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Media Release

Local apprentice wins national automotive award

Nineteen year old automotive refinishing technician Drew Avery took out the coveted award for the 2009 State Refinishing Apprentice of the year at an awards ceremony in Wellington.

The State Apprenticeship and Management Programme is an initiative set up in conjunction with the NZ Motor Industry Training Organisation (Inc) (MITO) and the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) to encourage more people into the vehicle repair and building industries nationwide.

Drew completed his apprenticeship with MITO while working at Wakefield Scott Panelbeaters, Lower Hutt. He impressed his supervisor early on by completing his apprenticeship in record time. His commitment to study has driven him to take his skills to the next level. He is currently enrolled in MITO's advanced technical qualification, ATech®.

Up against 30 candidates from around the country, Drew held his own through a tough selection process.

"It was great to be chosen for a scholarship place last year and now I am really excited to win this award. State's scholarship made such a difference as I was given so much support. I did the hard yards because I didn't want to let anyone down", said Drew.

"I had no idea what I wanted to do at school then I started with MITO and then the State Apprentice Scheme and haven't looked back. This is not just a job for me, now it's my career and I am thinking about getting into management in the future".

Drew's supervisor at Wakefield Scott Panelbeaters, Mark Gee, believes Drew deserves this win due to his dedication, hard work and willingness to learn.

"Since Drew started with us, he's been extremely motivated. He's a quick learner and really gets stuck in", said Mark.

"The State scholarship allowed Drew to learn on the job. He's really shown great commitment to us as well. He recently broke his collarbone but still comes in everyday to use the internet for his ATech® research and helps us on the phones."

Wakefield Scott Panelbeaters is one of the many State-approved repairers involved with this programme, which sponsors apprentices nationwide. Selected candidates complete a vehicle apprenticeship while working with their employer.

At the recent awards function in Wellington, Drew was presented with a vital tool of his trade – a refinishing sander, courtesy of Wyatt Machine Tools, one of the programme’s industry sponsors.

State pays all fees and course-related costs for the apprentices and management trainees as they study towards a National Certificate. The success of the programme has seen State introduce 25 sponsored apprenticeships in the 2009/10 intake.

“This programme promotes career pathways in our industry. By encouraging businesses to invest in education and training, they are growing their future.” said MITO Chief Executive, Janet Lane.

Executive General Manager of State Insurance, Mary-Jane Daly, says State is committed to helping increase the number of skilled technicians in the vehicle repair and building industries.

“By offering these apprenticeships we’re boosting talent and creating a strong sustainable industry,” she says. “Qualified and highly skilled trades people also help us provide a better overall insurance service for our customers.”

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About State

State has been providing New Zealanders with an extensive range of personal and business insurance services for more than 100 years. State manages 1.1 million policies on behalf of more than 500,000 New Zealanders. State is a business division of IAG New Zealand Limited, New Zealand’s largest general insurer.

About MITO

The NZ Motor Industry Training Organisation (Inc) – MITO - coordinates training and apprenticeships in the motor and industrial textile fabrication industries. MITO also sets industry standards and promotes training in these industries.

MITO also manages national qualifications in a wide range of industry sectors, including automotive heavy engineering, automotive engineering, collision repair, automotive refinishing, automotive electrical engineering, canvas fabrication, sailmaking, vehicle upholstery, sales and services, administration and business management.

For more information on apprenticeships and training, visit MITO’s website at www.mito.org.nz
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