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AWARD WINNERS SHOW ACT GREAT PLACE FOR NEW BUSINESSES

The winners and finalists of last night's Canberra BusinessPoint* Awards demonstrate that the ACT is an excellent incubator for successful small businesses.

"Awards were announced in six categories which recognise the diversity of start-ups and existing firms in the ACT," Canberra Business Council CEO, Chris Faulks said. "Winners were chosen in recognition of their innovation, effective business planning and future potential."

The winners in each category were:

- Web and Mobile – myinfoQ. myinfoQ has focused on the growing popularity of social media as a forum for business to consumer communication. It allows people to keep track of brands, products and services that interest them and for businesses to assess the success of their lead generation campaigns.
- Clean and Green – Envirolove. This company helps increase recycling and divert tonnes of waste from the ACT landfill through programs such as its food waste recycling system that is being implemented in shopping centres.
- Bricks and Mortar – Mighty Mount. This local business was born when founder and owner, Stephen Holgate was working on home improvements and realised there was a market for a simple mounting system for the building industry.
- Creative and Design – Canberra Academy of Dramatic Art (CADA). CADA was established in 2009 and has doubled its turnover every year. It provides training and communication skills for children four and up through to adults.
- Micro-Enterprise – Alice Be Curious. This clothing boutique in New Acton sells unique shoes, clothes and accessories.
- High Growth – Contractor Compliance Australia. For 19 months this new business has been providing auditing, compliance and business services to small, medium and large businesses. Its head office is in Canberra but it has satellite offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

"Canberra BusinessPoint had over 800 enterprises come to it for assistance or advice this year and each of those were in the running to take out one of the awards. It was very difficult to choose finalists and winners from such a strong field," Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre CEO, Anna Pino said.

"The awards not only reflect the success of each of the winners and finalists but the high-quality assistance being provided to new and growing businesses by Canberra BusinessPoint in areas such as strategic planning, IT and finance."

Ms Faulks added, "It is great to see so many people seek advice and training from Canberra BusinessPoint to ensure they give their businesses the best chance for success. I commend all the winners and finalists."

**Canberra BusinessPoint is an ACT Government program which provides practical advice and support to businesses in the ACT. It is delivered by Canberra Business Council and Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre*

More information about the award categories, winners and finalists is attached.

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PROGRAM DELIVERED BY:



AN ACT GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE



Canberra BusinessPoint Awards Winners and Finalists 2011

CATEGORIES

- Web and Mobile
- Clean and Green
- Bricks and Mortar
- Creative and Design
- Micro-enterprise
- High Growth

The Awards were judged on both general criteria for all nominees and specific criteria dependent on the category. The general criteria were:

- The business must operate in Canberra and/ or surrounding regions;
- The assessment is based specifically on the Canberra market;
- The business must have interacted with Canberra BusinessPoint during 2011.

In addition businesses were assessed on the degree to which they are:

- innovative (in relation to its particular sector);
- have undertaken market validation;
- clearly understand their customer base; and
- have a well-developed implementation strategy.

WEB AND MOBILE

The criteria used for the Web and Mobile Category is:

- Web based or Mobile Application;
- Includes innovative elements;
- Has identified market appeal;
- Recognised market potential that has been clearly validated.

WINNER

myinfoQ

<http://www.myinfoq.com/>

Dugald Homes is the founder and owner of myinfoQ.

“myinfoQ allows all of us leading busy lives to keep track of everything that interests us. Using SMS, Twitter, Facebook or our mobile app you can keep track of anything of interest, including products and brands, movies to see, books to read or a property for sale and all relevant information is delivered instantly to you.”

Businesses can activate their signage and advertising with a keyword. When the customer sends an SMS, they receive the information directly and the business instantly knows how well their lead generation campaign is going.

“We appreciate all the support of **Canberra BusinessPoint** helping us get the business started over the past couple of years and look forward to the future. myinfoQ - keep track of all your interests.”

FINALIST

Sigma Bravo

<http://www.sigmabravo.com.au/>

Karen Schilling and her husband Tim Wedding are the founders and owners of Sigma Bravo, a Canberra based company focused on providing professional business consulting and IT Services. Karen has led the development of a new Web based management system offering significant market appeal; through its easy-to-use, simplified business management and embedded traffic light reporting capabilities.

