

CELEBRATING OUR AWARD

WINNERS

INTERVIEWS: OUR WINNERS, AND OUR MAJOR AND PREMIUM SPONSORS







THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE

AWARDS GALA

By Miranda Packer
Photographs by Adam Wright

The 2016 Awards Gala was all about professionalism and polish. Every element was carefully thought out, ensuring the overall guest experience was nothing short of spectacular.

Held on Friday 26th August at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre and attended by almost 450 guests, the Gala was the culmination of one of the Chamber's biggest ever annual Business Awards programs.

We built the entire evening around our theme of 'Synergise', making sure every decision we made about the format of the evening had a place and a purpose.

We focused on sourcing local suppliers for our food, wine, beer, MCs, photography, graphic design, event management, trophies, printing, video production, and our incredible entertainment.

Guests were entertained with a unique one time performance by bespoke band, the Shoalhaven Sounds, which was fronted by vocalists Liam Maihi and Genevieve Chadwick.

Business Awards were presented in 18 categories, as well as the coveted Business of the Year, which was awarded to not-for-profit community organisation, CareSouth.






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HopDog BeerWorks
Shoalhaven Shuttle
The Hopper Society

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE
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Hotondo South Coast
Simmark
Workforce XS

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South Coast Nannies
Specsavers Nowra
Stella May boutique
Waterways Swim School

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Integrity Real Estate
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Nowchem
Quest Nowra
Repower Shoalhaven
Shoalhaven Shuttle
Southern Cross Community Housing
The Flagstaff Group
Waterways Swim School

EXCELLENCE IN EXPORT
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Ocean & Earth

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION
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Repower Shoalhaven
Southern Cross Community Housing

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CareSouth
Repower Shoalhaven
Southern Cross Community Housing
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Nowchem

EXCELLENCE IN INCLUSION
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CareSouth
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Quest Nowra
Southern Cross Community Housing
The Flagstaff Group

EXCELLENCE IN PRODUCTION
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G.J. Gardner Homes Shoalhaven
Hanlon Windows

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Sponsored by Hotondo South Coast
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Quest Nowra
This Old House Studio

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Hotondo South Coast
Kohli's Indian Restaurant
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Waterways Swim School

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Integrity Real Estate
Nowchem
Specsavers Nowra
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Peter Russell

WINNER

INTERVIEWS



EXCELLENCE IN

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

WINNER: HOPDOG BEERWORKS
INTERVIEW WITH: TESS THOMAS





> Winning has helped us become more visible in both the business and local community







Why did you enter the Business Awards?
We entered as an opportunity to become involved with the business community. We had not been part of the Business Chamber and were not sure how to become involved, so we thought involvement through event sponsorship and entering the Awards was a great place to start.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
I found the reflection of business was the most enjoyable part. It allowed Tim & I the opportunity to assess individual areas of our business that we had been undecided about and make clearer decisions on how details were communicated and assessed within our business. We also reflected on what we do well, which was nice, as we tend to reflect on negative things that need work rather than giving ourselves a pat on the back for what is already working well.

The judges made reference to your social media savviness, tell me about some of the more unique social media activity you've done?
Social media is an integral part of our marketing strategy. We have our Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts linked, which then feed to our website. We have hashtags such as #greencapontap and #popthegreencap in reference to us using only the green bottle caps. Tim aims to post 4-6 times per week about all manner of things happening in the brewery and when we make deliveries to our suppliers,giving not only HopDog, but also our wholesale clients social media coverage and market reach. We have dropped 6 packs of beer off to bottle shops and taken an obscure picture within the store, posted the pic on social media and given the 6 pack away to the first follower to get into the store and claim their prize.

Your beer has received industry accolades, have you entered any other Awards programs?
We have entered a few other awards, but find our beers don't fit into traditional brewing style guidelines. We have won 3 bronze medals for our beers, but find our biggest accolades come from our inclusion in the James Halliday's Hal *Guide*, SMH *Good Food Guide & Good Beer Guide* and several inclusions in this years' *Great Australian Beer Guide*. Our industry is very young and has gone through a rapid change in the last 3 years, we have secured ourselves in the "extreme" beer lovers beer title and love spreading the word of the beer.

Have you made any changes in your business as a result of entering the Awards?
There have been a few changes, I always try to set high standards and have found that becoming a finalist and then a category winner has set those standards higher. During the interview stage we identified areas that we felt we lacked to achieve a well rounded tourism business. Those areas are now front and for most in our planning for the next few months/years. Most importantly we have worked on our "visibility" in the local area and have begun to plan a beer festival, and sponsor and participate in local events.

What did it feel like to win?
Pretty good, who doesn't like a pat on the back from their peers? We were shocked, then excited and have enjoyed the process in its entirety. I think our involvement with making the beer for the event helped us enjoy the win. Not only did we receive an award on the night but we were able to share our product with the community. It was a great feeling.

What has winning done for you personally?
It has been a huge confidence boost. We are not conventional business owners, you can tell through many aspects of our business. It is nice to be true to ourselves and our product and still win an award. It has also given us the confidence to proceed with ideas that we had been milling over but not had the confidence to continue with, so stay tuned!

What has winning done for your business?
Winning has helped us become more visible in the business and local communities. Our plan for the next 12 months is to leverage this visibility.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
We will absolutely enter in the future. We reflect regularly on our financials with our accountant, so why not on our business. Future entry in the Awards will only allow us to consider what we are doing well and what needs our attention, and what we have completely dropped the ball with. Running HopDog has been an amazing journey and reflection has become the most important part of the process. With the criteria changing each year, we will be able to find new ways to improve upon and creatively change our business outlook.

Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality Award sponsored by
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EXCELLENCE IN

PROFESSIONAL & COMMERCIAL



WINNER: INTEGRITY REAL ESTATE
INTERVIEW WITH: PETER RUSSELL

integrity® real estate



> Winning the category we did was very surprising and a great honour as the competition was outstanding

Why do you enter the Business Awards?
Recognition for staff and to remind the public who we are and what we do.

Who else from your business did you involve in the application process?
Everyone, even some trusted members of the public for their thoughts on the business

The judges acknowledged your continued involvement in the Shoalhaven community, why do you think it's important to to get involved and support our community?
A business that doesn't support and be involved in the community (excluding government organisations) won't be in business long.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of going through the process of entering?
Not as yet, but we are always reviewing our business for better ways to do everything.

Excellence in Professional & Commercial Award sponsored by

spba | Shoalhaven Professional Business Association

What did you enjoy most about the process?
Reviewing business and getting staff feedback on the business. It helps with goal setting.

Past wins at the Awards have helped you grow your business, what advice do you have for this year's winners to capitalise on their win for growth?
Tell everyone (in a tactful way) of your win. Websites, marketing materials, social media. Display your awards.

What has winning done for your business?
Winning the category we did was very surprising and a great honour as the competition was outstanding. We have had several solicitors and accountants make comment on our win.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
DO IT. If you're afraid of little competition in the business awards, what do you think about your competition??? Have a go. One message I think the business chamber needs to really get out there is that you DON'T have to be a member to enter.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
We will see.

EXCELLENCE IN

SUSTAINABILITY

WINNER: NOWCHEM
INTERVIEW WITH: JOHN LAMONT



> Winning helps us benchmark our business and shows our staff that the great work they are doing is contributing to our sustainability success



> Winning awards allows us to show our staff that the wider community recognises the great work they do to improve our business



Why did you enter the Business Awards?
To review and reflect on our strategic sustainability plan to see what we have achieved and where we plan to go from here.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
Reviewing and seeing what goals we have achieved and to start thinking about how we can further improve. Getting feedback from the judges was also very good, it is important as part of the assessment process.

Did you involve anyone else from your business in the application process?
We involved a variety of staff to collect and gather data and information to show how we have reached our sustainability goals ranging from production, maintenance and administration staff. The application was written by three people. This helped when it came to interview time as Eliza was able to do the interview in my absence.

Can you tell us more about your Green Lean initiative?
Over the past three years Nowchem has completed phase 1 of our sustainability capital investment and over the past and next 12 months we are focusing on investing in our people running a Lean program on site. Our goal over the next 12-24 months is to start phase 2 of our sustainability capital investment including:
- Purchasing another 150 solar panels
- Change our office lighting to energy efficient lighting
- Training for Management and senior staff in Sustainability
- Cross functional work teams involving over 20 people across the site on waste reduction for sustainability
- Staff awards for improvements which help the environment - Purchase a more efficient air-conditioning unit for the Pharmaceutical area
- Change all motors to variable speed drives to save electricity. While our capital investment in this area is vital to our sustainability success, it is equally important to ensure we have staff engagement. Without their drive behind these goals, we will not fully succeed.

Excellence in Sustainability Award sponsored by



Have you made any changes in your business as a result of going through the process of entering/being interviewed by Awards judges?
Increasing the information on our positive impact on the community through our foundation. The Judges were very interested in how we support those less fortunate in our community.

You've been inducted into the Hall of Fame for this award, and you're also in the Employer of Choice Hall of Fame. And you've had wins at the Illawarra and state Awards. What does such continued Award success mean for your employees and the Nowchem culture?
Winning these awards allow us to show our staff that the wider community recognises the great work they do to improve our business. It reinforces our positive culture to show that our business is continually striving to improve. It also shows the sustainability focus needs to keep improving every year, and the Awards reflect the momentum and commitment of the organisation to sustainability

What has winning meant for your business generally?
It helps us benchmark our business and shows our staff that the hard and great work they are doing on site is contributing to our sustainability success. We also share this with our industry associations and networks to promote the business within our chemical industry peers.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
They should enter as it is a valuable process that allows your business to review where it was, what it has achieved and where you want to go from here. The Awards also help create the history record of the business, and see how far you come along each year or second year that you enter. It also allows you to network, learn from others and receive recognition in the business community.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
As we are now in the Hall of Fame for this category we will see what other categories we can enter. We will however continue to enter other categories such as Excellence in Production or Excellence in Business.

