

NZSA Launches New Business Journalist Awards

Awards for excellence in business journalism have been announced by the New Zealand Shareholders Association (NZSA).

NZSA chairman John Hawkins said the awards were designed to replace the business journalism awards which were cancelled earlier this year after issues over commercial sponsorship. The NZSA Awards will have no commercial sponsor support.

The Association believes it is very important to encourage and improve business journalism in New Zealand because it plays a vital role in the efficient functioning of the capital markets including celebrating excellence as well as investigating less positive behaviours, he said.

Unfortunately this area has borne the brunt of cutbacks as a result of changes to traditional media models.

Hawkins said the NZSA awards were notably different from others. Quite apart from NZSA's own independence, these awards would have no corporate sponsorship. The judging panel was totally independent of NZSA and had been given complete freedom to set the parameters for each award.

We have taken this approach so there can be no conflicts of interest and to ensure winners will be chosen entirely on merit. We want these to be the awards that every professional business journalist will aspire to win, said Hawkins.

The judging panel is chaired by Sir Rob Fenwick. Other members are Reg Birchfield, Merja Myllylahti, Garth Ireland and Jane Arnott.

Entries will be accepted in three categories, News, Feature and Commentary, with the option for newer journalists to also enter a Young Journalist award. The top "Business Journalist of the Year" winner will be selected from the three category winners. The awards are open to a wide range of media formats and either a single or a series of stories, which reflects the reality of how journalism continues to evolve, said Hawkins.

Entries will open on 25 September and must be received by 8 October. NZSA will directly contact individuals and media organisations, and entry details will be placed on the Associations website www.nzshareholders.co.nz for independent journalists to access.

The awards will be presented on 14 November 2017 in Auckland, as part of an expanded "Beacon" dinner function where NZSA will also present its Supreme Award for Business Excellence.

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