

Hair stylist makes the cut: award

TOP APPRENTICE

SEVERAL of the region's apprentices were honoured for their achievements across a range of award categories at the 2011 New England Region Training Awards last night.

Local hairdresser Ainsley Smith of Illegal Lengths in Hair was named the 2011 apprentice of the year and Alliance People Solutions employee Rachel Jeffrey was named the trainee of the year.

A record 100 nominations were received from across the New England North West.

The awards recognise the achievements of the region's best in vocational education and training.

State Training Services regional manager Greg Poetschka said it had been

extremely pleasing to see such a high number of of nominations for the 2011 awards.

"We know how hard it has been for businesses to focus on survival, let alone continue with training their employees over the past year, so I congratulate them on pushing ahead with training their apprentices and trainees," he said.

"This year we have large numbers in the trainee, vocational student and VET in Schools categories, equal to the much larger metropolitan regions."

The award winners – in the categories of apprentice of the year, vocational student of the year, school-based apprentice of the year and four other categories – will fly to Sydney in September to compete for the same honours in the state awards.



ON THE JOB: Local apprentices co-ordinator Libbi Redden and State Training Services regional manager Greg Poetschka. Photo: **Geoff O'Neill** 24061160101

Mr Poetschka said the 2011 nominations had been of a very high standard.

Nominations in the awards were received from right across the region, including Moree, Inverell, Armidale, Gunnedah, Narrabri and Tamworth.

He said this year it had also been pleasing to see an increasing number of nomi-

nations from smaller centres including Glen Innes, Warialda, Walcha, Manilla, Wee Wee, Coonabarabran and Quirindi.

This year the region's trainers and assessors were also recognised.

Armidale Dumaresq Council training and partnership manager Elizabeth Herbert was named the 2011 VET trainer/teacher of the year.

The finalists in the employer of the year award, presented for outstanding achievement in vocational education and training, were Moree Plains Shire Council, the Peel Valley Group and Challenge Disability Services.

They will be nominated directly to Sydney for the state finals in September.

Strategy adopted

GLEN INNES SEVERN

Council adopted its community strategic plan this week, after a public display period that failed to attract any feedback.

At the council meeting on Thursday, general manager Hein Basson said minor changes were made to the plan, which incorporates a resourcing strategy with a 10-year financial plan, workforce plan and asset management plan.

Mr Basson said there had been no objection from councillors to increasing borrowings for long-term water storage from \$3.5 million to \$3.86 million.

Mr Basson said the plan was "excellent" for the area.

"It sets out a clear direction for council to pursue into the future with projects that were identified by the community."

The plan is a culmination of a one-year operational plan and four-year delivery plan.

The meeting also approved the inclusion of a new organisational structure in council's workforce plan.