EXCELLENCE IN

PRODUCTION

WINNER: G.J. GARDNER HOMES SHOALHAVEN
INTERVIEW WITH: KIRSTY FAY

G.J. Gardner. HOMES





> Winning is about being part of a solid business community and being able to celebrate all the businesses in that community



> Community is so important to us and these Awards are the pinnacle in the Shoalhaven region, to be recognised among your peers is very rewarding



Why did you enter the Business Awards?
It is a great way to reflect on your past twelve months in business, it is almost like writing a business plan again. The Awards allow you to remove yourself from the day to day running of the business and take a helicopter approach to what has been happening.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
We really enjoy the interview process. It is great to discuss independently what you have achieved as well as discuss what your challenges have been. The Awards night is a great networking event and by this time all the hard work has been done! We love celebrating all the business success in the Shoalhaven – businesses of all different shapes and sizes coming together to celebrate our region.

Did you involve anyone else from your business in the application process?
No, the directors go through the entire process. We are experiencing solid growth and have increased our staff levels to facilitate this growth. We will certainly be aiming in future to include our staff in the written entry process as this is extremely valuable and can result in a different but relevant perspective.

The judges made reference to G.J. Gardner corporate rolling out programs to its entire franchise network that your Shoalhaven franchise has developed. How does it feel to know that you're setting the benchmark for how things should be done across your franchise network?
We are constantly pushing the boundaries at GJ Gardner Shoalhaven and Wollongong and are always looking for a better way to do things. Complacency is our enemy. It is great that we can roll a number of these initiatives out across GJ NSW as well as across the entire country. We take great pride in what we do and take a holistic approach to business. Once you know what your objectives are, you can create solid systems and process to facilitate this. GJ Gardner provides a good platform for us to share these initiatives and ideas.

Excellence in Production Award sponsored by



Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of going through the process of entering /being interviewed by Awards judges?
No, as I think it is difficult to make changes when you are not provided feedback from your judges – this is both for the written and verbal entry. I think each business should receive their scores afterwards as well as comments from the judges (maybe a feedback sheet that is sent to each entry) so that we can make improvements to our business and submissions going forward.

What did it feel like to win?
It is great to be rewarded for your hard work but this is not what it is about for us. It is about being part of a solid business community and being able to celebrate all the businesses in that community. It is also about rewarding our staff, it is about our team and what they have achieved.

Since winning, have you received any media coverage?
Not this year but we have received loads in the past. The Facebook campaign run by the Shoalhaven Business Chamber this year was fantastic. A great way to recognise both sponsors and finalists.

What has winning done for you personally?
You are so busy running the day to day of your business that you rarely get to celebrate all the things that you have done well. This is a good reassurance that hard work pays off. Business is not about awards, but awards are nice icing on the cake.

What has winning done for your business?
It is great to be recognised in your community for running a successful business. The Shoalhaven business community is very tight knit and business to business networking is an important part of this. Community is so important to us and these awards are the pinnacle in the Shoalhaven region, to be recognised amongst your peers is very rewarding. We also like that these awards are not industry specific, they are across business as a whole. I think the community see great value in the fact that not only can we build a great home, we can also run a good business.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Give it a go. Reflect, because you will be surprised at what you have achieved in your business. Sometimes all it takes is time to sit back and think about it from another perspective

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
Probably not for 2017 as we have entered a couple of times now. We will certainly be entering again in the future.

OUTSTANDING

NEW BUSINESS

WINNER: QUEST NOWRA
INTERVIEW WITH: JAMES BLANCHETT

QUEST
NOWRA





> None of this would have been possible without the dedication and tenacity of the Quest Nowra team



> We held a brainstorming session to gather ideas about how we could best respond to each question within our category



Why did you enter the Business Awards?
Having been a judge for the Awards in 2015 I understood what a great opportunity the Business Awards is to reflect on the way you've operated your business during the past year. It's a really interesting and useful process to see how well your business stacks up in each of the category questions and helps you to identifying opportunities for further improvements in the coming year. It's also a fantastic way of recognising the work of your team.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
I really enjoyed the interview process with the judging panel. Having independent, business-minded individuals critically and objectively evaluating your business might seem daunting, but they asked lots of questions that prompted new ideas and gave us great food for thought about other ways we can improve what we do.

Did you involve anyone else from your business in the application process?
Absolutely, our application was a true team effort. We held a brainstorming session to gather ideas about how we could best respond to each question within our category. Not only is this a great development opportunity for staff, but it's a great way for them to feel involved and empowered within the business. They also came up with some great suggestions that I may have missed if I'd been working on the application alone.

The judges noted that Quest Nowra ranks highly in terms of performance across the entire Quest franchise network, yet you have only just celebrated your first year in business. What do you attribute such a standout performance to?
Quest Apartment Hotels operate under four core values –ongoing relationships, understanding, alignment and personal best. We've taken these values very much to heart, spending a great deal of time getting to know our partners in local businesses and others within the community to help us form a strong understanding of the accommodation requirements of people who might travel to see them. The next step is aligning our service to fulfil these needs. It's a logical progression and a really solid base on which to build a successful business. Of course, none of that would have been possible without the dedication and tenacity of the Quest Nowra team.

Outstanding New Business Award sponsored by

Hotondo Homes A great find
AUSTRALIA'S LEADING NETWORK OF PROFESSIONAL BUILDERS

You and your team are highly involved in and actively supportive of the community, why is this important to you?
We are a business with a social conscience, not just because it's the right thing to do but because my team and their friends and family all live within this community.Supporting local organisations and fundraising efforts is a really nice way to engage with my team and connect our business with what's important to them in their personal lives. Additionally, our business very much relies on the success of other businesses around us. If we can identify a way to support them, not only in their businesses which employ countless local residents, but in their own philanthropic endeavours, then this all returns a great benefit back to both the community and to our business.

What did it feel like to win?
While it was a great personal achievement for me, it was a really fantastic feeling to be able to share the honour with our team. I've been telling them since day one that they provide incredible customer service and that their dedication to their jobs is second to none so it was a huge thrill to be able to show them that their efforts are more widely recognised by others that we respect in the local business community.

What has winning done for your business?
It's definitely a great morale boost for the whole team and we've been really humbled to receive congratulations from so many successful local businesses in the Shoalhaven. It has also given us extra motivation to identify more opportunities for improvement so we can measure up to the high expectations for our business.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Start working on your application early and be sure to involve your team. Brainstorm your ideas and answers together – you are probably doing more than you think. It's also a great idea to locate a copy of this year's category questions now and create a strategy for what you would like to achieve in each area and how you'll put that into action during the coming year.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
Yes. Quite simply it's fantastic recognition for all the hard work that you and your team put in during the year. It's also a great way to make your business more visible to your customers and will help you to establish new business connections and develop professional relationships in the local area.

OUTSTANDING

HOME BASED BUSINESS

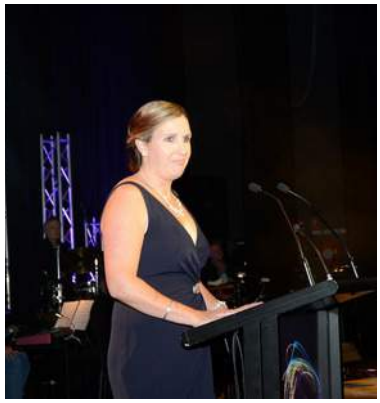
WINNER: LILY EVER AFTER
INTERVIEW WITH: REBECCA WOODHOUSE





> Every consult I go to now, my win is mostly spoken about first and I am congratulated on it before we get down to business







Why did you enter the Business Awards?
I entered the awards I think as a test to myself on whether I was good enough to win or not . a test on whether my little business, that I started on my kitchen bench was going well enough to win such a amazing award.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
The whole process was a little daunting and scary I must admit. As proud as I was, I was petrified of the interview and what the judges were going to think of me and my business, and if I was good enough or not. I ended up laughing through the whole interview, but it was the total unknown and what was going to be asked which was the teeth clencher.

The media exposure leading up to the Awards was amazing and I've got to say I kind of loved the attention.

Did you involve anyone else from your business in the application process?
My fiancé helped me with my application and was one of the main ones who encouraged me to go into it. I think he really pushed me to do it because he wanted to see me get back some reward for all the hard work that I put into my business.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of going through the process of entering /being interviewed by Awards judges?
No, not any changes as of yet, but one of my judges did give some good financial advice which I have very much taken on board and am starting to use it.

The judges stated that your passion for your business is evident in everything you do – where does your passion come from?
I love my job, as much as it stresses me out, and my anxiety levels are through the roof, I love the final outcome. When a bride opens her box of flowers on her wedding day or walks into her reception room and gasps and bursts into tears, that's my reward. That is the the only thing that matters, one of the most important days of a woman's life is her wedding day and I play a huge part in that. My passion lies in making that come true through the expression of flowers.

What did it feel like to win?
It was the most terrifying experience of my life, I was so overwhelmed! I normally am the most confident outspoken person in the room, however as soon as I hit the podium, I was lost for words. It was the most overwhelmingly satisfying moment, it felt like 'oh wow, all my blood, sweat and tears have finally paid off, I am finally getting recognition for my dedication to my work'. Amazing, terrifying, satisfying all in one!

What has winning done for you personally?
A sense of accomplishment, self satisfaction, I work hard and long hours, so it kind of feels that it has all been worthwhile.

What has winning done for you professionally/for your business?
People seem to be more drawn to me now, because of winning the award, and they think it is an amazing achievement. Every consult I go to now, it is mostly spoken about first and I am congratulated on it before we get down to business. I think people before thought I was just a housewife doing this as a hobby, but I think it's actually made people realise I am an established and well managed business

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Do it, it is so much fun and an amazing thrilling process. Even just getting through to the finals is a great achievement.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter in 2017?
Yes, I will probably enter next year, I may even splurge next year and go into a few different categories.

