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Business awards celebrate success, resilience and positivity

A veritable who's who of Waikato celebrated the winners of the annual Waikato Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, supported by Foster Construction Group, tonight at a glittering gala dinner at a sold out Claudelands Arena.

Profile Group was the crowned the overall champion, taking out the Foster Construction Group 2022 Supreme Award, along with the Business Growth and Service Excellence awards.

Chamber chief executive Don Good said Profile Group represents a family of powerhouse businesses that form New Zealand's only integrated supply chain for aluminium window and door solutions.

"Profile Group is on a journey to redesign how they do business, how they manufacture even more efficiently, how they reimagine and repurpose waste streams, regenerate the natural world around us and enable their people to realise their full potential across all facets of the businesses.

"Their success is driven by an excellence of service ethos. Their structures, processes, and more importantly – people – set the standard for service excellence both nationally and internationally."

Judges said: Profile Group are world class role models around future vision, long-term strategy, innovation and product design, operational execution, ongoing commitment and an ethos of genuine care for the people, community, Aotearoa and the environment.

MilktechNZ's Gustavo Garza was named CEO of the Year. MilktechNZ is a leader in designing electronic milking cup removers with future-proof technology and accessories for herringbone and rotary cow sheds.

MilktechNZ also took out the Innovation Award.

Judges said about Gustavo: his entrepreneurial spirit, his energy and passion for the business that he has created, and the way that he spoke of the team who have joined him on his journey, was inspiring. Gustavo sets aspirational goals for his business and sets high standards for himself and his

team, including around values and behaviours. He shows a warmth and care toward his team that is genuine, and a satisfaction in progressing and enabling others that is humbling.

Aware Group's Jo Mickleson was named Emerging Leader of the Year. Aware Group is a globally recognised leader in emerging technologies. It provides a range of innovative solutions and services that focus on artificial intelligence, big data and Internet of Things.

Judges said about Jo: her focus on keeping people at the core of all decisions and actions is one of the primary leadership traits that her team greatly respect. Jo has gone above and beyond in building the capabilities of the senior leadership team with steady improvements being implemented that have developed empathy, business acumen and broader leadership skillset in the team.

Don Good said the quality of the four Emerging Leader finalists was exceptionally high with Jo Mickelson competing against managing director / founder of (AGP) Architectural Glass Products David Bunting, Young New Zealander of the Year and Nau Mai Rā founder Ezra Hirawani, and Chiefs Rugby general manager commercial Kate Rawnsley.

Good said it was great to be back to the full complement of 600 people at Claudelands.

"The calibre of entries this year shows the resilience and positivity of Waikato businesses as they emerge from the impacts of Covid.

"It was wonderful to have finalists and winners from all over the Waikato. And while international headwinds remain strong, the Waikato is in a good place with strong foundations.

"The region is booming. You can see wherever you go that the Waikato is establishing itself as New Zealand's economic powerhouse behind Auckland. Benefiting from its proximity to Auckland, its strong farming foundation, its booming tech industry, strong construction sector, superb educational entities, its highly efficient and well located logistics industry and the major work being undertaken in sustainability are making the region a stunning and positive place to live, work and play."

A full list of the award winners are as follows:

Business Growth Award (sponsored by Deloitte): **Profile Group – AGP**

CEO of the Year Award (sponsored by University of Waikato): **Gustavo Garza – MilktechNZ**

Community Contribution – Commercial (sponsored by SkyPoint Technologies): **Discover Waitomo**

Community Contribution – Non-Commercial (sponsored by Montana Food and Events): **Waikato Hauraki Coromandel Rural Support Trust**

Emerging Leader of the Year Award (sponsored by Mitre10 Mega): **Jo Mickleson – Aware Group**

For Purpose Award (sponsored by Trust Waikato): **HMS Trust**

Innovation Award (sponsored by Company-X): **MilktechNZ**

Marketing Award (sponsored by Chow:Hill Architects): **Shift72**

Micro Business (sponsored by Sleepyhead): **The Chopping Block Limited**

People & Culture (sponsored by Hamilton Airport): **EAS**

Service Excellence (sponsored by Tompkins Wake): **Profile Group**

Sustainability (sponsored by Wintec Te Pūkenga): **MyNoke**

Supreme winner (sponsored by Foster Construction Group): **Profile Group**

Applications for the 2023 Waikato Chamber of Commerce Business Awards will open in April.

Ends

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