

Media Release

23 November 2018

THE AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK NAMED 2018 NSW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

The Australian Reptile Park, located in Somersby on the Central Coast, has been named the 2018 NSW Business of the Year by the state's peak business organisation, the NSW Business Chamber.

The award was presented in front of 920 guests, including NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, at a gala dinner at the Big Top, Luna Park in Sydney.

The Australian Reptile Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is regarded as one of the country's premier attractions and is the only zoo in Australia committed to saving lives with a spider and snake venom-milking program in place.

The Park has experienced significant growth in admissions and worldwide international visitor numbers. General Manager, Tim Faulkner, is an ambassador and activist for several Australian animals and has raised \$375,000 in a crowdfunding campaign to double the size of 'Devil's Ark'.

"The state-wide awards program continues to grow each year with over 2,000 businesses entering each year. It is rewarding to see so many examples of where someone took a risk and changed lives through their drive, courage and creativity," said NSW Business Chamber Chief Executive Stephen Cartwright.

"This year's winners should feel incredibly proud to be named as the State's leading businesses for 2018 with 172 finalists competing against 16 regions" Mr Cartwright said.

The Australian Reptile Park was also named the winner of the Excellence in Business category, sponsored by **Westpac**.

For more information about the New South Wales Business Chamber Business Awards, please visit <http://businessannualawards.com.au>

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WINNERS OF THE 2018 NSW BUSINESS CHAMBER STATE BUSINESS AWARDS

2018 Outstanding Young Entrepreneur

The Outstanding Young Entrepreneur award recognises an inspirational young person aged between 18-35 years, who demonstrates outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic direction and innovative ideas whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of upcoming young business people.

Winner

Jamie Simpson, Ranger Jamie Tours
South Eastern Sydney

Media Contact

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Jamie Simpson started Ranger Jamie Tours to teach students about environmental conservation, Australian culture and sustainability. Jamie's dream to revolutionise the school excursion education system was sparked by the difficulties he experienced while studying at school. Today, Ranger Jamie Tours educates over 100,000 students per year and is the largest Primary School Education Excursion and Incursion company in Australia, employing over 30 educators. Jamie lives by the quote "Smooth Seas Never Made a Skilled Sailor" and his hard work is evidenced by the 400% growth his business experienced last year.

2018 Outstanding Business Leader

The Outstanding Business Leader award recognises the positive contribution made to business by business people and professionals, who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic business direction and innovative ideas, whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of upcoming business leaders.

Winner

Dr Jim Hungerford, The Shepherd Centre
Sydney City

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Dr Jim Hungerford has been the Chief Executive Officer of The Shepherd Centre for the last seven year. The Shepherd Centre is a charity and disability provider enabling children who are deaf or have hearing loss to be able to speak just like any other child. Jim has tripled the centres income over the last seven years and expanded their services to tele practice and online learning allowing more children to get the support they need.

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2018 Excellence in Small Business

The Excellence in Small Business award recognises a business, employing less than 20 that has attained significant growth and is able to demonstrate the specific strategies and processes implemented to achieve sustainable growth in the previous 24 months.

Winner

SEHEZ Group
Hunter

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SEHEZ Group is a building and construction company that provides complete turn key services for home owners, developers and businesses alike. They have established a service provider model designed to partner with clients in lieu of the traditional client/contractor relationship, to ensure that the objectives of both parties are aligned and achieved. The positive results of this approach is evident in the repeat business they see from clients.

2018 Outstanding Employer of Choice

The Outstanding Employer of Choice award recognises businesses that put in place strategies and initiatives to create stimulating and supportive workplace environments for their employees.

Winner

Excite Holidays
Sydney City

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Excite Holidays is a travel tech company providing the most innovative booking experience in the travel industry, empowering travel agents by providing them with a huge portfolio of services. Employing 70 people, the business has launched an array of HR initiatives to improve workplace culture including a Health and Wellbeing program and The Workplace Giving Program. Excite's Human resource management system has revolutionised the employee experience by embracing technology to simplify and automate the majority of the HR admin functions. They have also introduced an online learning management system to house company specific compliance courses.

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2018 StartUp Superstar

The StartUp Superstar award recognises a business that has been operating for less than 2 years that delivers a product, service, idea or invention that has a solid chance of market success.

