINA BAYLY

JIMBOOMBA refrigeration and air conditioning apprentice Nathan McHugh has been selected to join an elite international team known as the Skills Squad.

The squad comprises the best of the best trainees, apprentices and students who have just become gold medalists at the recent WorldSkills Australia 2016 National Competition.

Mr McHugh will spend the next year training with a dedicated skills mentor, vying for the opportunity to join more than 1000 young men and women from 75 countries at WorldSkills International Competition.

The competition is being held in Abu Dhabi

next October.

Mr McHugh said the opportunity to be involved in the Skills Squad was "surreal".

"This has been pretty awesome and it's already opened up so many options career wise," he said.

"It's a pretty big deal and I want to give it 110 per cent.

"The more you put in the more you get out and I want to do my best."

The squad members must reach certain milestones before they are chosen to perform internationally.

In preparation for the next year, the squad will attend a training camp from November 10 to 13 in Victoria.

There, the competitors will meet with their skills mentors and develop a training plan for the coming weeks

and months.

Mr McHugh said he used every day as a training opportunity.

"You've got to prove to them that you want to put in that time and effort," he said.

"My mentor has been heavily involved in the skil-laroots and so we will train to what we know.

"This week away will be a big team bonding experience, we want to come away as a big family and that is a great thing to be part of."

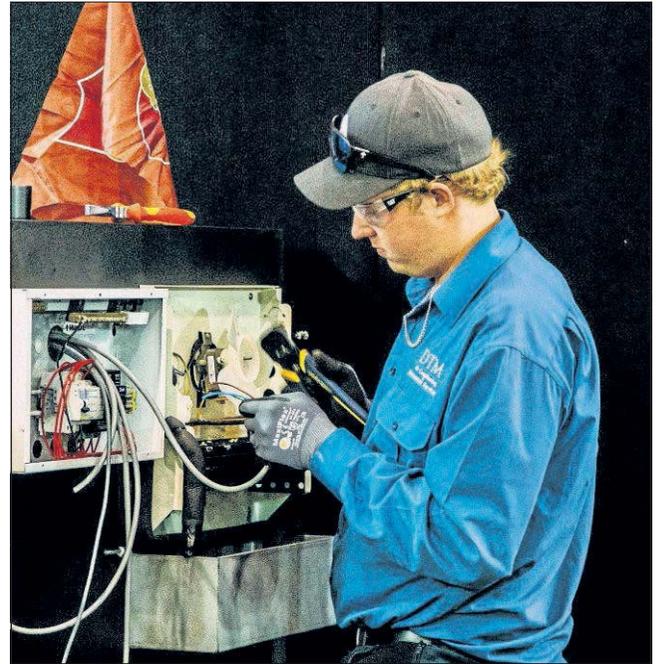
Mr McHugh has just returned from Germany at the world expo, where he was able to see the national finals for the German team.

"It was great to pick up different skills and see another country's perspective," he said.

WorldSkills Australia CEO Brett Judd said he was delighted to reveal the history making 2017 Skills Squad, with the highest female representation in the competition's history. WorldSkills Australia has been competing internationally since 1983 when the first Australian team was sent to Linz, Austria for the WorldSkills International Competition.

"Our recent National Competition was a wonderful demonstration of the strengths of Australia's vocational training system, and displayed what a skills resurgence in our country would look like," he said.

"I can't wait to see what these young men and women achieve on the international stage."



**SKILLS:** Jimboomba refrigeration and air conditioning apprentice Nathan McHugh joins an elite international team known as the Skills Squad. **Photo: Supplied**