

For release: Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018

**Media Release: 2018 Westpac Northland Business Excellence Awards: Winner's announcement**

The Westpac Northland Business Excellence Awards for 2018 took place at Forum North on Friday night, 26 October. Businesses from throughout Northland submitted 46 unique entries across 5 business categories, 7 ancillary categories and an overall supreme winner.

Clements Contractors Ltd was the 2018 Westpac Northland Business Excellence Supreme Award winner and was also the winner of the Vodafone Excellence in Business Large Business Award.

The judges said...

*Clements Contractors has developed a great vision for its future. The owners of the business are clearly encouraging employees to be actively involved with decision making and responsibility for achieving goals. Everyone seems to understand where the company is heading and what is expected of them. But above all, there is a strong "one team" culture which gives you the sense that this is a great place to work.*

Tony Collins from the NZ Chambers of Commerce Northland said that, as always, it's great to see what these amazing businesses are doing in our Region and to celebrate business success. The standard continues to get better every year and no matter what the size, structure or nature of the enterprise, they were all committed to making their business a success.

Winners of each category were:

- Giftbox Boutique NZ Ltd - winner of The Orchard Business and Event Hub Best Emerging Business Award. Gold Beauty Bar and Bay of Islands Computers were finalists.

The judges said...

*Giftbox Boutique provide beautiful, thoughtful and professional gift boxes for all occasions. The gift boxes are beautifully presented and easy to purchase via a well-designed and user friendly web site.*

*The judges were impressed with the enthusiasm, passion and attention to detail from the business owners. The husband and wife team, Andy and Katie Gray have complimentary skill sets that have contributed to the successful start-up of the company.*

*Giftbox Boutique have only been operating since November 2016 but have implemented good systems and processes and developed a detailed business plan to map out the future. Sales have continued to grow month on month. Giftbox Boutique is a worthy winner of the emerging business category and we wish them every success for the future.*



- Mangawhai Artists Inc - winner of the Ricoh Northland Excellence in Micro Business (1-3FTE) Category. Aligned Movement Ltd and Jessie Rose were finalists.

The judges said...

*The top few in the micro category were all excellent, but the judges were particularly impressed with the scale and complexity of Mangawhai Artists Inc. From running exhibitions that appeal to all ages to negotiating with Council over a new building and an addition to an existing one, setting up a complex website to benefit local artists and provide an information base, the work is done smoothly with a great deal of focus and determination, delivering great outcomes.*

- Cadenshae - winner of the Henderson Reeves Excellence in Business Small Business Awards (4-9FTE). Finalists were R.Tucker Thompson Sail Training Trust and Whangarei Top 10 Holiday Park & Motels.

The judges said...

*The judges were particularly impressed with the phenomenal growth as a direct consequence of exploiting a niche market.*

*Cadenshae has effectively established 3 offshore manufacturers for their innovative product range as well as 2 global distribution hubs in Canada and the UK.*

*There are clear and simple processes in place from design to delivery, and a proven understanding of the power of social media to exploit markets all over the world.*

*Nikki and Adam are to be congratulated for their entrepreneurialism, and their journey is by no means over as they continue to target exciting global opportunities.*

- LC Hydraulics - winner of the Golden Bay Cement Excellence in Business Medium Business Award (10-24FTE) Active Intervention Management Ltd (AIM) and Northern Benchtops Ltd were finalists.

The judges said...

*LC Hydraulics is well structured with great planning and regular monitoring and development of those plans. There is a good team culture and everyone seems to be engaged and on board. There is very good knowledge of customers and management of those relationships, and the commitment to training and apprenticeships is impressive for a company of this size.*



- Clements Contractors Ltd - winner of the Vodafone Excellence in Business Large Business Award (25+ FTE). Mitre 10 MEGA Whangarei was a finalist.

The judges said...

*Clements Contractors live up to their advertising as “clever” contractors! The company has developed some really innovative processes, which are tailored to meet the demands of the business and are well documented. They have excellent long term strategic planning with regular meetings to review performance and progress with their annual plan. The company also has very good knowledge of and interaction with its customer base, and they actively seek ways to improve their customer experience.*

- Mangawhai Artists Inc - winner of the Top Energy Best Not-For-Profit Organisation Award. R.Tucker Thompson Sail Training Trust were also a finalist.

The judges said...

*Mangawhai Artists are a deserving winner of the Not for Profit category. The unity with which they operate is clearly evident - a large group of people working co-operatively with a very clear focus to instigate and complete ambitious building programmes, run innovative exhibitions and workshops for the local community and support local artists both at home and away. The obvious enjoyment and efficiency of this group made it a pleasure to judge.*

- Northern Benchtops Ltd - winner of the Northland Regional Council Environmental Excellence Award. Modern Earth Homes were also a finalist.

The judges said...