Outstanding Home Based Business Award
sponsored by

BUSINESS CENTRE NOWRA

EXCELLENCE IN

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

WINNER: HOTONDO SOUTH COAST
INTERVIEW WITH: ADAM STURT





> Throughout the process of entering, you send a powerful message to your inner self about who you are and who you believe you can be







Hotondo Homes
AUSTRALIA'S LEADING NETWORK OF PROFESSIONAL BUILDERS
A great find

Why did you enter the Business Awards?
Whilst the Business Awards recognises the current achievements of our business it also opens up the possibility of many more in the future. Entering the Business Awards gave us the opportunity to recognise the hard work and achievements of all employees at Hotondo South Coast. Obviously, winning breeds confidence. But confidence begins with faith, self-determination and dedication to success. The minute you put yourself into the race you elevate your state of mind. It's an opportunity to face your personal doubt about how you stack up among your peers. Throughout the process of entering, you send a powerful message to your inner self about who you are and who you believe you can be.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of going through the process of entering?
With the growth of Hotondo South Coast I have been able to renovate the existing office building. The building has had a major makeover throughout the office. The team has also grown due to the company's success. We have achieved strong relationships with our clients, suppliers and contractors and built a solid reputation.

The judges noted your philosophy of 'presence in the community ahead of dollars in the door' - can you tell us more about this?
We love supporting our local community, the community is a sense of family. I love my community because the people you meet here become your family. Giving back to the community is valuable in itself, but helping others also offers many benefits. It's eye-opening to realise that doing even small things can have a big impact on others. From a young age I had always had a dream to own my own successful building company. Now I am 32 years old and I own two very successful building companies. We've been involved in a lot of different community projects over the past year and it's something we pride ourselves on. We're always willing to put our hands up and jump on board with something new and we love to see how our support has helped others. To be in a position where we can help the local community and help it grow is a great privilege and it's something we're really committed to. It's great to be recognised for our community involvement, it's something we're very proud of.

What has winning done for you professionally/for your employees?
Winning is an amazing feeling that will have you walking on air. And you'll feel great about acknowledging those who worked with you. A nomination feels great too! And either one tells your clients friends, family and potential clients that you're capable of bringing something "special" to the table. Succeeding in business requires a team effort and picking up an award gives recognition to my team's contribution to the business's success.
Having my business judged and endorsed by an independent panel of respected business leaders gives my company increased creditability when pitching to new customers. Receiving an award acknowledges our excellence in this category, and provides a distinct competitive advantage over rivals.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Be human. Include something humorous. Explain some of your mistakes, and what you learned from them. What you would have done differently. Talk about your biggest wins. Invite relevant members of your team to help you with the submission. Writing the piece actually makes you all look back collectively at what you've achieved, where you are going, and think about what you want to do. This is a good process in itself, irrespective whether you win or not. Awards should be fun. Make the submission sing, and enjoy the night. You never know, you might just walk away with a gong. And if not, no worries, come back next year, or choose another one.

Excellence in Social Responsibility Award
sponsored by

Shoalhaven City Council

EXCELLENCE IN

INCLUSION

&

EXCELLENCE IN

INNOVATION





> Winning has really boosted awareness around Community Housing providers and the amazing work we do within the community

WINNER: SOUTHERN CROSS COMMUNITY HOUSING
INTERVIEW WITH: PENNI WILDI

Why did you enter the Business Awards?
We entered to increase awareness around Community Housing and the people and communities it supports. And also to receive recognition for the amazing hard work and effort that goes into our projects and our organisation as a whole.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
The interview process. When the judges arrived, I knew their knowledge of community housing providers was very limited and it was a great feeling to explain what we did, who we look after, what we do in the community, and see them visibly impressed with our work and achievements. They also had family members, maybe elderly or with a disability who would benefit from the projects and events we organise for our tenants and community members.

Did you involve anyone else from your business in the application process?
Yes, we ended up having four separate interviews, so I asked two of my colleagues who work in other areas of the business to participate in the interviews with me. They have both been with the organisation longer than me and could elaborate on how the organisation has grown in the last ten years. Together, we offered different perspectives to many of the interview questions, which in turn led to a better understanding for the judges on what our organisation accomplishes, and for who.

Your Shark Tank initiative has been so successful that it is being used as a model for similar initiatives in other areas, how does it feel to be leading the way in such a fantastic community project?
It's a fantastic feeling to know you have created an initiative that can replicated in other regional towns that will bring the same relief to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and the services that support them. We feel very proud.

The judges noted that SCCH demonstrates an in-depth understanding of an inclusive society. Can you tell us about some of your inclusive practices?
Let me share with you three of our best programs that consistently address the issue of inclusion for the disadvantaged:

Yard Assist is a volunteer based community group in the Shoalhaven, assisting those who are not coping with lawn mowing & gardening. It is aimed at assisting the elderly and those with a disability. The service is offered due to a high demand, from the elderly in particular, to those who are unable to afford contractors' fees and who feel more secure having volunteers assisting them.

The **Path2Home** phone app is a guide to assist those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and do not know where to go for help. It provides an instant, compact and up to date source of information covering all aspects of being homeless. It lists support agencies, counselling, free showers, toilets, laundry facilities, food banks, free or low cost meals, food parcels or a bed for the night. The app is now in operation throughout the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Cooma, Monaro, Jindabyne, Bombala, Queanbeyan, Yass, Goulburn and Bega regions. And prior to the app, the information supplied to the homeless was only as good as the advocate may be aware, therefore the app has now become a valuable tool to those working in the sector to be able to assist those in need.

In 2015, SCCH was acknowledged and highly commended by the NSW Federation of Housing Associations for our important partnerships with disability enterprises such as Cooma Challenge and Yumaro, which have all seen significant achievements, but none more so than our launch and implementation of '**The Shack**'. SCCH was very excited when we launched "The Shack", a joint initiative in collaboration with a local disability service provider (Essential Disability Employment Services) to help connect lesser privileged youth of the Shoalhaven with a range of skills which will not only empower them to take positive control of their life's direction, but also assist them in their quest to become valued and contributing members of our wonderful community. The youth are aged between 14 years and 24 years old. The young people are taught and engage in a range of activities such as basic carpentry skills, minor furniture repairs and repairing bicycles. They are given the option of choosing their own projects to work on and a space to store them. When the projects are complete, they can keep them for their own use, sell them for extra money or pass them on as a gift.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of entering the Awards?
Just making sure we document and report on results and good news stories from our projects and innovations, so we can easily share through real life experiences what a difference our work in the community is making.

What did it feel like to win?
We were very honoured to be recognised by our peers, it is a huge accomplishment to be chosen from an outstanding line up of businesses and organisations in not only one category but two.

What has winning done for you personally?
For me personally, I was super excited on the night particularly for the Innovation Award which celebrated the success of The Shoalhaven Shark Tank. I was proud of what our innovation had achieved and also so proud of the philanthropic businesses that had made it possible. My confidence in my ability to make an on the ground difference was certainly lifted to a new level. The Inclusion Award was very special as it reflected exactly what our projects and innovations stand for, including those who we feel are excluded within the community is of utmost importance and it is a huge team effort.

What has winning done for your business?
It has really boosted awareness around Community Housing providers and the amazing work we do within the community.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Do it!

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
Yes, absolutely, the awards have really proved that social responsibility is a huge part of the criteria and next year we will have some more wonderful projects to showcase to the Shoalhaven community and this is the perfect platform to do so.

Excellence in Inclusion Award sponsored by

hansa SAILING SYSTEMS

Excellence in Innovation Award sponsored by

QUEST NOWRA

EXCELLENCE IN

SMALL BUSINESS

WINNER: SIMMARK
INTERVIEW WITH: MARK HORSFALL

SIMMARK
ELECTRICAL • AIR CONDITIONING
BATTERIES • SECURITY • SOLAR
COMMUNICATIONS • PLUMBING





> Knowing that we have been recognised in this way is a differentiator for our business and that helps in a very competitive space like ours







Why did you enter the Business Awards?
Simmark is proud to be a member of the Shoalhaven business community. The Business Awards seemed like a great way to measure the progress our hard-working team has made when compared to other outstanding businesses in the area.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
We enjoyed the professionalism exhibited by everyone associated with the Business Awards – from the judges, the sponsors and of course the organisers of the outstanding Gala evening. We also thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity for introspection and self evaluation that the process requires (you can always learn new things about your own organisation).

Did you involve anyone else from your business in the application process?
Absolutely. We made the entire team aware of the process, we included input from them in how we responded to questions in our submission, and of course, shared the results with them in our celebration afterwards.

The judges noted your policy of profit sharing with staff and your excellent staff retention, what else do you do to create a workplace where staff truly enjoy coming to work?
We try to create a culture of respect and personal development. We think this creates a more satisfying workplace for everyone. Of course, we also try to have fun whenever we can.

In 2015 Simmark won Excellence in Customer Service, and this year our judges noted your commitment to providing exceptional service to your customers. Can you tell us about some of your service initiatives?
Simmark is all about customer service! We have internal goals for how quickly we can respond to customer requests and we solicit feedback during and after the job through formal questionnaires and also informally through our social media presence. Our motto is we will find a way to get the job done.

Excellence in Small Business Award sponsored by

nabbusiness



What did it feel like to win?
It was a humbling, fantastic experience.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of entering the Awards?
Probably the biggest learning we took away from the process was in the area of community involvement and diversity. While we like to think of ourselves a supportive company, we are looking at some 'Simmark-driven' ways to help make a positive difference in the community in 2017.Importantly we have worked on our "visibility" in the local area and have begun to plan a beer festival, and sponsor and participate in local events.

Since winning, have you received any media coverage?
We have been recognised on the radio by the Shoalhaven Business Chamber which we greatly appreciated. Overall, we have been recognised by various people and organisations through social media as well as traditional media.

What has winning done for your business?
We like to think that participation in the Business Awards is a endorsement of quality that our customers value. Knowing that we have been recognised in this way is a differentiator for our business, and that helps in a very competitive space like ours.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Let your passion for what you do shine through and you will be rewarded!

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
Absolutely. Simmark is very proud to have been a winner on more than one occasion and we don't want to stop now! We don't expect to qualify for the Small Business category in 2017 but we will continue to set our sights high and challenge each other to be the best that we can be.