Busiblocks delivers a flexible combination of business ‘blocks’ designed to meet individual organisations needs, making it a one-stop-shop for business management. The product appeals to smaller businesses and Franchisee organisations because there is no need for dedicated IT staff and it has the potential to save management overheads by automating many business processes.

“I have found Canberra **BusinessPoint** a valuable resource in terms of access to seminars and networking among like-minded individuals who can pass on their experience in developing IT and growing small businesses. There have been a number of occasions where an ‘expert’ has been organised to brainstorm with Sigma Bravo about how to progress our Busiblocks product.”

FINALIST

Gum Tree Homes

<http://www.gumtreehomes.com.au/>

Richard Branford is the founder and owner of Gum Tree Homes, which been operating as a local Canberra builder constructing new homes for ten years. From 200 sq. metres up to 500 square metres in size, they can either custom design your home or have plans that you can choose from.

“We feel the new web site we are developing will be innovative in our area of profession, the same as our homes we build.”

Gum Tree Homes is a member of the Master Builders Association (MBA) and are also a MBA accredited Green Living Builder. Gum Tree Homes understand the benefits of choosing the correct products when building and the benefits each product can bring to enhance the solar performance of your home.

Gum Tree Homes is undertaking the development of a new web site which will be enhanced for mobile and iPad type devices. It will include E-books, Feature Products articles and an opt in option for clients to sit down with Gum Tree Homes and its architect and other interactive communication features.

“We would like to thank the **Canberra BusinessPoint** for their assistance that they have provided through their ongoing programs and seminars that they run. The broad topics of information that they provide are great assistance to a small company like Gum Tree Homes.”

CLEAN AND GREEN

The criteria used for the Clean And Green Category is:

- Environmentally friendly and sustainable application with clear market potential;
- The service / product has applicability to identified target market/s and the path to that market is clearly established;
- This may include innovative elements and demonstrate sustainable leadership.

WINNER

Envirolove

<http://envirolove.com.au/>

Jahne Meyer and Vikram Sunkara are the founders and owners of Envirolove.

Jahne said, “Since I started this work, I do go past a single bin without wondering - how much is in there that can be recycled”.

Envirolove is a business built for the purpose of empowering people in their environmental contribution. One big part of their business is Food Waste recycling. E.g. in shopping centres, where there are different businesses involved, high turnover of staff and large producers of waste. Envirolove put their problem solving skills into play to create food waste recycling that is easy and works for everyone in the centres. What they care about at the end of the day is that all people, from the Operations Manager to the girl who throws out the coffee grounds, are absolutely lit up to their contribution to the environment and recycling. As a result, every single month Envirolove diverts many tonnes of waste from the ACT landfill.

“We have appreciated the support of **Canberra BusinessPoint** through their clinics in the development of our business.”

FINALIST

My Adelina Cleaning Services

www.myadelinacleaningservices.com.au

Beth and Tony Murdoch are the proud owners of My Adelina Cleaning Services, a family business operating in Canberra since 2009. “Our business objective is to allow customers to have more free time to spend with those they care about. “RELAX WE”LL DO IT FOR YOU - is our motto.”

My Adelina use natural products such as vinegar, bicarb-soda, essential oils and microfiber cloths for dusting and microfiber mops for hard wood floors. Vacuum cleaners have reduced noise level and HEPA Filters and fresh air is taken full advantage of in cleaning homes.

They have discovered that there are many people who want environmentally sound cleaning outcomes and are prepared to pay for the high-quality services we offer. They have put into place excellent quality control processes and our team is trained to pay attention to details.

“Our customers confirm satisfaction with our personal approach and level of care through their feedback and references – and continuation of contracts’, says Beth.

“Tony and I enjoy our interactions with **Canberra BusinessPoint** and have learned a lot from programs.”

FINALIST

Quiet Rush

<http://quietrush.blogspot.com/>

Quiet Rush sell hybrid electric bikes and riding gear – “evolving the ride”

Their hybrid electric bikes are ideally suited to cities like Canberra where active transport is encouraged and supported. The bikes have been getting strong interest domestically and internationally from riders who understand the need for a swift, silent, simple, rugged, flexible and capable electric mountain bike. They're also well suited to the needs of law enforcement, defence and border control agencies.

