



MEDIA RELEASE: For Immediate Release

Winners Announced at Waipa Networks 2016 Business Awards

Excited finalists, colleagues, friends, clients, family, mentors and advisors gathered at Mystery Creek Events Centre on Friday 19 August to celebrate business success in the Waipa and Raglan regions at the Waipa Networks 2016 Business Awards (the Awards). Over 400 people attended the event, including Waipa District Mayor Jim Mylchreest, the Hon. Louise Upston (MP for Taupo) and Barbara Kuriger (MP for Taranaki-King Country), presented by a witty Paul Ego.

The exceptional quality of entries into the Awards created a great contest between a diverse range of businesses, resulting in the judges awarding several highly commended certificates.

Andrew Buchanan-Smart, Waikato Management School said, "When you consider each entry is judged by up to 9 different judges across multiple disciplines, the results were so close they could be likened to a hundred metre sprint with the contestants all lunging as they cross the finish line."

Tania Witheford, CEO Cambridge Chamber of Commerce said, "It is clear we have some exceptional businesses in our communities who actively pursue excellence and who are providing great leadership."

Kris Anderson, CEO TE Awamutu Chamber of Commerce commented, "This year's Awards process has been an incredible journey for all involved and the overwhelming support we have received gives strong indication of the value the Awards offers."

This was the second year Raglan has participated in the Waipa Networks Business Awards. Dave Currie, Chair of Raglan Chamber of Commerce said "We are thrilled with the opportunity these Awards provide business in Raglan as well as them being an exceptional platform for Chambers to promote business excellence throughout our regions."

Our congratulations go to all entrants, finalists and winners, who invested themselves in the Awards process to measure their business against the best in their region.

Thank you to our family of dedicated Sponsors and Event Partners whose support and commitment clearly demonstrates their belief in the pursuit of excellence in business and enables the Awards to take place.

To find out more about the awards or to view photos, please visit www.waipabusinessawards.co.nz



Winners in the Waipa Networks 2016 Business Awards are:

Sponsor: Rocketspark	EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS – SOLE TRADER
Winner	The Second Floor Yoga & Wellbeing Centre
Highly Commended	RV Living

The Second Floor Yoga & Wellbeing Centre impressed the judges with a comprehensive understanding of their business and client base. The excellent information provided in this entry, across all areas of the business demonstrated The Second Floor Yoga & Wellbeing Centre has a solid foundation and is growing organically, having recognised and focussed on its unique competitive advantage.

Sponsor: NZME.	EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS – NEW AND EMERGING
Winner	Laszlo Boats NZ
Highly Commended	HUS

New Zealand’s oldest and newest rowing skiff company, Laszlo Boats NZ demonstrated a well-defined strategy to increase sales in New Zealand and Australia which is working. The strategic plan is broken down to tactical and operational considerations. A focus on quality is evident, which is paying dividends with strong forward orders indicating a successful future for this business.

Sponsor: Te Awamutu Courier	EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS - SMALL BUSINESS
Winner	The Herbal Dispensary
Highly Commended	CSC Buying Group

The winner of this Award in 2015 has done it again! The Herbal Dispensary made a strong entry in a very competitive field with excellent growth year on year to win this category for 2016. Improvements on last year’s success included significant growth in systems and the unification of branding. The development of The Herbal Dispensary as a brand, distinct to its suppliers, has created a strong market position.

Sponsor: Cambridge Edition	EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS - MEDIUM BUSINESS
Winner	Amber Garden Centre
Highly Commended	Loulous Hair and Beauty Spa

Amber Garden Centre clearly demonstrated how it has employed a deep level of industry experience and understanding to differentiate itself in the garden centre market. A strong sense of community with core values drives the success of this business. The effective development of the 'Amber' brand impressed the judges, as did the strategic plan the business works to.



Sponsor: Lewis'	EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS - LARGE BUSINESS
Winner:	Paddock
Highly Commended	Gallie Miles Limited

The judges said, Paddock demonstrated strong market differentiation, expressed in innovative foods using fresh, preservative-free seasonal produce. Its excellent policies to encourage feedback from staff and customers provide opportunities for expansion and development. Paddock has clearly shown serious consideration in developing the 'Paddock' brand, which has enabled this business to grow and be successful.

EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION is selected from the finalists in the Excellence in Business categories. These businesses demonstrate consistent excellence in sustainability across the award criteria and proven community contribution as an integral part of business.