EXCELLENCE IN

RETAIL & PERSONAL SERVICES

&

EXCELLENCE IN

BUSINESS

WINNER: SPECSAVERS NOWRA
INTERVIEW WITH: LOUISE WINKLER





> Winning the Awards was a great boost for our staff. We received congratulations from other businesses and our customers







Why did you enter the Business Awards?
We entered the Awards as an opportunity to have a good look at our business, to highlight our successes and identify areas of weakness that needed improvement. What did you enjoy most about the process? We enjoyed the interviews and having discussions with judges. It was also enjoyable to note our successes and realising how far we had come.

What did it feel like to win?
Winning felt excellent! It was wonderful to be rewarded for our effort and to share with our staff who are a great asset to our success. It was especially rewarding as it was judged by other outstanding business men and women.

Did you involve anyone else from your business in the application process?
We asked our staff and our spouses to contribute to the written application. They highlighted other areas we performed well in that we saw as day to day procedures. We also had a friend read over the final application questions before submitting to make sure it made sense to a person who is not in the industry.

The judges made reference to the exceptional culture you've created at Specsavers Nowra, can you tell me more about it?
We have an exceptional culture: we empower our staff, we keep them motivated and encourage their career advancement. They want to come to work. They all have a Development Plan in place and we have regular one on one meetings with them. We have an open door policy where everyone has a voice. We lead by example. We also celebrate socially.

Our judges also commented on how you are attracting people to the region with your careers program, how does it feel to know that you are changing lives by attracting people to such a beautiful part of the world?
We are proud of the Shoalhaven and want others to enjoy it too. We knew if we could get staff to the area they would love it. We are accredited with Deakin and UNSW now to take students for their practical placements. We haven't done any particular teaching or hold any certificates as teachers but we support and mentor the students before they go back to uni to finalise their degree. Our retail and dispensing staff are all locals. We like to provide career opportunities to all ages.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of going through the process of entering /being interviewed by Awards judges?
Since the awards, we have joined the Shoalhaven Business Chamber and the Shoalhaven Professional Business Association. We have also discussed areas we would like to offer support to, both financially and by volunteering our time. We wanted to become more involved with the Shoalhaven business community and the community as a whole.

Since winning, have you received any media coverage?
We have had photos posted on Facebook and the South Coast Register. Specsavers included a small article on us in their monthly newsletter.

What has winning done for you personally?
We have more confidence in our position as business people.

What has winning done for you professionally/for your business?
Winning the awards was a great boost for our staff. We received congratulations from other businesses and our customers.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Do it wholeheartedly. Take the time to really think about the questions and your answers. Ask staff and family for their input.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
We plan on entering another year but may challenge ourselves with another category.

Excellence in Retail & Personal Services Award sponsored by

TAFE NSW ILLAWARRA

Excellence in Business Award sponsored by

imb BANK

YOUNG

ENTREPRENEUR

WINNER: ROSS THOMPSON, WORKFORCE XS
INTERVIEW WITH: ROSS THOMPSON





> I believe that [as a result of winning] we have received better local awareness of our business and what we offer



> Entering was not only an opportunity to showcase what our company has to offer – and our success – but also to acknowledge the hard work of my team



Why did/do you enter the Business Awards?
I feel that it is important to acknowledge local businesses and to celebrate the achievements of my team. Entering the Award was not only an opportunity to showcase what our company has to offer and our success but also to acknowledge the hard work of my team. I value the efforts of my team and wanted to celebrate that with them.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
Whilst I have always set goals both personally and professionally, it was great to review these in more detail and to put them in writing. I also enjoyed the judging process where I was able to meet people from a variety of industries and share my experiences and goals.

Who else from your business did you involve in the application process?
The entry process was a collective effort where I involved all of the team. The application was prepared with information collected from my recruitment team as well as my own experiences. We also sought feedback from our clients and labour hire employees and it was great to see what they had to say about us.

At the winners and sponsors lunch, you noted that you don't tend to think of yourself as an entrepreneur. From the perspective of someone who is not only an entrepreneur, but a winning one, how would you describe an entrepreneur?
Prior to winning this Award I had not really thought of myself as an entrepreneur but rather a local business owner with a passion and drive to succeed. The definition of an entrepreneur is 'a person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit'. On reflection, this definition describes my journey well...I started as a recruitment consultant and then the general manager of a recruitment agency and after two years in the industry decided that I wanted more. This lead me to explore options of opening my own business and with limited funds in the bank and big ideas I opened Workforce Extensions in Nowra in February 2014. My goal was to own a business that was not only profitable but that also offered local employment opportunities within our community. I am a firm believer in supporting our local community and try to use local employees and suppliers wherever possible.

Young Entrepreneur Award sponsored by

The judges noted your approach to mentoring your team, can you tell us why providing mentoring is so important in nurturing your people?
The success of the business relies on having the right team and ensuring that they have all the necessary tools to succeed. I feel that it is important to take a proactive approach towards individual growth within my team and encourage them. As the managing director I feel that my role is to support the team and encourage them to achieve.

Have you made any changes in your business as a result of going through the process of entering/being interviewed by Awards judges?
I am always looking for ways to improve the business and our processes, and have been working with my team to streamline our processes. Being a finalist in four categories has provided me with the motivation to win in other categories next year. I have set myself a goal and will be looking at ways to increase our opportunity of winning in the future.

What has winning done for you personally?
I felt extremely honoured to be recognised for my efforts and have enjoyed the experience on a personal level. It is a great confidence booster and I have received congratulations from many friends and colleagues since winning the Award.

What has winning done for your business?
On a professional level I believe that we have received better local awareness of our business and what we offer. It has been a positive boost to my team and being able to share the excitement with my team on the night was a highlight for me.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
The Awards are a great way to honour and showcase local businesses and I would encourage other local business owners to enter. It is also a great team event and I enjoyed sharing it with my team. I encourage others to follow their dreams, I feel that I am a great example of an average working class person who has the drive and ambition to succeed despite the many obstacles along the way.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
I will be entering again in 2017 as I feel that this is a great local event and it has been a positive experience for my business. I have already set a goal for our team to win in a different category next year.

EXCELLENCE IN

EXPORT

WINNER: CHERUB RUBS

&

YOUNG BUSINESS

EXECUTIVE

WINNER: ELIZA DE PAOLI,
NOWCHEM/CHERUB RUBS
INTERVIEW WITH: ELIZA DE PAOLI





> Cherub Rubs' exporting success is attributed to the passion and belief all directors, staff and distributors have in our products







Why did/do you enter the Business Awards?
Cherub Rubs – It enables us to review what we have achieved over the last 24 months and gives us motivation to improve further.
Me – My boss nominated me.

What did you enjoy most about the process?
Cherub Rubs – Reviewing the business and having the business be judged on its achievements by people external to the business.
Me – The opportunity to review processes with my boss, reflecting on where I have come from and what I still have to accomplish. I also enjoyed having the judges assess my achievements.

Your manager, John Lamont, is clearly an advocate for you and for the development of young leaders, how important is the support of your manager in growing your leadership skills?
Me – The support of John Lamont and the mentoring he provides has helped me develop into a leader within our organisation. The encouragement to strive and reach my career, educational and personal goals has helped me continual improve my skills and knowledge to develop into a leader.

The judges referred to Cherub Rubs as an exporting success story, what do you attribute its exporting success to?
Cherub Rubs' exporting success is attributed to the passion and belief all directors, staff and distributors have in our products. We provide products that are certified by one of the strictest certifying bodies in Australia and take the time to continually educate our distributors and target markets on the different certifications and what they mean. They get extensive information on what our products are and how and why they work. We also ensure we have a consistent marketing message across all countries, emphasising Australian made and certified organic.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of going through the process of entering /being interviewed by Awards judges?
Cherub Rubs – I have set new targets and goals to reach.

What has winning done for you personally?
Besides reconfirming my fear of public speaking it has allowed me to further network, set bigger goals and the provided the opportunity to mentor others, both in our business and in the business community. This will all help me further develop as a person and leader.

What has winning done for you professionally/for your business?
Cherub Rubs – It's a great marketing tool to show our export markets that we are a respected, high quality business, and are continually striving to improve.
Me – Provided a chance to formally review what I have accomplished and set further goals for what I want to achieve over the next 5 years. It also improved my confidence to help mentor others.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
I recommend that all business consider entering the Awards because it is a good chance to reflect on what you have achieved and celebrate those achievements. It is also a great opportunity to network with the wider business community.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future? Why/why not?
Yes, it is a great reflective process that promotes your business.

Excellence in Export Award sponsored by

GEM OF THE WEST
MANILDRA GROUP
100% Australian Owned

Young Business Executive Award sponsored by

macey
INSURANCE BROKERS

BUSINESS

LEADER

GRANT GLEESON
INTERVIEW WITH: GRANT GLEESON





> We sometimes forget when we are busy in the doing, that the contribution we make is being noticed



> It is great to know the firm and members of the Shoalhaven business community wanted my contribution to be recognised in the wider business community



You were nominated by RMB Lawyers, how did it feel to know that they felt strongly about gaining recognition for the incredible work you do for the Shoalhaven community?

It was a really pleasant surprise. And unexpected as there was no obligation on RMB to nominate me. It is great to know that the firm and other members of the Shoalhaven business community wanted my contribution to be recognised in the wider business community. We sometimes forget when we are busy in the doing that the contribution we make is being noticed. I didn't actually realise how much that contribution was valued until after the award. So it has been great all round.

On the topic of your work with the community, what drives you to give back so much and support your community?

It is easy to give back when the community here in the Shoalhaven is so accepting. It may surprise some but here in the Shoalhaven we have a wonderful spirit of support for enterprise. We may have over 40 villages in the City but most of us relate to the concept of the Shoalhaven. The trick is to let it be known that you want to be part of the scene and the rest sort of looks after itself. Participating then creates its own feedback loop. You link with people who want to support you and that breeds new ideas which can then take on a life of their own. That is how SPBA began. When I moved here 30 years ago someone said of the community that people here may not draw new-comers in but if you put your hand up it will rarely be rejected. That has been my experience. In regional towns the reality is that the only ones who will make the town work are its people. If no-one puts their hand up we don't have a city. Thankfully, many of us do put our hands up.

Earlier this year you made the shift from business to government, has that had any impact on your ability to continue giving so much to the community?

