

SA businesses excel in challenging times

2 July 2009: Leading small and medium businesses, today named as finalists for the 2009 South Australian (SA) Telstra Business Award, are weathering the current financial difficulties through a combination of strong customer focus, innovation and robust business processes.

Twelve SA businesses - ranging from a flower and gift delivery service to a company developing health cures for the 21st century - were today announced as finalists in Australia's largest and most prestigious small business awards program.

Four of the 12 finalists in the awards are helping build South Australia reputation as the innovation hub of Australia, through their development of groundbreaking research and products.

The winners of the South Australian awards will be announced on July 14, and the winners of each category will proceed to the national awards to be announced in Sydney on August 20. There is more than \$400,000 in cash and prizes to be won.

Telstra Business Group Managing Director and Telstra Business Awards Ambassador, Deena Shiff, said while the finalists from South Australia operated in a diverse range of industries and vastly different scales, they were all weathering the current financial turmoil with a combination of strong customer focus and robust business processes.

"For 17 years, the Telstra Business Awards have applauded and inspired the strength and spirit of Australia's entrepreneurs as part of Telstra's support for the engine room of the economy," Ms Shiff said.

"As economic conditions get more difficult, the role of these awards couldn't be more important. And the SA finalists are rising to the challenge.

"Rather than wallowing in the doom and gloom of the financial situation, these businesses from Port Adelaide to Mount Gambier see the financial crisis as a new opportunity. With the right business models in place, they are being even more aggressive in pursuing new business.

"A number of them are doing so by breaking new ground with their world leading innovations and even saving lives in the process."

For Kelly Baker, Managing Director of Edible Blooms, new markets have opened up following a quick response to the global financial crisis.

"We pre-empted a drop in consumer spending and with the majority of our products priced at over \$60 we made a decision to expand our range under \$50. Popularity for this low-end range has soared and the increase in new customers has facilitated total revenue growth," Ms Baker said.

For others, business is prospering through the delivery of new innovations. Since its founding in 2004, small Adelaide biotech, Vaxine has risen to international prominence for its world leading vaccine research.

Vaxine founder, Professor Nikolai Petrovsky said his company is "at the forefront of global efforts to create new vaccines to counter the major threats posed by HIV, SARS, avian influenza and more recently swine influenza".

For CEO of EVRsafe Technologies, Shane Faulkhead, the company's innovative integrated toxic gas detection system is the only one of its kind in the world, and has the ability to save hundreds of lives each year.

Ms Shiff said each finalist has undergone a rigorous self-assessment process with their plans and processes assessed by a panel of independent judges. The judging panel has also visited the site of each of the finalists and obtained verification of financial data.

SA finalists in the 2009 Telstra Business Awards are:

Businessowner

Micro-Business

Award	Out of this World The Trademan	Advertising/Marketing Home services	Kent Town Port Adelaide
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MYOB

Small Business

Award	Edible Blooms Pty Ltd Vaxine Pty Ltd Rapid Induct Clarke and Associates Veterinary Practice EVRsafe Technologies	Retailing Biotechnology/Pharmaceutical Education Veterinary Air quality technology	Goodwood Bedford Park Adelaide Mount Gambier Eastwood
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Panasonic Australia

Medium Business

Award	Solar Shop Australia Wellness & Lifestyles Australia d'Arenberg Pty Ltd GeneWorks	Renewable energy Healthcare Food & beverage Biotechnology	St Peters Kent Town McLaren Vale Thebarton
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Sensis Social

Responsibility Award

Vaxine Pty Ltd Solar Shop Australia Clarke and Associates Veterinary Practice	Biotechnology/Pharmaceutical Renewable energy Veterinary	Bedford Park St Peters Mount Gambier
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AMP Innovation

Award

Vaxine Pty Ltd Solar Shop Australia Pinnacle Workplace Consultants Pty Ltd	Biotechnology/Pharmaceutical Renewable energy Professional Services	Bedford Park St Peters Eastwood
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Ms Shiff said Telstra Business was committed to helping small and medium-sized businesses succeed by providing them with business grade tools and guidance for today's challenging and ever-changing environment.

"We touch more small and medium businesses than almost any other organisation and we want them to succeed not only by providing services and solutions, but also by working in partnership with them to help their business thrive into the future," Ms Shiff said.

"As part of this commitment, each year Telstra invests months of work and millions of dollars to assess the hundreds of entries in the Telstra Business Awards. We make such a significant undertaking because we want to work with small and medium businesses to realise their potential and receive the recognition they deserve."



Media release

Editor's note: Details of each business, contact details and photographs are available on request from Lighthouse Communications Group on 02 9692 8811 or by email: plaidlaw@lighthousecomms.com.au.

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