TAFE Illawarra wins the 2012 TAFE NSW Landscaping Challenge at the Sydney Royal Easter Show

Eighteen students from TAFE Illawarra’s Yallah Campus took out the first prize at the 2012 TAFE NSW Landscaping Challenge at the Sydney Royal Easter Show recently.

The TAFE NSW Challenge was the centrepiece of the Great Aussie Backyard – a wide mix of great gardening ideas, exhibitors and leading gardening experts.

Following the theme “A Courtyard Garden”, the four competing teams made up of students enrolled at each of the four participating TAFE NSW Institutes including TAFE Illawarra battled it out for top honours. The other Institutes who took part were Northern Sydney Institute, South Western Sydney Institute and Western Sydney Institute.

According to Craig Conway, Teacher in Horticulture, Yallah Campus the students enrolled in the Certificate III in Horticulture course at Yallah Campus showed great dedication and commitment to creating an award winning landscape design.

“With distance our greatest disadvantage we set out to prepare meticulously prior to the gruelling four day challenge. In fact the students started their preparations about a month before the competition to ensure that they would be ready,” he said.

“The students were also very fortunate to have the assistance of Travis Butler, a Carpentry and Joinery Teacher to help fine tune their skills in building pergolas, decks and timber flooring,” he added.

After three exhausting days of competition they were awarded first place for their innovative exhibit.

Promoting the importance of sustainability, each team’s design was required to incorporate either eco-friendly or water wise elements. The garden displays also included a paved area, a grassed area, a water feature, BBQ, seating and the use of elevations throughout the garden.

“Our team’s exhibit was designed to aid the concept of home sustainability. The students came up with some very innovative ideas that were inline with this concept such as clothesline for minimising electrical bills, use of recycled construction materials and recycling of water for conservation,” he said.

“The clever use of reed beds to filter any potential contaminants and excess nutrients from the water worked really well,” he added.

“This event provides a unique insight into the challenges that professional landscapers face when working on large projects to tight deadlines and is an invaluable experience for our students. We are so thrilled at winning this challenge and look forward to taking part again next year,” he said.

The exhibit included a range of products that were donated by many generous suppliers such as Abulk Turf Supplies, Andreasens Garden, Baines Masonry, BBQs Galore, BlueScope Water, Coastal Windows and Doors, House of Bamboo, Lifestyles Pavers, Wall Garden and Water Well Irrigation.

The garden displays were constructed pre-show and then judged by a panel of experts, including TV gardening personality Jody Rigby.