Yes it has had an impact. I have now have a public not private position. I have to be conscious that people may take my personal position on a range of matters to reflect the position of the Government. So understandably my ability to have a public profile is limited. I used to enjoy being 'cheeky' in my public statements to try and emphasise a point but that is now certainly curtailed. But we all give back to the community in many ways so I will continue to contribute as and when I can behind the scenes. I continue to work as part of the SPBA as it develops new initiatives. I continue to live in town so I will still have an opinion. I love the Shoalhaven and want to see it prosper still.

You have been the Chair of Judges for the Awards for a number of years, how did it feel to be on the other side of the judging process?

Stressful. I always viewed my role as Chairman of Judges as ensuring the integrity of the Awards. So I knew that while the process was rigorous I could have confidence in the assessment process. But that doesn't mean you don't get anxious. It is a big award and the other candidates were each entitled in their own right to expect they could win. I expect that like me, they put their best foot forward too. Knowing about the process helped me to remember to focus my preparation on the aspects that were important in the set questions. I think keeping anxiety in a box was key to allowing me to tell my story to the judges in that moment. The rest was up to others.

You were one of only two winners for 2016 who wasn't self-nominated. What would you say to people in the community who would like to nominate someone else/another business in 2017?

Go for it. I don't think that it will detract from the awards. Your peers are often best placed to know the value of the contribution made by a person or business to the life of the Shoalhaven business community. There is also great support offered by the Chamber to help get the nomination material together so it is not a daunting process. And it is a wonderful tribute to the candidate. I can't tell you how much the support of the business community means to me. There have been many occasions over the years when I have found myself in a conversation when the topic of 'why didn't so and so feature in the awards' was raised. I am sure you have had more than one of those discussions. I think that if we have more nominations of other businesses then we will help to grow a new dimension for the awards. Sometimes you only have to give someone a nudge – as I say above, once nominated I knew it was up to me to put my best foot forward. I didn't want to let down those who supported my nomination by not giving it my best shot. Being nominated by a peer will give great confidence to a business to see it through.

You founded SPBA, what do you think it has done for professionals in the Shoalhaven?

I was actually only one of a group of about 6 professional businesses that got SPBA off the ground. But I was lucky enough to be its inaugural Chairman. From the outset we dared to be different. As a result SPBA has quickly become the peak organisation to speak for our growing professional business sector. It is a collegiate organisation. We aim to help business owners and young professional find their place in the sun in the Shoalhaven. The SPBA is still, as far as I am aware, a unique body in NSW because we don't live in our professional silos

(though we are found at Raj and Sophie's place from time to time). What we have found in SPBA is that by reaching across the professions in the Shoalhaven we strengthen the ties that bind and help these businesses to thrive right here in the Shoalhaven. When they thrive, they employ more Shoalhaven people and help to make the Shoalhaven a destination for other enterprising individuals. Our city is all the richer for the contribution of its professional business sector. Imagine what it would be like if we had to go out of town for those services?

Since winning, have you received any media coverage?

Not so much media coverage but letters of support. Letters are becoming an old fashion thing but when you want to make a special tribute to someone it seems that you go to the trouble of pen and ink. I can tell you that to receive those messages has been wonderful. Power FM have asked me to be on the judging panel for the Boss of the Year awards, which will be nice. But apart from that it pretty much has been King for a day! But what a wonderful day (and night).

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?

I have always encouraged our businesses to contest this space. Competition is what we face daily in our business activity and those that succeed in that contest thrive. So the same principle applies to the awards. I know how keenly the Business of the Year category is contested among the judges having directly participated in that forum for some 7 years. CareSouth can be rightly proud of its achievement and have the confidence of knowing that the award is the highest honour awarded each year. It is the judgment of your peers in business so it means a lot. But what I do know is that it is by participating in the process that a business understands what the awards are all about. I have watched over the years as businesses have entered in one year and learned from the process becoming successful in later years. So don't just think about doing it in 2017. Make it an objective in the 2017 business plan to submit an application. That process starts with contacting the Chamber today to ask about the process. Let them know you are interested and you will get support. Talk to the category winners. I am sure they will be only too happy to help you along the way.

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Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future? Why/why not?

Great question. I am buggered for Business Leader. Do you have a separate category for Government Offices? We have quite a few Government departments in the City but none of them would see themselves as a business. And then there is the differentiation aspect. Council operates at a local level, OLG and TAFE at a state level and Centrelink/Medicare at a federal level. To give the category heft we need something that reaches across each sphere. And how to judge it? Best at delivery? Best 'employer'? Most significant contribution to the life of the Shoalhaven in the past year? And I suspect the budget for some/all of these agencies won't extend to funding a table at the awards and that means staff members have to pay to attend – so an added disincentive. But I would love to be part of the dialogue to see what can be done. Megan Cleary will surely have some insight into this dimension. So there is the beginning of a conversation. That is how SPBA kicked off out of the Blueprint Shoalhaven initiative. It started with Sue Schofield asking me an intriguing question. I took that question to others and we formed a committee of willing volunteers. That committee still meets.

Business Leader award sponsored by



EMPLOYER OF

CHOICE

EXCELLENCE IN

COMMUNITY SERVICE

&

BUSINESS OF

THE YEAR

WINNER: CARESOUTH
INTERVIEW WITH: DEB TOZER

EVERYDAY

CareSouth





> For us to stand shoulder to shoulder with successful commercial businesses is a really important message to about the value of the community services sector



> We've had professionals offering us their services free of charge; more people knowing about the great work that we do has really opened up doors for us



Why did you enter the Business Awards?
We entered the Awards this year because we know from previous years what a huge positive impact being a finalist and winning these awards can have on our organisation. We have also recently launched some great initiatives, of which we are extremely proud. We think its important to recognise that not for profit businesses face many of the same challenges as commercial businesses. It is a wonderful opportunity to build relationships and gain a greater understanding of what other businesses are achieving across the Shoalhaven including ways we can work together to support our community.

Who else from your business did you involve in the application process?
Our application process was definitely a team effort with our frontline staff, programs, corporate services, human resources, community relations and teams right across the organisation. We involved every department to showcase our best CareSouth stories.

The judges were thoroughly impressed with the workplace culture at CareSouth, and the phenomenal attraction an retention programs you have in place. Can you share one/some of the more unique attraction & retention policies you have in place?
We have worked very hard to develop programs to enrich the experience of our staff and ultimately our clients, it is difficult to pinpoint just one program. This year we launched our Everyday Emerging Leaders program where a group of potential future leaders for the organisation are selected to participate in a program where they are mentored and trained in management techniques to further their careers. We are also in the process of launching our Aboriginal Employment Strategy, which is something that is extremely important not just to our Aboriginal staff, but our whole community. Our innovations program is also a highlight with many of our exciting initiatives born from a staff idea, it is wonderful for staff to see their idea become a reality. We also promote the wellbeing of our staff, we have additional leave entitlements, cultural leave days, walking meetings, flexible workplace arrangements and many more practices that support a positive culture.

What does winning Business of the Year mean to you?
We were absolutely thrilled to win the Business of the Year. It's a great testament to an organisation that has its roots in helping the most vulnerable people in our community, for us to stand shoulder to shoulder with successful commercial businesses is a really important message to the community of the value of the community services sector. We were up against some outstanding local businesses. Living and working in the Shoalhaven we interact with these businesses on a daily basis. Being the first not for profit organisation to win this award is something we are enormously proud of. We feel incredibly privileged and honoured to have won this award.

Have you made any changes you have made in your business as a result of going through the process of entering /being interviewed by Awards judges?
Not changes necessarily however we have expanded our contacts with other organisations and business that has directly benefited our clients.

What did it feel like to win three Awards?
Winning the three awards was an overwhelming experience. We just didn't expect that we would take out the three awards against such tough competition. It was such a proud moment for me as CEO to be leading an organisation that is so highly regarded in the Shoalhaven Business Community. I could not wait to share the news with our staff and Board.

Since winning, have you received any media coverage?
We received quite a bit of media coverage following the business awards in the local press, radio and television. It was really a whirlwind few days doing interviews.

What has winning done for you professionally/ for your business?
The media exposure and the event itself has already initiated conversations with other organisations that may eventually lead to partnerships or business opportunities down the track. We've had professionals offering us their services free of charge; more people knowing about the great work that we do has really opened up doors for us. We have received an enormous response to a recent volunteer recruitment in the Shoalhaven.

What advice would you have for businesses thinking about entering the 2017 Awards?
Do it wholeheartedly. Take the time to really think about the questions and your answers. Ask staff and family for their input.

Based on your experience in the 2016 Awards, do you expect to enter again in the future?
We plan on entering another year but may challenge ourselves with another category.





> It was such a proud moment for me as CEO to be leading an organisation that is so highly regarded in the Shoalhaven business community

Employer of Choice award sponsored by

Carter Ferguson
CARING & CLIENT FOCUSED SOLICITORS

Excellence in Community Service (not-for-profit) award sponsored by

Waterways
Swim School
swimming australia

Business of the Year award sponsored by

Shoalhaven City Council








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BUSINESS
AWARDS


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WINNERS'

INTERVIEWS



EVENT

PARTNER



SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL
INTERVIEW WITH: GREG PULLEN

> The Awards strengthen our community and celebrate the strong economic backbone of this amazing area

Shoalhaven City Council went the extra mile with their sponsorship this year. In addition to being our Event Partner and sponsor of the Business of the Year Award, Economic Development Manager Greg Pullen was the driving force behind Council's sponsorship of the Excellence in Social Responsibility Award.

Greg is a firm believer that every business leader has the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of our community through socially responsible behaviour and practices.

ABOUT COUNCIL'S SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

What do you enjoy about the Business Awards?
The Shoalhaven Business Awards provide businesses with an opportunity to articulate their contribution to the local economy and community of the Shoalhaven. Many of our businesses operate in discrete industry sectors or on the world stage. The Awards enable these businesses to promote what they do. However, the best thing about the awards is that they are truly inspirational. Seeing the variety of successful businesses in the Shoalhaven is a proud moment for our community.