Sponsor: Fonterra	SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION
First Equal Winners	Amber Garden Centre & CSC Buying Group

In this instance we have two winners. Their scores were exactly the same and the judges felt very strongly that both these businesses were deserving of the Award and 1st equal standing.

The judges said “Amber Garden Centre demonstrated an excellent holistic approach to environmental sustainability involving natural resources and strong philanthropic involvement with Hospice and with youth educational and work based programmes.”

The judges were particularly impressed by CSC Buying Group’s integrated practices around community and disability into the organisation. This is a very successful business with strong ethics which returns a percentage of the profits for charitable purposes.

EXCELLENCE IN DIGITAL STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION is selected from the finalists in the Excellence in Business categories. This category requires the utilisation and implementation of digital innovation and technology through the use of digital tools and the internet to enhance business performance and customer experience.

Sponsor: Waipa District Council	DIGITAL STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION
Winner	Emma's Food Bag
Highly Commended	Five Stags

Emma’s Food Bag demonstrated excellent coverage and use of digital technologies for many aspects of the business. Digital technology has been applied to enable customers more autonomy in placing single or standing orders, tracking their account balance, status and entire history through the customer database, which is contributing to the business’ overall success.



WAIPA NETWORKS 2016 BUSINESS AWARDS - SUPREME OVERALL WINNER

Amber Garden Centre is this year’s Supreme Overall Winner. The overall attention to detail and focus on the business has impressed the judges and made Amber Garden Centre a clear winner for the judges.

Robert Clancy credited the win to the dedication and passion of the Amber Garden Centre Team, and the support and commitment from a supportive family particularly his wife, Jen, saying on the night “she is the clever one, I just grow great plants! “We are committed to our community and growing our business”.

Showing steady growth over the last 3 years, Amber Garden Centre has nimbly adapted to a changing business environment and taken risks to move into other segments. A clearly developed brand with a defined competitive advantage, an aligned marketing and customer focus has reinforced brand equity. Involvement with community and a commitment to sustainability are at the forefront of operations, and the business works to a strategic plan. And the combined knowledge of the staff ensures customers get a reliable and personalised experience.

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

The **Trustpower** Customer Service Awards confirmed we have outstanding businesses that understand their customers and are delivering excellent customer service.

Sponsor: Trustpower	CAMBRIDGE CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD
Winner:	Loulous Hair and Beauty Spa

Loulous Hair and Beauty Spa continue to build on its reputation of an exceptional hair and beauty service with a standard of service to match.

Angelique Gellert, Director of Loulous Hair and Beauty Spa, is central to the Hair salon’s brand and philosophy which is for their clients to feel good and look absolutely amazing. By being consistent, persistent, and focused on their values, while delivering a premium product and service, it’s not difficult to see why Loulous Hair and Beauty Spa is heralded as a role model for other businesses seeking to excel in the area of hairdressing and customer service.

Sponsor: Trustpower	TE AWAMUTU CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD
Winner:	Showcase Jewellers Te Awamutu

Richard Preest - Trustpower said “At Showcase Jewellers, Kirsty and her team aim to ‘Create Precious Memories’, and this translates to more than just selling a watch or a wedding ring to the customer. An immaculate front of house and knowledgeable staff showcasing their product range through to jewellery servicing requirements with an in-house jeweller, Showcase Jewellers deliver an exceptional customer experience. Kirsty and her team bring the sparkle to every customer interaction and this passion for delivering exceptional customer service ensures Showcase Jewellers will continue to out shine the rest.



Sponsor: Trustpower	RAGLAN CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD
Winner:	Mousey Brown

While reasonably still “the new hairdresser in town” Mousey Brown has hit the ground running when it comes to customer service. Salon owners Paul and Sarah Fitch’s ability to connect and understand their customer needs and requirements enable them to deliver a quality customer experience that is second to none. Introducing innovation technology and remaining sustainable in a very competitive environment are also key components that set this business a head of the rest.

CUSTOMER CHOICE AWARDS:

Customers voted for their favourite business in the **Vodafone Customer Choice Awards** with winners being announced for Te Awamutu, Cambridge and Raglan (per below). The Overall winner, The Lily Pad Café, won the coveted award for the 2nd year running taking home a smartphone, courtesy of Vodafone. One lucky voter received a \$100 Vodafone credit for taking the time to vote for their favourite business.

