



Media Release

14 June 2012

Christchurch's Plato Design Selected As Finalist

Plato Design Agency has been selected as a finalist in the 2012 AUT Excellence in Business Support Awards.

Recognised for excellence in the "Business Under \$5m turnover – Sales and Marketing" category, Plato will join 48 other finalists in this year's AUT Excellence in Business Support Awards – a record number in the awards seven year history.

John and Lisa Plato say this latest achievement is testament to the hard work of the Plato team.

"We've moved five times in the last five years, three times as a result of the earthquakes," says John. "That's certainly trying for staff and clients alike, especially if they too are personally experiencing instability as a result of the earthquakes. We've tried hard to stay together as a team, in the same location and have been fortuitous to recently move into new offices across the road from our last premises, which incidentally are being demolished this month," he says.

Plato Design has experienced significant growth every year for the last five years, and the long-term sustainability of the business is really important to the husband and wife team. Lisa Plato says, "We have a responsibility to our staff and their families. We are only as good as our people, and our people are great."

Sarah Trotman, Founder of the Excellence in Business Support Awards and Director of Business Relations at AUT Business School says the high level of interest this year is highly encouraging for New Zealand business.

"The Excellence in Business Support Awards were established in 2005, and never before have we had 49 finalists. It's a true reflection of the quality of applicants we have had this year," says Trotman.

For Dean of AUT Business School Geoff Perry, being aligned with the awards provides an important opportunity to build on the Schools existing engagement with industry.

"The Excellence in Business Support Awards are regarded highly among industry, providing organisations the chance to benchmark their performance alongside others in their field. As a Business School, it's important for us to celebrate the businesses that contribute to the economic and social development of our region, so that together, we can continue to add value to the changing world of business," says Dr Perry.

The robust entry and evaluation process of the awards enables finalists to reflect on how effectively their organisation achieves business excellence in all key areas including leadership and planning, customer and market focus, provision of business support, evaluation and improvement, and business results.

Finalists now have until 6 July to submit their final applications. The winners will then be announced in October at a black-tie gala dinner in Auckland. The Supreme Award will be chosen from the category winners.

Evaluation of all nominations will be overseen by The New Zealand Business Excellence Foundation, including evaluators for the management department of AUT Business School. Excellence will be assessed using the international Baldrige criteria.

Ends

Please contact Ali Jones on 027 247 3112 for more information.

The 2012 Finalists of the AUT Excellence in Business Support Awards are as follows:

Business under \$5m turnover – Management Services

- Optimal Usability Limited
- Otago Innovation Limited
- Rotorua Chamber of Commerce
- The Small Business Company
- Valentine Addis Ltd

Business under \$5m turnover – Sales & Marketing

- The Research Agency
- Plato Design Agency
- Verve – The Event Agency
- Terabyte Interactive

Business under \$5m turnover – Technology

- Vadacom
- Optimal Usability
- Aura RedEye Security Ltd

Business under \$5m turnover – Accounting and Finance

- Debtworks
- DJCA
- GoFi8ure

Business \$5m - \$10m turnover

- Provoke Solutions
- Advanced Security
- Laser Plus Limited

Large Business Specific Initiative

- Deloitte Fast 50
- ASB Bank Limited -Business Focus Account
- BNZ Finance

Large Business \$10m - \$50m turnover

- Teradata
- Plan-b Ltd
- Intergen
- BankLink
- Telecom Rentals
- Fusion5

Large Business \$50m-\$200m turnover

- Kordia Networks
- 2degrees
- Minter Ellison Rudd Watts

Large Business \$200m plus

- Gen-i
- GE Capital
- Bidvest
- Bartercard New Zealand
- ANZ Banking Group NZ

Not for Profit

- Sustainable Business Network

- Leadership New Zealand
- Beef + Lamb New Zealand Ltd
- Development West Coast
- Onehunga High Business School

Government

- CarboNZero Holdings
- Dunedin City Council – Economic Development Unit
- Business.govt.nz (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment)
- Dispute Resolution Services Ltd
- Work & Income

Individual

- Dr Ann Smith – CarboNZero Holdings
- Chris Quin – CEO Gen-i Australasia
- Rachel Brown – CEO Sustainable Business Network
- Glen Senior – CEO The Small Business Company
- Michael Barnett – CEO Auckland Regional Chamber of Commerce & Industry