Why are the Awards important for the Shoalhaven?
Recognising excellence in business performance across a range of criteria is positive for the confidence in the

economy of the Shoalhaven. Local businesses do some amazing things and providing recognition is important to not only those business leaders but to their employees as well. The Shoalhaven has a growing economy. Demonstrating that the businesses within that economy make a significant contribution to this local area, the wider region and national and international markets is worthy of receiving an award from their peers.

Why should businesses enter the Awards?
Our business community should be proud of their achievements. Entering the awards, whether you win or not, contributes a greater understanding and respect for our hard working and innovative companies. The Awards are bigger than the entrants. It is a process that strengthens our community and celebrates the strong economic backbone of this amazing area. The more entrants – the more inspirational the night. I think that every entrant, and every attendee of the event learns something new about themselves, their business and our strong business community.

CareSouth took out Business of the Year, what was your response when they were announced as the winner?
CareSouth is an exceptional business. CareSouth is in an industry that arguably may not have been traditionally viewed as being business savvy. I think CareSouth stands out as a business leader because they have made the transition from a community 'enterprise' to an extremely successful business without compromising on the quality of their care provided to their clients. They have grown without comprising quality care and this is what makes CareSouth stand out.

Council used to own and run the Awards. As a past organiser, what is the number one tip you can give to businesses thinking of entering the Awards next year?
Take a look at your business, is it doing something well or different? Can this be put down on paper? Be honest, complete the task! You may not be ready this year but the exercise may well prepare you to be better next time around. Relationships in business are all important. If you or your business are doing something well, then share with others, learn from that and this continuous improvement process is what the Shoalhaven Business Awards are here to recognise. Don't be discouraged by others being continually better! Look at your business and strive a little harder.

ABOUT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Council also sponsored the Excellence in Social Responsibility category this year, collaborating with the Chamber to share an important message, what is the driving force behind this Award?
Many businesses or business leaders do go the "extra mile" and involve themselves in their local community. Some may stand for Council or an advocacy group, others may have staff contribute each week to a charity, others regularly offer students work experience and others may have positive employment programs for apprentices or indigenous workers. For those businesses committed to improving their community above and beyond their trading activities, Council wished to have that effort recognised. There is more to business than just turnover, employees and satisfied customers! For those that do think about the social, economic and environmental needs of their community, Council wishes to pay tribute to this outstanding effort.

The judges of the social responsibility category stated "In judging this category, the sheer depth of civic duty and community involvement of the Shoalhaven business sector became readily apparent. This made for a large and exceptional pool of finalists". As the driving force behind this category, how did this make you feel?
Very happy to be part of a community that supports one another and even happier to see this acknowledged. I wasn't surprised that there was such a large pool of finalists. Working with businesses in this area over the last thirty years I have seen time and time again how much business supports community. Or rather how evident it is that our businesses are part of our community. They do not work in isolation. And it is this connection and support of their staff, the youth and the sporting groups and charities that set our business community apart and make them the economic success that they are.

Hotondo South Coast won the Excellence in Social Responsibility award, what can you tell us about their contribution to the Shoalhaven community?
I have known of the quality work of Hotondo for some time but was unaware of their commitment to social responsibility. And this is precisely what makes the Awards so special. To discover other businesses' successes, to celebrate them and to be encouraged by their efforts. Hotondo is a well deserving winner of this category and I look forward to finding out what future entrants and winners of this category do to support the Shoalhaven community.

ABOUT COUNCIL

What's on the horizon for Council?
Like the business community of the Shoalhaven, Council looks forward to the annual Shoalhaven Business Awards. It is great to be part of such a large public acknowledgement and celebration of our business community. We look forward to supporting with the Shoalhaven Business Chamber with the Awards for many years to come.

Thank you to Shoalhaven City Council for being our Event Partner.

MAJOR

SPONSOR



MACEY INSURANCE BROKERS
INTERVIEW WITH: BRENDAN GODDARD

> Recognising young executives and hearing more of their stories allows other young people to have role models and subsequently have aspirations of their own

Macey Insurance Brokers was a major sponsor of the Awards, sponsoring the Young Business Executive award. This award has its roots in recognising the number of bright young leaders we have in the region; our leaders of tomorrow.

Brendan Goddard, Company Director of Maceys, shares his thoughts on the important role our young business executives play in the region, as well as another very important topic – business insurance!

ABOUT MACEYS' SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

Why does Maceys get involved with the Business Awards?
We see the awards as "the" major business to business event in the Shoalhaven. The Awards have become a very professional and sophisticated gala evening that showcases the many great businesses here in our region, many of whom are our clients. The Awards are in line with our company brand positioning which includes giving back to the community that gives so much to us.

All our other Awards recognise business owners, why is it important we recognise the role that young business executives play in our community?
I believe it is important that you don't have to be a young business owner to be recognised as a young business leader. Young business owners often work hard because they have skin in the game however, in my role both as a business owner and also as President of the SBC I am constantly meeting so many inspiring young business executives working in larger organisations. I believe that recognising these young executives and hearing more of their stories allows other young people to have role models and subsequently have aspirations of their own.

ABOUT YOUNG BUSINESS LEADERS

Why is it important to recognise and nurture the young business leaders we have in the Shoalhaven?
Through their mentoring program, SPBA is doing great things in nurturing and fostering young business leaders. Young leaders are our region's future leaders and we need these people to stay in our area and provide valuable input in to the future success of the Shoalhaven. In a world of high paced change it is sometimes the younger people who have the best solutions.

You've been in a leadership role at Maceys since you were quite young, what development do you undertake to help you grow as a leader?
I was 24 when I became a director at Macey and at 32 became the majority shareholder and MD. At times over those years I have felt moments of inexperience as a leader and made it a priority to learn more every day. I placed a huge importance on self development and

training on leadership and attended various leadership courses and public speaking training to improve my skill set. I read books on leadership and have learnt a lot about people, management and leadership over the past five years.

ABOUT MACEY INSURANCE BROKERS

What does an insurance brokerage do?
As an insurance broker we represent our clients in the arrangement and placement of insurance policies for all types of insurable risks. We work on behalf of our clients in the negotiation with insurers to find the most comprehensive policy at a competitive price. Importantly, our role also consists of claims negotiation and management to ensure the most favourable outcomes for our clients. We also provide advice on risk management and risk minimisation for clients.

Why is insurance for business owners so critical?
As our radio ad goes "Having the correct insurance is crucial to the survival of any business, without it you could find yourself out of business". A simple yet profound statement. Statistically 2 out of 3 businesses without adequate insurance who suffer a major loss will disappear within 3 years. Business owners have mortgages, business loans, and families to look after. Having insurance protects all of these interests and enables you to live life without worry. In addition, insurance is what makes the economy move. Without insurance people would not take risks, without risk takers the world would be a boring place.

What is the advantage of using a broker?
Using a broker really takes the stress and worry out of a complex and costly process. A broker saves you time and in many cases money however, it is the expertise of a good broker that ensures your insurance dollar is spent in the most cost effective way. Ensuring you obtain the cover you need for your business rather than just ticking the box with any policy is crucial when it comes to claim time.

What is one of the most overlooked aspects of business insurance?
Business Interruption insurance is the most overlooked insurance policy. This protects the most critical component to any business – the revenue. If your business ceases due a fire or storm your bills and expenses don't stop. You still have commitments and without income coming in the door you cannot meet these costs and therefore you find yourself getting deeper and deeper into debt and inevitably bankruptcy results. Business Interruption ensures this revenue and allows you to keep meeting your commitments including wages, loan repayments and even your net profit.

What does Maceys do really well?
Aside from looking after our customers with the highest levels of customer service we place a strong emphasis on staff training and career development. By spending time and money on developing our team we are ensuring a high professional standard is delivered every time. We also place a high level of importance on the culture within our organisation and work hard every day to ensure the environment is enjoyable and rewarding for our team.

How does working with a broker make a difference at claim time?
The main thing to remember is that as a broker we act for the client not the insurer. So when our clients have a claim we are there for them as a partner helping them get through, in many cases, a very stressful situation of reinstating their operations following a disaster. We negotiate the best outcomes for them ensuring they get everything they are entitled to under their policy and not just the minimum amounts insurers tend to offer.

What advice do you have for businesses that just renew their insurance policy each year, without really thinking about what's changed?
Many things can change in your business each year that can affect your risk exposure and subsequently your insurance coverage. The insurance market changes too, there are so many new insurance products on the market protecting new emerging business risks such as cyber crime, employment practices issues and new forms of property cover. A full review with a trained broker can find areas where you may be wasting money and offer options for more suitable current covers that will protect your business from exposure you may not have considered.

What's on the horizon for Maceys?
We have just come off the back of two years of significant growth following a refreshed and more directed marketing strategy. We will continue locally to keep a strong focus on growth opportunities and commitment to the community. However, we also opened a new office in Camden late last year following strong growth in the Macarthur region from our Bowral office team. We now have 3 staff in Camden and aim to have a team of 6 there by 2020.

What makes Maceys different, and why should businesses talk to you about their insurance needs?
At Macey we work hard for our clients to simplify the insurance process and ensure they receive quality insurance products at market competitive prices. Having us as your trusted advisor to walk you through the minefield of complex insurance jargon and policy comparisons will allow you to spend more time on what you are best at, running your business. Our qualified, highly skilled general insurance brokers have been providing professional advice and insurance solutions for over 40 years. Extensive industry experience has seen us serve commercial and personal clients covering all aspects of their insurance needs. If you want more from your insurance broker call us today.

Thank you to Macey Insurance Brokers for supporting our Young Business Executives.

MAJOR

SPONSOR



WEBICS
INTERVIEW WITH: ORY PURHONEN

> Webics would not be where it is today without the support of the business leaders of the Shoalhaven

Although he probably won't admit it, sponsor of the Business Leader award, Ory Purhonen, is undoubtedly a young business leader. In a story that best fits people you read about, not people you know, Ory started Webics from his parents' lounge room when he was only 15 years old. He has now grown Webics into one of the region's largest web design and web marketing businesses, having serviced over 500 clients around the world.

Ory is resourceful, he values self-development and growth, and he surrounds himself with people he can learn from. All important qualities in a leader.

Ory shares his perspective on leadership, and some insight as to how crucial it is to have a website that cuts through all the online noise.