Winner

MAYDAY Recruitment
Sydney City

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MAYDAY Recruitment are total business support experts providing temporary, contract and permanent recruitment services for some of Australia's most reputable organisations. The founders have over 30 years combined experience in the industry and identified a need for a go-to recruitment emergency service available 24/7 to cover next day absences. Since 2016, their year on year sales have increased by 500%.

2018 Excellence in Innovation

The Excellence in Innovation award recognises businesses that have made significant contributions to their industry through the introduction or improvement of an idea, method, technology, process or application.

Winner

Murray Cod Australia
Murray Riverina

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Murray Cod Australia grows premium Murray cod in open ponds on the Murray-Darling Basin river system. The farming system is the only one of its kind in the world and mimics the natural environment providing the fish with the best conditions they need to grow. The innovative approach is centred around taking what nature has provided and improving it allowing them to guarantee size and quality of the fish as well as using 100% recycled water. Murray Cod Australia can deliver fresh Murray cod to anywhere in the world within 36 hours of harvest due to their effective supply chain system.

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2018 Excellence in Sustainability

The Excellence in Sustainability award recognises businesses that are working to reduce the impact of their operations on the environment and/or provide products and services that have positive environmental outcomes.

Winner

Stone & Wood Brewing Co
Northern Rivers

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Stone & Wood is committed to taking care of the earth that sustains us. Their Green Feet sustainability program aims to minimise environmental impact as well as create value through input cost savings and reuse and recycling of outputs. Program initiatives include the sale of spent grain as cattle feed to farmers, reusing treated water for irrigation for farmers and landholders in the local area, as well as upgrades to plant equipment to reduce gas, electricity and water usage. Stone & Wood also implemented a reusable cup program #ForCupsSake to eliminate single use plastic cups at festivals and events, saving use of 240,000 plastic cups from last year.

2018 Excellence in Export

The Excellence in Export award recognises leading examples of businesses that are exporting their products internationally and are forging a strong reputation for Australian products and services in international markets. This applies to businesses that are exporting directly or through a third party.

Winner

Featherdale Wildlife Park
Western Sydney

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Featherdale Wildlife Park is home to Australia's largest collection of Australian native wildlife with over 1700 animals from more than 270 species. Their primary export success has been driving incremental revenue per guest by working with 400 trade partners and travel wholesalers to add additional experiences to their visit including Koala encounter packages, combo meal packages and an Education package with wildlife lessons for Chinese Education Groups. In the past 24 months, Featherdale has achieved record visitation of over 600,000 visitors with 60% of this being from international markets.

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2018 Excellence in Workplace Inclusion

The Excellence in Workplace Inclusion award recognises businesses that address the needs of a diverse community, including seniors, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, and people with disability. An inclusive business facilitates the needs of all its employees and customers.

Winner

WINYA Indigenous Furniture
Sydney City

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WINYA is majority Indigenous owned and controlled business, supplying workstations, sit-stand desks, task seating, lounges and storage, lockers and Boardrooms through Indigenous employment focused manufacturing. WINYA supplies large scale fit out and furniture to the ATO, Defence and to builders like Laing O'Rourke, Lend Lease allowing them to increase Indigenous manufacturing employment program nationally. WINYA is a Profit for Purpose business, supporting Indigenous training and employment growth.

Excellence in Social Enterprise

The Excellence in Social Enterprise award recognises the achievements of those organisations that have been established to further a social purpose in a financially sustainable way.

Winner

BackTrack Youth Works
New England North West

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BackTrack enables young people to get back on track by developing strong, happy and healthy foundations resulting in positive life pathways and full participation in the community. They specifically target youth in rural and regional communities where demand led career opportunities can be less obvious or varied. Remarkable improvements across a range of domains has been seen after only six months in the program including an increased school attendance by 66%, reduced suspensions from school by 70% and a 50% decrease in severe psychological distress.

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2018 Local Chamber of Commerce

The Local Chamber of Commerce award recognises the achievements of a Local Chamber in supporting their members to maximise their business potential.

Winner

Corrimal Chamber of Commerce
Illawarra

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The Corrimal Chamber of Commerce works for both the businesses and citizens within their area. They offer both a Business and Community membership, recognising that community members want to have a voice in the development of the area. For 38 years, Corrimal Chamber has organised the "Spring into Corrimal" festival, the largest one day free family festival in Regional NSW, attracting over 60,000 people to the area supporting businesses from Corrimal as well as the greater Illawarra region.