There is such potential in lightly powered active transport options to address entrenched issues of traffic congestion, noise pollution, transport costs, inactive lifestyles and social isolation. Riding these bikes is an inherently quiet, socially engaging and pleasant experience. They're flexible enough to cater for unfit, inactive or elderly riders, family riders needing some power to help them in pulling a heavy load of kids and shopping in a bike-trailer through to highly experienced off-road riders looking for adventure.

“We have appreciated the support of **Canberra BusinessPoint** in our development.”

BRICKS AND MORTAR

The criteria used for the Bricks and Mortar Category is:

- A tangible product that people can “touch and feel” that has demonstrated market application and validity;
- May include innovative elements;
- The product has an identifiable path to growth.

WINNER

Mighty Mount

Stephen Holgate is the founder and owner of Mighty Mount.

“My idea was born out of sheer frustration whilst I was working on some home improvements. When I found myself asking ‘why hasn’t anyone produced a simple mounting system to make this job easier?’ I produced a simple prototype and the business was born. “

“However, it’s simply not enough to have a good idea or even a prototype. A successful business does not just happen. My business success so far can be attributed mainly to the support from the ACT Government and Canberra BusinessPoint. **Canberra BusinessPoint** has helped in many ways including advice on company structure, IP protection, legal, financial and marketing. For people like myself who are new to this, who have never run a business before. The guidance, advice and support from Canberra BusinessPoint and Lighthouse will have made a significant contribution to our business’s success.

The Mighty Mount business plan includes strategies to have a commercial product in the building industry within the next 3 months, national market exposure within the next 6 months and overseas patent applications within the next 12 months.

FINALIST

Organic & Eco

<http://www.organicandeco.com.au/>

“Two roads diverged in a wood and I – I took the one less travelled by – & that has made all the difference” Carolyn Ryan believes this quote describes her and her business endeavour well.

Carolyn is the founder and owner of Organic & Eco, a business that targets the niche market of natural and organic skincare and is unique to the Canberra. She notes that not only do consumers have a choice of multiple Australian brands, they are safe in the knowledge that each product passes a stringent criteria base. “If it’s not good enough for my store, if it’s not good enough for their shelf at home.”

Consumers are increasingly informed and self-empowered and make purchasing decisions based on health, ethical and environmental beliefs. Organic & Eco is uniquely positioned to meet many of these consumer preferences. Organic & Co interacts with the consumer through bricks & mortar retail, online and a social media presence.

“**Canberra BusinessPoint** provides a cost effective and supportive environment where I can both learn and network.”

FINALIST

Shade4Hire

<http://www.shade4hire.com/>

Shade4hire is a business operating in Canberra & surrounding regions. Research indicated neither large peg and pole marquees nor water proof Shade Tops were available in the ACT.

Founder and owner Ian Bassingthwaite realised that their product was able to target a niche market and asked **Canberra BusinessPoint** for assistance. They attended their first Business Basics Seminar and with guidance helped the business in the further development of the shade4hire website. Our Web Designer stressed the importance of web pages being able to open quickly, and include detailed FAQs and hire stock details with pricing.

Their identifiable path to growth has been measured by the number of enquiries generated from the Google Search Engine and measurement of hits on the site.

During their first year, high customer satisfaction levels have been indicated by increased customer demand and repeat business. Customer satisfaction is assessed by interview, indicating clients appreciate the quality of our materials and service.

The innovation was to take centre sections of large marquees and adapt them to form a shade top. We have a variety of materials to meet a growing market.

CREATIVE AND DESIGN

The criteria used for the Creative and Design Category is:

- A creative endeavour, existing or in development, that has clear market potential;
- The core product is clearly identified and has a unique market advantage.

WINNER

Canberra Academy of Dramatic Art

www.cada.net.au

Elizabeth and James Scott are the founders and owners of Canberra Academy of Dramatic Art (CADA). CADA is Canberra's leading drama school, providing innovative training in drama and communication skills for children aged 4 through to adults.

"For us, 'acting' is not about glamour or pretending to be something you're not – it's about discovering truth through storytelling. We encourage people to discover more of who they are through the process of rehearsal and performance. We have seen extremely shy children speak boldly before an audience after just a few weeks in class; we have seen public servants who have been trapped in a suit for 20 years find a whole new side to themselves which they didn't know existed. Dramatic art is valuable because for many people it's life-changing," said Elizabeth

Over 200 students across Canberra now participate in dramatic art on a weekly basis. Since CADA began in 2009, it has doubled its turnover every year. Of special note is their vocational education programs, which are delivered in association with Unity College Australia, a local registered training organisation.

