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## **Media Release**

### **Local apprentice wins national automotive award**

Nineteen year old panel beater Matt Harris took out the coveted award for the 2009 State Collision Repair Apprentice of the Year.

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 (BICTOBCITO) to encourage more people into the vehicle repair and building industries nationwide.

Matt is completing his apprenticeship with MITO while working at Wally Sutherland Ltd in Whakatane.

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

"I was stoked to be chosen for a scholarship place a year ago and to win this award now is such an honour. State's scholarship made such a difference as it allowed me to focus on my studies" said Matt.

"My family were really surprised and proud when I told them the news, as I wasn't the best at school. But this opportunity really gave me a push and I just focused on the work and learning my trade".

Matt's supervisor at Wally Sutherland Ltd believes Matt deserves this win due to his dedication, hard work and willingness to learn.

"Matt's been with us for two and half years and since he started on the State programme I've seen him work really hard," says Bradley Cooper, Panel and Paint manager.

"The State scholarship gave him the motivation to show he could do it and do it well."

Wally Sutherland Ltd 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 Hamilton, Matt was presented with a vital tool of his trade – a dustless sanding machine, 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 apprenticeship programme was initially established by State in 2003 to encourage more young people into the vehicle repair and building industries. 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 trades people 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.”

**ENDS**

### **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](http://www.mito.org.nz) or phone 0800 88 21 21

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