

The places you'll go

PLUMBING WORD'S YOUNG Plumber of the Year competition is open to New Zealand plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers aged 31 and under—whether at apprentice, Tradesman or Certifying level.

Julian Parker was the very first winner of the competition when it launched back in 2017. The finalists were judged on their workmanship, accuracy and speed in plumbing and gasfitting tests based on everyday requirements of the job—and Julian came up trumps, winning around \$20,000 worth of prizes, including a trip to Fiji for the Plumbing World Shareholders Conference in May 2018.

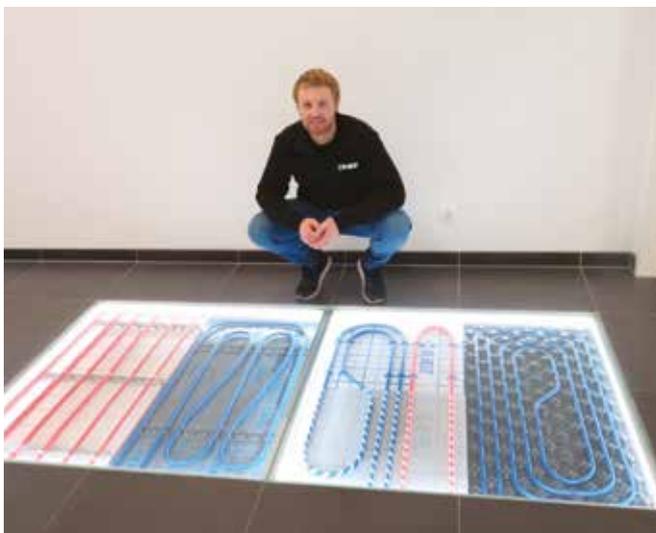
Winning the competition has also opened up new horizons for Julian, including the opportunity to work for KE KELIT in Austria. “Without it, I wouldn't have met the contacts and friends I now have, which led me to this position,” he says.

Overseas experience

After the competition, Julian continued working for The Lewis Plumbing Company in his hometown of Rotorua until August 2018, then headed overseas for his long-planned OE. He started in Mexico with some friends and travelled through Central and South America for four months before heading towards Europe.

“I had always planned to work in London, but when an opportunity came up to work for KE KELIT in Austria I got pretty excited at the thought of it. I felt that it would be a challenge but that I could take plenty away from it and extend my knowledge of the industry.”

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Above: Julian beside KE KELIT's underfloor heating samples.

Winning the inaugural New Zealand Young Plumber of the Year competition has opened up a world of opportunity to Julian Parker.



Above: Julian Parker outside the KE KELIT headquarters in Linz, Austria.

Julian's job at KE KELIT Austria involves working closely with installers and absorbing industry information from the experts he is surrounded by.

“I am currently working within the technical office,” he told *NZ Plumber* at the end of February. “We recently had a trip to Zwickau in Germany to test a new product for its performance in the testing facility within the university, which I found really interesting. We had good results so have now moved onto further testing in the workshop.”

Huge learning curve

He has also been working with design programmes for calculating heating systems, which will hold him in good stead for the future. “A fair bit of what I'm doing here is relatively new and different to what I'm used to,” he says. “I've not had a lot to do with underfloor heating, ceiling heating and cooling and radiators before, so it's a huge learning curve and something I'd like to see more of in New Zealand.”

Julian says he and his work colleagues are taking advantage of the chance to improve their respective language skills (“they now get most of my Kiwi humour”), and he has been busy translating and adjusting some of the KE KELIT new product information for English-speaking clients.

When he was presented with the chance to attend the annual ISH exhibition in Frankfurt in March, Julian jumped at the chance. “I've known about ISH for a few years now and had planned on attending at some point in time. Now I get the best of both worlds going there and supporting KE KELIT.”

Bringing new knowledge home

Julian plans to work for the company until June, before heading back home to New Zealand. “The standards and innovation within the company have blown my mind and I look forward to working with their products in the future,” he says. In the meantime, he's also looking forward to coming home to become a Certifying Gasfitter and enjoy a good old Kiwi lamb roast! *Entries for Plumbing World's 2019 Young Plumber of the Year competition are now open. Visit www.ypc.co.nz for details.* ■