Sponsor: Vodafone	TE AWAMUTU CUSTOMER CHOICE AWARD
Winner	Luxe & Co
Sponsor: Vodafone	CAMBRIDGE CUSTOMER CHOICE AWARD
Winner:	The Lily Pad Café
Sponsor: Vodafone	RAGLAN CUSTOMER CHOICE AWARD
Finalists:	Mousey Brown

TE AWAMUTU PEOPLE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

The People Manager of the Year Award for Te Awamutu recognises exceptional leadership in the business they are employed by, or own.

Sponsor: People4Success	TE AWAMUTU PEOPLE MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD	
Winner:	Annette Kershaw	Enrich+

Annette will put her hand up for anything, going above and beyond expectations. She manages the operational side of things for Enrich+, with 4 Team Leaders reporting to her, oversees Taumarunui services and also being cultural ambassador for training services.

Being so caring about staff, Annette makes sure they are fully supported and knowledgeable. Coaching and mentoring is paramount. Annette leads by empowering staff to develop and identify growth opportunities. This approach has a massive positive impact on staff morale.



EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

The Employee of the Year Awards for Te Awamutu and Raglan (People4Success) and Cambridge (People In Mind) recognises individuals who go above and beyond, making a significant contribution and positive impact to the business they work in.

Sponsor: People4Success	TE AWAMUTU EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD	
Winner:	Brenda Whitehead	Growing Spectrum

Growing Spectrum is experiencing a huge year of growth, driven by sales and Brenda is a key person on that team. Brenda's been described as a consistent high performing employee, always going the extra mile to solve a customer's problem - she's a solutions lady.

Sponsor: People4Success	RAGLAN EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD	
Winner:	Maki Nishiyama	Raglan Ink Ltd

Since Maki joined Raglan Ink 4 years ago she's grown in stature and her role has taken on so much more. Maki's initiatives in the office go above and beyond, without there being any expectation on her to take certain tasks upon herself. Maki is a unique individual who has poured her heart and soul into the business and community. She really is a gold nugget!

Sponsor: People In Mind	CAMBRIDGE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD	
Winner:	Josh Dillon	Body and Motion Limited

LesleyAnn of People In Mind said, "Josh Dillon from Body & Motion has not only lived to the core values of the business, but has far exceeded the expectations of his employer. His journey in his chosen industry is a heart-warming story that so clearly demonstrates that a person can achieve so much when they find a match between interests and work."

WAIKATO MANAGEMENT SCHOOL EMERGING BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR:

Greg Wallace has been awarded Emerging Business Leader of the year Award. Greg has shown leadership in three significant areas – in his role at Rocketspark, the Cambridge business community and his involvement with the Raleigh Street Christian Centre.

Described as a natural leader, Greg is known for his integrity and is always an example of honesty and authenticity. It is without hesitation that the judges recognised the endorsement given by his colleagues as a fantastic example of a leader in business and the community.



WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICES TO BUSINESS: Mayor Jim Mylchreest presented Richard Edge with the Outstanding Services to Business award. Richard (Ritchie) Edge has spent 50 years supporting businesses in the Waipa with high level accountancy and business advice. In 2014 Ritchie was recognised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants NZ for reaching 50 years as a chartered accountant.

Ritchie has been a Justice of the Peace for 21 years, and is currently serving his 22nd year on the Cambridge Resthaven Trust Board. As a mentor, he has guided many graduate accountants through their Chartered Accountancy qualifications. His colleagues describe Ritchie as thoughtful, knowledgeable and a pillar of society and well deserving of this recognition.

The Waipa Networks 2016 Business Awards, was a resounding success, highlighting the exceptional business we have in our regions.

ENDS:

Contact:

Cambridge Chamber of Commerce: Tania Witheford: ceo@cambridgechamber.co.nz

Te Awamutu Chamber of Commerce: Kris Anderson ceo@teawamutuchamber.org.nz



ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Waipa Networks Business Awards are a celebration of business excellence in Waipa and Raglan. Entries open in April and the Awards culminate with *the* premier business event in Waipa and Raglan: the Gala Awards Evening on the 19th of August at Mystery Creek Events Centre.

The aim of the Awards is to recognise and celebrate business success and encourage local businesses to strive for excellence in the following categories:

All entrants in the Business Excellence categories undertake a comprehensive entry process which includes a written entry, supporting documentation and on-site judge's visit. Judging is provided by the University of Waikato Management School and feedback and comments are shared with finalists after the Awards. The Special Judges Awards winners, aside from the Services to Business in Waipa award which is entered by nomination, are chosen from the finalists in the Business Excellence categories.