

Awards recognise ACT businesses

By John Thistleton

Canberra creator of new web-based program myinfoQ that enables busy people to keep track of all their interests with text messages and Twitter has been recognised in the Canberra BusinessPoint awards for innovative new businesses.

Capitalising on the growing popularity of social media as a forum for businesses to reach customers, myinfoQ allows people to keep track of brands, products and services that interest them and for businesses to gauge the success of their lead-generation campaigns.

Founder Dugald Homes met the awards criteria which included market validation, being Canberra-based and interacting with Canberra BusinessPoint which provides advice and support for ACT businesses.

Mr Homes said by using SMS, Twitter, Facebook or myinfoQ's mobile app a user could track

products and brands, movies to see, books to read or a property for sale.

All relevant information was delivered instantly.

Businesses could activate their signage and advertising with a key word. When the customer sent an SMS, they received the information directly and the business knew how well their lead generation campaign was going.

Finalists in the web and mobile category were Karen Schilling and Tom Wedding's web-based management system Sigma Bravo, and Gum Tree Homes founder Richard Branford, a builder who has developed a web site for home plans.

Canberra Business Council and Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre run Canberra BusinessPoint with ACT Government funding and helped more than 800 enterprises during the year with legal, financial and marketing advice.

Business Council chief executive

Chris Faulks said awards in six categories recognised innovation, effective planning and future potential and showed the ACT was an excellent incubator for successful small businesses.

Envirolove, which helps increase recycling and divert tonnes of waste from landfill won the clean and green category.

Founders Jahne Meyer and Vikram Sunkara said a big part of the business was food waste recycling, especially from shopping centres.

Finalists in this category were My Adelina Cleaning Services, a family business offering environmentally sound cleaning and Quiet Rush which sells hybrid electric bikes and riding gear.

Mighty Mount, a mounting system to help the building industry won the bricks and mortar category for tangible products. Founder Stephen Holgate said the product came from his sheer frustration while working

on home improvements and looking for something to make his job easier.

Finalists were Organic and Eco, which provides natural skincare products and Shade4Hire which provides shade tops.

Canberra Academy of Dramatic Arts won the creative and design category with its school for teaching drama and communication.

Finalist Seona McDonald designs wearable art and jewellery.

Microenterprise category winner was Alice Be Curious, a women's clothing boutique and finalists were learning Adventures which offers Japanese language and cultural courses and Players Football Club, a specialist soccer club for children.

The high growth category winner, Contractor Compliance Australia, was founded by Anne O'Connor to provide auditing, compliance and business services.

Finalists were Easycare landscapes and Deeks Health Foods.