YOUNG SKILLED TERRITORIANS AIM FOR GOLD

A team of 11 young Territorians will fly to Melbourne tomorrow to represent the NT in what has been billed as the ‘ultimate gig’ for apprentices - the WorldSkills Australia National Competition 2006.

Patron for WorldSkills in the Northern Territory and Minister for Employment, Education and Training Syd Stirling said the strong NT team is a testament to the increasing number of apprentices and trainees, and the high standard of skills they display.

“The commitment and dedication demonstrated by all these NT WorldSkills team members is to be congratulated”, Mr Stirling said “You really are the future of the Territory, and we wish you well in the next level of competition”.

“The young Territorians that comprise the Northern Territory WorldSkills team are all gold medallists in their respective categories from the NT regional competitions held last year.

“The competitions took place in Darwin, Nhulunbuy and Alice Springs, and were open to all eligible apprentices, trainees and VET students across the Territory.”

This year’s competition will be held at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre over three consecutive days – from Friday 5 until Sunday 7 May – and will see up to 400 young Australians compete, testing their skills in either the Open section or VETiS (Vocational Education and Training in Schools) section.

Contestants will demonstrate their competence within their trades by participating in projects that have been designed by industry experts from across Australia.

In the months since the NT regional competitions, the NT team members have received mentoring in preparation for the competition from their employers or teachers.

The 2006 NT WorldSkills team members are: Open Section – Despina Sisois (Hairdressing), Mathew Letts (Plumbing), Michael Carey (Welding), Troy Watson (Electrical Installation) and Daniel Walton (Cookery). For Vocational Education and Training in Schools: Amy Leimandt (Food and Beverage Services), Kamila Taufalele (Business Administration), Lan Phuong Dang (Retail), Sam Wilson (Electrotechnology), Matthew Dodd (Information Technology) and Paul Darcy (Primary Industry – General Agriculture).

The Northern Territory enjoyed success in the last two national finals - winning three medals in Brisbane in 2004 and four medals, including two gold, in Newcastle in 2002. The 2002 NT team also won the coveted Evatt Shield for best overall team performance.
An impressive overall 77 per cent of all NT competitors have finished in the top ten of their category in the last three national competitions.

If successful at the national competition in Melbourne this week, the NT representatives have the opportunity to represent Australia at an international competition in Japan next year.

“I wish all the Territory competitors all the very best of luck,” said Minister Stirling.

Contact: Michelle Fraser 8901 4010 or 0407 642 011