In 2011 CADA launched Canberra's first Certificate III in Performance (Acting) 81118ACT, a nationally accredited, Austudy approved course. Styled as an introduction to professional acting technique, this course offers students a chance to explore their dramatic potential and receive a qualification for their efforts after 18-weeks of full-time study.

For those who want to take it further, CADA is developing an Advanced Diploma, due to start in 2012, which involves a further two years of study. This program aims to help students become versatile, working actors across a range of media. Also coming soon is a Diploma of Musical Theatre – another first for Canberra.

Canberra Academy of Dramatic Art thanks **Canberra BusinessPoint** for the opportunity to be involved in clinics, masterclasses and networking events, which have really helped inform our decision-making in our business.

FINALIST

Seona McDonald

Seona McDonald started SeonaMargaretDesigns in June 2011, designing and creating unique pieces of wearable art and jewellery through the mediums of crochet and beadwork. “ I pride myself on using high quality materials resulting in beauty, strength and durability.”

“I’ve created jewellery for family and friends for years however after numerous requests from workmates and others, just by word of mouth, I knew there was a market for my designs.”

Canberra BusinessPoint has been instrumental in helping me develop confidence and progress my business by assisting with advice, mentoring and workshops.

“It’s an exciting year for me; starting SeonaMargaretDesigns, and winning Reserve Champion Overall Beading and a Beading Category Champion and numerous other prizes at the Royal Canberra Show.

MICRO-ENTERPRISE

The criteria used for the Micro-Enterprise Category is:

- A business, in early stage or growth, that meets that standard criteria of micro-enterprise and employs less than 5 employees;
- The business demonstrates a clear path to market.

WINNER

Alice Be Curious

Daniella Jukic is the founder and owner of Alice Be Curious, a women's clothing boutique in New Acton that sells unique shoes, clothes and accessories. "The women of Canberra no longer need to travel to Sydney or Melbourne to find that statement piece. When buying from Alice Be Curious you know not everyone will be walking down the street will be wearing the same thing you."

In a month's time Alice Be Curious will be online. Alice Be Curious also uses social media on a daily basis to engage with my target audience. Daniella enjoys posting updates on upcoming stock and fashion tips. She also enjoys collaborating with local photographers and fashion designers to produce editorial images to help expose and promote Canberra's hidden creative talent.

"**Canberra BusinessPoint** has helped with my business planning and also introduced me to my web designer at a networking night."

FINALIST

Learning Adventures

www.learningadventures.com.au

Leanne Gundry founded Learning Adventures in 2008 and commenced operations in April, 2009.

Learning Adventures offers Japanese language and cultural courses for children and families. We aim to be the best quality provider of early childhood language education in Australia, if not beyond, through developing a sustainable business model that enables me to support my team through genuine family-friendly practices and maximum inclusion of client families. In short "I want to be the family-friendly flexible employer I wished I could have found in my earlier working life".

The Learning Adventures program focuses on joyful and hands-on experiential learning through cooking, art & craft, songs, games, calligraphy and off-site excursions, to name but a few of our teaching tools. We use a unique team-teaching model so that children are exposed to real-life teacher-to-teacher communication as part of their regular classes.

Growth statistics are robust, with a 600% increase in paid enrolments from our commencement in April 2009 through to October 2011, 2.5 years into the business, slightly ahead of our planned growth targets for Year 3.

"Our motto is 'slow and steady wins the race'. Strong word-of-mouth reputation has meant, apart from a \$3000 ACT Government Women's Microcredit Loan – now fully repaid – that funded our recently-launched new website, we have achieved our growth to date with a marketing budget of \$27! I have also been blessed with several Business Mentors from diverse backgrounds helping me to turn these dreams into reality, two of whom came through the **Canberra BusinessPoint** community."

FINALIST

Players Football Club

<http://playersfc.wordpress.com/>

Anthony Hatton is the owner operator of Player's Football Club, a specialist soccer club for young kids aged 3 to 9 years.

