



## MEDIA RELEASE

1<sup>st</sup> December 2011

### Melbourne's North Celebrates Business Successes and announces the 2011 NBAA Business of the Year Award winners.

Melbourne's northern businesses, educational institutes, local government and community gathered in anticipation of the announcement of the winners of the Northern Business Achievement Awards for 2011.

The Department of Business and Innovation's **2011 Business of the Year Award** along with the Macpherson + Kelley Lawyers **Human Resources Award** and Sustainability Victoria's **Sustainability and Environment Award** were awarded to Willow Ware Australia.

The Business of the Year Award recognised the overall excellence of Willow Ware Australia business including their processes, adaptability, past achievements and future growth potential. The Human Resources Award proudly sponsored by Macpherson + Kelley Lawyers recognised Willow Ware Australia for demonstrating commitment and investment in employee engagement and development and the Sustainability and Environment Award proudly sponsored by Sustainability Victoria recognised Willow Ware Australia for their commitment to sustainability and the environment.

WillowWare CEO Ralph Wilson said "At Willow, we view the receiving of awards as an opportunity to benchmark ourselves with similar like-minded organisations. Winning the Business of the Year Award, the Human Resources Award and the Sustainability and Environment Award at the Northern Business achievement Awards is a gratifying result and encourages us to go further as we continue our journey to becoming a showcase Australian Housewares Manufacturer.

Other awards presented at the breakfast were:

- The **Customer Service Award** sponsored by Magellan Logistics which recognised excellence in customer service was awarded to Eltham College.
- The **Innovation and Enterprise Award** sponsored by AusIndustry recognised significant innovation and enterprise initiatives. This award was presented to Impact Digital for developing and implementing innovative sustainability and environmental practices in order to reduce their impact on climate change.
- The **Industry-Education Engagement Award** sponsored by Northern Melbourne RDA recognised businesses that excel in the area of education and workplace learning was awarded to Mercy Health who have established themselves as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and have implemented a wide range of programs for employees to enable best practice and leadership in health services
- The **NORTH Link Chairman's Special Recognition Award** recognised Entrepreneurial Excellence and originality. The award was presented to Philip Stokes Studio Glass for building a market overseas that also creates opportunities for other artists.

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The Northern Business Achievement Awards Grand Finale breakfast for 2011 was held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December and was hosted by Banyule City council and attracted over 200 people.

The Awards align with NORTH Link's aims of economic development and marketing and promotion of Melbourne's north, by recognising local business achievement, encouraging innovation and providing valuable networks and opportunities for enterprise growth and development.

So as to encourage continuing accomplishment amongst businesses, The Northern Business Achievement Awards (NBAA) have been created as a series of business breakfast events designed to:

- acknowledge and celebrate the successes of Small-Medium enterprises (SME's)
- offer opportunities for valuable networking
- learn and exchange ideas

Chris Heysen Chair of NORTH Link said "The 2011 NBAA Grand Finale again showcased the best that Melbourne's north industry has to offer. I congratulate the winners and all nominees on their achievements".

The NBAA have been created by NORTH Link with initial funding from the Victorian Government and the support of the Cities of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Whittlesea, Yarra and the Shire of Nillumbik.

For more information or Sponsorship opportunities please contact Mick Butera, NORTH Link on (03) 9479 3337.

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Conference Website - <http://www.nbaa.com.au>

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