ABOUT WEBICS' SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

Why does Webics get involved with the Business Awards?
An integral part of our marketing strategy is growing our brands through sponsorship. As Webics is in the B2B market, sponsoring a Business Chamber program aligns perfectly with this vision.

Why are the Awards important for business in the Shoalhaven?
Without the hard working businesses in the Shoalhaven we would not have a thriving local economy. Recognising the businesses that go above and beyond to service their clients and the community is an important factor in ensuring these businesses continue their good work.

Webics was one of our first sponsors to sign up why did you sponsor the Business Leader award?
Webics would not be where it is today without the support of the business leaders of the Shoalhaven. By sponsoring, it's our way of giving thanks and recognition.

ABOUT LEADERSHIP

What does leadership mean to you?
A company's growth can only be determined by the team's performance and commitment. A leader's role is to ensure the team is aligned with the company's vision and that they believe in the company's goals too.

You're a young and inspiring business leader, what development do you undertake to help you grow as a leader?
Daily mentoring and coaching from people smarter than I am. As well as investing massively in education, and learning through trial and error. There's 168 hours in a week, if you use them wisely to become better at what you do ultimately your success will be beyond comprehension.

You have a wall of inspiring quotes in the Webics office, what's your favourite leadership quote?
"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."
– Henry Ford.

If you could have a private dinner with any four business leaders from around the world, who would they be, and why?
Warren Buffett, Grant Cardone, Bill Gates and Elon Musk. These four individuals are all extremely successful and are self made.

ABOUT WEBICS

Why is the design of businesses' websites so crucial?
Your business's website is its digital shop front. When someone lands on your website, you only have a few seconds to capture their attention. Poor design will yield poor results in those few precious seconds.

What is web marketing?
Web marketing is the practise of marketing your business on the internet – it involves several different mediums, including the website, how people find the website and general branding.

Why is web marketing important?
In 2016, consumers are going to the internet to look for goods and services – if you're not present in this space your business won't be a player on the field, therefore you have no chance of winning.

In 2016, how important is SEO?
More important than ever. If someone wants a service they will Google it, if you aren't appearing in the search results – you won't even be considered.

How important is knowing your audience in web marketing?
Demographics are the key to ensuring you're investing your marketing dollar in the right places. You need to get inside the head of your customer in order to understand their buying habits.

What is one of the most overlooked, yet important elements of web marketing?
Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) – people are concerned about getting the most people to their website, but they don't understand that every website has a conversion rate. If you increase this rate, you increase your enquiries and sales.

What advice do you have for businesses that haven't touched their website in years?
Ask yourself one question: Do you want to grow your business or not? If the answer is yes, you need to be including website updates in your marketing budget.

What's on the horizon for Webics?
We want to be the best digital agency in the world. We will do this by offering the best services and customer service.

What makes Webics different, and why should businesses talk to you about their web design and web marketing needs?
We combine a client-centric and results focused philosophy, by doing this we align the services we offer with your desired outcomes. And then we go above and beyond to ensure we amaze our clients.

Thank you to Webics for supporting our Awards and our Business Leaders.

MAJOR

SPONSOR

POWER FM & 2ST
INTERVIEW WITH: PETER PERRIN



We see the awards as a tangible way of acknowledging the development of the business community



Power FM and 2ST have a heart and soul that is very much a part of where we live and broadcast

Power FM & 2ST have been long time supporters of the Awards. This year the station really amped up its support, saturating the airwaves with Awards-related commercials, interviews and daily live reads.

Station Manager, Peter Perrin best represents Power FM and 2ST's Awards involvement when he stated in his sponsor video that they become 'invested in what their clients do for a living'.

ABOUT POWER FM & 2ST'S SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

Why does Power FM and 2ST get involved with the Awards?
We see the awards as a tangible way of acknowledging the development of the business community.

Why are the Awards important for the Shoalhaven?
The awards promote professional growth and development.

ABOUT YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

You sponsored the Young Entrepreneur category, why is the development and recognition of our young entrepreneurs vital to the region?
Everything successful has to start somewhere and there is a need to encourage youth and vitality.

Tell me about a young entrepreneur who you are inspired by?
Youngish would be Elon Musk with SpaceX, Paypal, Tesla etc, and not so young, my fallback is Richard Branson.

ABOUT POWER FM & 2ST

Why should businesses invest in radio advertising?
Because radio after all the years its been around still works and delivers results. Its the lifestyle media that's portable.

What does Power FM & 2ST do really well?
When all else is impersonal and centralised, 2ST and Power FM are still live and local and continue to entertain and inform.

What role does radio advertising play in a business's marketing strategy?
It always has been and still is the most effective cost affordable method to tell your potential clients what you do best.

What would your customers say about Power FM & 2ST?
I hope they would say we are always prepared to go the extra mile to make their message right get the results they seek.

What's different about Power FM & 2ST?
The stations have a heart and soul that is very much a part of where we live and broadcast.

What advice would you have for business owners who think they can't afford radio advertising?
That they cant afford not to advertise. It should be a budgeted operational expense not a luxury or extravagance.

What's on the horizon for Power FM and 2ST?
Doing what we do but better and better.

Thank you to Power FM & 2ST for supporting our Awards and our Young Entrepreneurs.

DESIGN

SPONSOR

THE MARKETING CLAN
INTERVIEW WITH: JAMIE MCAINSH



The Marketing Clan

> The Awards are a great platform for demonstrating some of the incredible talent here, working together with a common mission, to create growth for a place we all love to work and play in

When The Marketing Clan pitched their concept design to the Awards Committee, it was clear that they understood the brief and the vision behind the 2016 theme.

It is not surprising that they understood the concept. The Marketing Clan is an example of synergy in itself; an agency of like-minded advertising professionals all bringing unique skill-sets to support local business with commercial creativity in brand, marketing and communications.

ABOUT THE MARKETING CLAN'S SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

Why dId The Marketing Clan get involved with the Business Awards?

As a new agency in the Shoalhaven, we wanted to get involved with the Awards by contributing our time to help develop a new visual identity to complement such a unique event in the Shoalhaven. The essence of the Awards theme is fittingly built on the same philosophy as The Marketing Clan, so we also wanted to generate awareness of our design credentials to a targeted audience.

Why are the Awards important to the Shoalhaven?

It is the biggest business event of the year for both the business community as well as the Chamber. The Awards demonstrates an evolution of the Chamber and a new strategy to big events in order to remain relevant and attract a greater number of guests. The Awards are a great platform for demonstrating some of the incredible talent operating here, working together with common mission, to create growth for a place we all love to work and play in.

What was the inspiration behind the logo you designed for the Awards?

Any piece of creative work starts with a brief. The brief we were given was a good one and it came with the strategy of the 'synergy' theme. This immediately provided a number of directions that we could have been taken it. We pitched four concept designs each visually celebrating collaboration and complemented the various aspects of the community. We were happy with the committee's choice in design direction as it not only reflected the synergy, dynamic and positive nature of our business community, but also included the glamour and prestige that would be executed on the night. Whilst a tactical piece for the Chamber, we had to ensure that the it was true to the Chamber's identity, but it pushed the boundaries of traditional Chamber branding, and that it worked across all aspects of the communications.

ABOUT THE MARKETING CLAN

Tell us about The Marketing Clan

The Marketing Clan was established three years ago and our model is a very simple one. The clan members have all worked together in the past for multi-national marketing and ad agencies in Sydney, London and Dubai. We are a group of independent professionals who have one common driver, doing effective, measurable marketing and advertising that is driven by great creative, insights and strategy. Most importantly, working with businesses in the Shoalhaven that see the value of how our thinking can help their growth.

What is the difference between logo design and brand strategy?

Logo design is just a small part of the work we do and it is an important one, however it shouldn't be seen in isolation from the rest of your brand. Sure, a logo is part of the visual identity that your staff, customers and partners relate to, so it should reflect what your brand is about, the brand values, tone of voice and positioning – in other words, your brand strategy. To get there however, you need to identify your position in the market and how you want your brand to be perceived. It is important for a business to have a brand strategy.

Is a brand strategy important in Business to Business?

Yes, defining your brand strategy is important whether B2B or B2C, to determine how it looks, what it sounds like and how it behaves across the business, internally and externally. This all contributes to your customer experience and creating a consistent message across your communication touch-points. Brand strategy, marketing and advertising are also part of our key skills but what we do depends on our clients' business challenge. Sometimes it will be a creative solution, others more strategy.

What would your customers say about you?

Good things hopefully! I think when businesses understand what we do and how our experience can help contribute to their bottom line, it makes businesses more comfortable to challenge the norms. Since we work with clients in different ways, we're often regarded as their external marketing department as opposed to simply the agency. Our clients make us feel like part of the team so that can only be a good thing.

What's different about The Marketing Clan?

We have a unique proposition in that we have a lot of experience working across many categories, markets and countries for both B2B and B2C brands. We have a scalable and flexible model so our clients get big agency thinking without the large overheads.

Thank you to The Marketing Clan for supporting our Awards and bringing synergy to life in such a beautiful way.

ENTERTAINMENT

SPONSOR

THE DRUCE DP GROUP
INTERVIEW WITH: NIKI WILLDIG



DRUCE DP
CIVIL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

> By awarding "locally grown" businesses we strengthen our community by investing our business dollars close to home



> We ask the most important question first: how will our residential solutions improve the lives of people who live and work here?

TOVEDALE
DEVELOPMENTS

Over the last few years, the Druce DP Group has been instrumental in providing us with the opportunity to secure exceptional entertainment for the Awards Gala.

Recognising that the seriousness of business needs to be balanced with an element of fun, the Druce DP Group ensured that our night commenced with a room full of energy and joy.

ABOUT THE DRUCE DP GROUP'S SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

Why does the Druce DP Group get involved with the Awards?
We believe excellence should be rewarded. And as a locally owned and operated business of 35 plus years – it would be impossible without the support of local business, so supporting other local businesses is our way of giving back.

Why are the Awards important for the Shoalhaven?
By awarding "locally grown" businesses we strengthen our community by investing our business dollars close to home. Also, it showcases the Shoalhaven and reaffirms why we have chosen to do business here.