The point of difference for the club is that they run a specially designed *Kidsoccer* program that is non-teams based and non-competitive. This appeals too many young players who can participate without the pressures and sometimes negatives experiences associated with the traditional team sport environment.

This approach has proven popular with parents and kids alike, with many parents willing to say nice things about our program to their friends. This has led to steady growth in the last four years - just 23 kids in 2008 to over 230 kids in our 2011 winter program.

I really enjoy the challenge of being in business and particularly learning new things. I've been able to take advantage of the workshops and seminars by **Canberra BusinessPoint** which has helped me meet the many new challenges this year.

However, my greatest satisfaction comes from seeing young kids enjoy their sport. When they do, it's the first step on the road to being better and becoming more confident in themselves. I'm looking forward to the next few years and many more kids at the club

HIGH GROWTH

The criteria used for the High Growth Category are:

- A business that is trading or in development, with a growth strategy in place whether organic or through investment;
- The business has a customer or is about to lock one in.

WINNER

Contractor Compliance Australia

<http://www.contractorcompliance.com.au/>

Anne O'Connor is the founder and owner of Contractor Compliance Australia Pty Ltd, with Head Office based in Fyshwick and satellite offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The business has been operating for 19 months since April 2010 and already has approximately 180+ clients in the Canberra and surrounding regions.

Contractor Compliance has filled a gap in the Building and Construction industry supplying Auditing, Compliance and Business services and assistance to small, medium and large businesses in Canberra and surrounding areas.

Contractor Compliance has managed to grow the business organically. Due to a past financial situation, it did not have assets to use as security and was unable to secure funding from banks. However, it has been able to grow the business in spite of these challenges and continues to grow.

The business has yet to advertise, our customer base has grown through word of mouth and recommendations throughout Canberra and into NSW, QLD and Victoria

With over 30years experience in the building and construction industry, we have filled a need, assisting businesses with attaining and maintaining compliance, freeing them up to work.

“**Canberra BusinessPoint** team has supported us over the past 19 months and prior to the launch of the business. Without their unconditional support and assistance the business would not be where it is today.”

FINALIST

Easycare Landscapes

<http://www.easycare.com.au/>

Vicki Still is the owner and manager of Easycare Landscapes. Vicki began her landscape design, construction and maintenance business in 1999 with the intention of keeping it as a one person, part-time micro business. It grew exponentially and was quickly out of control with no systems or processes.

She has led innovation in her sector by appealing to a market of mature women who trust another mature woman, by implementing processes and procedures that are so good the business could easily be franchised, despite being residential with no quality assurance requirements and by looking after all sections of residential landscaping including design, construction and maintenance – so that “our clients can just enjoy their garden rather than having to work in it”.

Their growth strategy is happening with 3 people being coached to succeed Vicki in her role (thanks to an EDF grant, **Canberra BusinessPoint** and the ACT Government) and the new trading name of Elemental Landscapes is set to place us in a new market.

FINALIST

Deeks Health Foods

<http://www.easycare.com.au/>

Deeks Health Foods™ is much more than a bakery. “We are uncompromising in making great tasting, nutritious gluten and grain-free food to help our customers enjoy life.”

Deeks has two stores in Canberra. Our first is in Pearce, where all the food production is done. The other store (café) is in Dickson. Food can be bought from these two stores as well as select stockists, supermarkets, restaurants and cafés here in the ACT, NSW, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

The Deeks idea originated from the need to produce a range of quality food for people unable to eat gluten and grains. After many years of pioneering research, Rob and his good friend and clinical biologist, Bill Giles launched Deeks in 2005.

Message from Rob de Castella

“Grain and gluten free living is not a fad. It is an awareness that will continue to grow as the public understanding grows.

“Not only do I stand by my products, I continue to strive for better health and performance by eating Deeks™ on a daily basis. I encourage you to do the same.

“For a delicious investment in your health...enjoy Deeks.

“Deeks is at a substantial growth stage at the moment and we’re keen to make substantial improvements and establish a national presence in the ensuing months. The contact, assistance and guidance we’ve received thus far from **Canberra BusinessPoint** and Lighthouse Innovation have been invaluable. The connections and leads resulting from the seminars, workshops and other activities have and will undoubtedly allow us to fulfill our ambitions of having Deeks available to everybody in Australia and then overseas.”