*This is certainly an eco-friendly business! There is a strong environmental awareness which has been built into many aspects of the company’s operations. Examples of this are the recycling of water through the factory, the collection of roadside rubbish by employees, recycling initiatives, and encouraging suppliers to use non-plastic wrapping materials. Northern Benchtops have shown that it is possible to create a successful business without harming the environment.*



- Northern Benchtops Ltd –winner of the ACC Workplace Safety Award. Mitre 10 MEGA Whangarei, Action Fencing NZ Ltd and Clements Contractors Ltd were finalists.

The judges said of Northern Benchtops Ltd...

*A high level of due diligence has been undertaken by senior leaders and they encourage staff to take a leadership role in H&S within the business. The expertise of the workforce is well utilised in managing Occupational Health and Safety.*

*The business has good practice guides and industry standards, as well as worker expertise are used to assess risks and select controls. They have a programme to address identified hazards over the medium to long term, including a replacement programme for equipment.*

*Eliminating or isolating risks through procurement is evident. Safety education is built around induction and further developed through worker engagement. Whilst not all systematic procedures have been formalised, there was evidence of objectives being set and achieved, as well as worker involvement in this process. They showed several initiatives implemented following advice from last years' awards process.*

*A truly stand-out company with a holistic approach to workplace health, safety and wellbeing which is very well led and implemented.*

- Jessie Rose - winner of the Creative Northland Excellence in Creative Industries Award. Mangawhai Artists Inc and The Butter Factory were named as finalists.

The judges said...

*Jessie Rose art form is unique she has found a niche market for her creative endeavours, artistic programmes and much more. From her hand painted Forever Love caskets to, her unique clothing range and accessories, she is inspiring our children to open their eyes to develop their creative thinking and confidence to be themselves, to be individuals and through art to start seeing the world through different perspectives. There is strategic thinking, business planning, positive branding and multiple streams of income - most of all we see creativity as a practice to build business success and a new paradigm for successful arts and business partnerships.*



- Lavinia (Vini) Hoeft was selected as this year's Ministry of Social Developments' He Poutama Taitamariki (Youth Employee of the Year) Award, recognising young people who have made significant life changes as a result of employment.

The judges said...

*Lavinia (Vini) is a vibrant, ambitious, enthusiastic young lady with a huge future ahead of her. Vini joined the Northland Regional Council (NRC) in 2015 as part of the Ministry for Social Development Cadetship Programme. After the 10-month cadetship, Vini's outstanding performance gained her a permanent fulltime position within the NRC Communications Team. Vini is always keen and willing to learn and is an inspiration to her friends and family*

- Extrutech Ltd took out the Northland Inc Innovation Award. Tankful and Kai Ora Honey were finalists.

The judges said...

*Extrutech is a business that produces filaments for the agricultural industry, mainly hothouses and bailing twine. In the past the plastic twines have been impossible to recycle and, mixed with all plant material at the end of the seasons, had to be dumped. Extrutech has developed a new biodegradable twine enabling to repurpose both the plant material and the twine as compost. The applications for this technology are significant, and the increased worldwide market demand for these products will enable this Northland business to grow in a smart and true sustainable way. Their expertise and commercial application through their innovative development process has resulted in a product that will make a positive contribution in the war on plastics.*

*This team did not "get tied up" with the status quo but challenged conventional processes to be able to be recognised as the most innovative business in Northland in 2018.*



- Whangarei Top 10 Holiday Park & Motels was the winner of the People Potential Judges Choice Award.

The judges said...

*The Judges were impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the Whangarei Top 10 team. Not only is it a very well-run business where staff and management actively and vigorously support Northland and encourage visitors to experience the diverse opportunities of our region, the back story shows true commitment and vision.*

*Having been dealt a divesting blow in the Christchurch earthquakes, Nick and Claire, moved to Fox Glacier Top Ten Holiday Park to take up a cleaning contract. Within a short time they were managing the Park and winning awards. The opportunity to purchase the Whangarei Top Ten presented itself and the fact that they had no money didn't stop Nick and Claire from negotiating a purchase deal with the owners. Convincing the vendors that they were the right people to take the business forward and that they should provide them with vendor finance was the start of a wonderful adventure and a very impressive business.*

- Uber Group Ltd was voted winner of the More FM Customer Choice Service Provider Award and The Butter Factory was the winner of the More FM Customer Choice Retail Provider.

This is what one client had to say about Uber Group Ltd

*Great service. We live in a remote area and consider ourselves so lucky to have our internet and phone via Uber. Generous packages, great prices, outstanding service - every question is handled with patience and professionalism.*

And a The Butter Factory customer had this to say...

*The Butter Factory is the best place in town for a night out, with friendly staff that go the extra mile, they have a variety of events all the time and the food is top notch. I just love it there- the owners definitely deserve to win!! They put so much effort into bringing Whangarei the best entertainment.*

The Northern Advocate Business Hall of Fame inductee this year was Stan Semenoff in recognition of his contribution to Northland business.

**For more information, please contact:**

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