ABOUT THE ENTERTAINMENT

This is the third year that you've sponsored the entertainment at the Awards, what value does it bring to Druce DP?
At the end of the day – you need to have some fun!!!! Business can sometimes consume you and the Awards allow you sit back and be proud. The entertainment puts a smile on everyone's face and that just feels good.

What did you think of the performance put on by the Shoalhaven Sounds?
Stellar. They were fantastic. We were dancing from the moment they came on.

ABOUT THE DRUCE DP GROUP

Tell us about the Druce DP Group.
We are a local family owned and operated development company. With civil construction at the core of our business, we take a holistic approach to development, from the design through construction to marketing and sales.

What projects are you working on at the moment?
With Twin Waters Estate coming to an end, our current focus is on Carrington Heights Estate, along with a few new projects you will see popping up around the Shoalhaven.

What does the Druce DP Group do really well?
Our approach sets up apart. We ask the most important question first: how will our residential solutions improve the lives of people who live and work here? We then take a creative approach: strategic partnerships and generations of know-how to make quality communities more affordable.

The Druce DP Group is family owned and operated, what advantages does a family run business offer to its customers?
As a family run business we have a strong commitment to quality and its relationship to our own family name. Also the humanity in the workplace and the developments we deliver where the care and concern is often likened to that of our extended family.

What's different about the Druce DP Group?
It's all about building and developing communities by locals, for locals. We live in the area and therefore have a very personal commitment to balance financial performance with quality of life – not only for our employees and customers but the community at large.

What's on the horizon for the Druce DP Group?
We plan to be devoted to developing the Shoalhaven for the foreseeable future. Working closely with many local businesses, understanding the local needs, so we can aim to get it right.

Thank you to the Druce DP Group for supporting our Awards and for enabling us to have such brilliant entertainment!

AUDIO VISUAL

SPONSOR



CMG AUDIO VISUAL
INTERVIEW WITH: TOBI PINAZZA

CMG AV
Premier Event Solutions
AUDIO • VISION • LIGHTING

> We partnered with the Chamber to deliver an engaging Awards evening that recognised and rewarded outstanding achievement by all



> Our personalised approach to achieving the best outcomes for your event is what sets us apart from our competitors



In their first year as our audio visual supplier, CMG Audio Visual put on a phenomenal and memorable show.

Partnering with us to provide top tier equipment and an unparalleled Awards experience for our guests, CMG Audio Visual is unquestionably a leader in its field.

ABOUT CMG AUDIO VISUAL'S SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

Why did CMG Audio Visual sponsor the Awards?
As one of the larger regional AV and event suppliers in NSW, CMG Audio Visual understands the importance of the state's regional centres as well as the economic and social contributions of local business. In addition to raising our own brand profile within the professional networks of the Shoalhaven, we partnered with the Chamber's Business Awards to deliver an engaging Awards evening that recognised and rewarded outstanding achievement by all.

This was your first year in business and you generously sponsored our Awards, what value did this bring to CMG AV?
Currently in the growth stage of our exciting new business, CMG Audio Visual aims to deliver design-focused and technically excellent Audio Visual solutions - for events of all sizes - that are cost-effective for local businesses and community organisations alike. The Awards provided a great platform to showcase some of the new opportunities that can now be delivered locally through our large selection of top-tier equipment and services.

ABOUT THE VISUAL SHOW PUT ON BY CMG AUDIO VISUAL

The lighting and screens were at a whole new level for the Awards this year, what role did CMG Audio Visual play in making sure our guests were wowed?
From concept to execution, CMG Audio Visual designed and pre-programmed much of the show you witnessed within our in-house production studio via exclusive 3D Modelling and Pre-Visualisation Technology. This enabled visual insights into how the room would eventually look and feel weeks out from the event, adding confidence and peace of mind for both the event planner and committee during what is normally a very stressful lead up to an event of that scale.

How important is great lighting and visual effects for an Awards event?
With absolutely no bias: It's essential. In all seriousness however, the reason we stand by this statement is that most people within our community attend several events or functions per year for various celebrations, fundraising efforts or awards. There is an accepted standard that may well be fine depending on the objectives of the event, but for businesses and organisations that wish to stand out from the crowd, engage their audience and ensure their message is memorable – there are definite ways of achieving a better return on their investment via creative lighting and visual solutions.

ABOUT CMG AUDIO VISUAL

What's different about CMG Audio Visual?
CMG Audio Visual was established with one objective in mind: to raise the benchmark of live event production and AV Hire in NSW (Australia) through an uncompromising commitment and entirely design-focused implementation of five core principles: Client Satisfaction; Advanced Technology; Outstanding Service; Efficiency and Value; and Complete Reliability. Our personalised approach to achieving the best outcomes for your event is what sets us apart from our competitors.

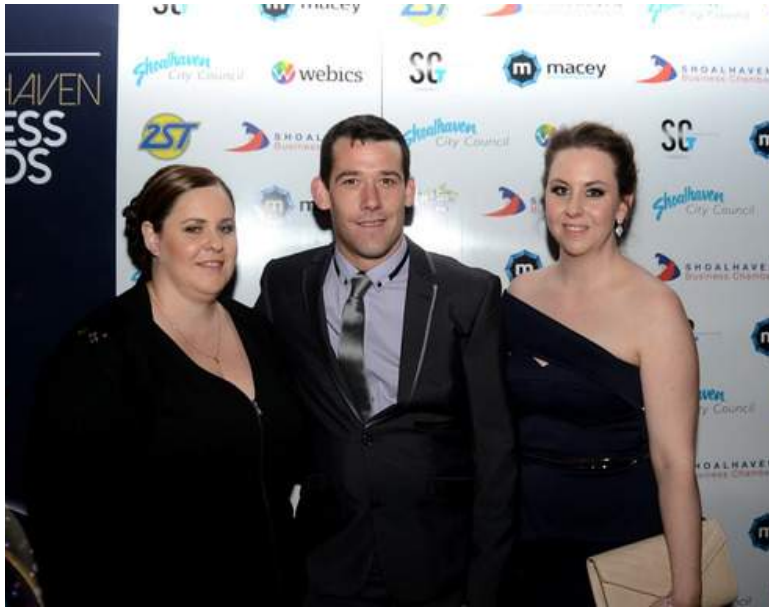
What's on the horizon for CMG Audio Visual?
To continue our growth in regional NSW while maintaining the relationships we have built to date with our many valued clients. Our inventory of Audio Visual equipment is constantly expanding as are the technical services and support our specialist technicians can provide, meaning there is always something new and spectacular in the works. To sum it up in one line, our Team absolutely loves delivering amazing events and will continue to do so in the future!

Thank you to CMG Audio Visual for supporting our Awards and putting on the most incredible show we have ever seen at the Shoalhaven Business Awards.

MAJOR & AFTER PARTY

SPONSOR

SG TECHNOLOGIES
INTERVIEW WITH: BEN DUNCAN



> The Awards provoke ideas and strategies that can be worked towards for the following year



> We look deeper into the operations of a business with a focus on delivering a solution that enhances the professional image of a company



After several years of supporting the Awards and the After Party, SG Technologies has become synonymous with wrapping up the Awards Gala in style.

This year, SGT stepped up their support another level, sponsoring the Awards as a major sponsor, while also supporting the After Party. Thanks to SGT, we were able to have a live band, fun and lively SGT Party Officials, a photo booth, and awesome sangria cocktails.

ABOUT SG TECHNOLOGIES' SUPPORT OF THE AWARDS

Why does SG Technologies get involved with the Awards?
We have been part of the Awards for a few years now, it's been great for us to see the wide variety of businesses in the area, build our brand profile and enjoy the experience of the night!

Why are the Awards important for the Shoalhaven?
I think it is important to recognise local businesses and the valuable contribution they make to the area. It helps showcase some of the best businesses and individuals and allows business people to take a look over their business from a different angle – which usually provokes ideas and strategies that can be worked towards for the following year.

ABOUT THE AFTER PARTY

This is the third year that you've sponsored the After Party at the Awards, what value does it bring to SG Technologies?
The After Party has brought great value to our brand, it's an opportunity for us to showcase our brand in complete isolation for the night, and we love that it's all about celebrating the winners and having a great time!

The After Party was jampacked this year, what role did SGT play in making sure it was an awesome end to the night?
There was a great buzz at the After Party this year, we always try and add a little extra to the party to get the vibe going! With help from the Chamber, we decided upon a live band to really get people moving, added the photo booth and Party Officials to help create the memories, and thought we would top it off by offering the Sangria to help get everyone in the mood!

ABOUT SG TECHNOLOGIES

Tell us about SG Technologies?
As a fully accredited Telstra Enterprise partner, SG Technologies provides class leading solutions for mobility, fixed, data and cloud services. This accreditation is the highest level awarded to Telstra Business Partners and enables SGT to supply Telstra's range of specialised business and corporate solutions.

Why should customers talk to SG Technologies about their communication needs?
We provide honest and reliable advice, and solutions to the problems that businesses face on a daily basis. We look deeper into the operations of a business with a focus on delivering a solution that enhances the professional image of a company, whilst also saving time and money through increased productivity and efficiency.

What sort of post sales support do you offer your customers?
We offer a number of different options via our SGT Care program, which enables businesses to oursource the management of their phone and computer networks to SGT, relieving them of the pressure and stress to ensure they do whatever it is that they do best.

What would your customers say about SG Technologies?
I hope that they would say we are honest, great and what we do and have improved their businesses through our solutions and service.

What's different about SG Technologies?
We are always looking to stay ahead of the technology curve, and do things a little differently with our marketing and networking, such as the live Instagram feed via our party officials at the after party! We're a lot of fun, but have the knowledge and capability to deliver the right solutions for any sized business.

What's on the horizon for SG Technologies?
It's an exciting time for SG Technologies at the moment, with the NBN pushing the area into a new world of technologies that have previously been unavailable in the region. Video is the new voice and the Cloud is here, and SG Technologies is ready to partner with local businesses to take advantage of these great new business tools.

Thank you to SG Technologies for supporting our Awards and for ensuring we ended the night with a killer After Party!


SG
#sgtparty
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