



MEDIA RELEASE

Rainbow excellence shines brightly despite Covid cloud

The 2021 New Zealand Rainbow Excellence Awards were held today in a live, virtual ceremony, hosted by Ali Mau.

Over 400 online attendees nationwide logged onto the event that celebrates organisations who are achieving best practice and making outstanding progress towards creating more inclusive workplaces for New Zealand's LGBTTQIA+ community.

The virtual Awards included videos from finalists, winners, and special guests from all corners of New Zealand, including the Mother of Marriage Equality, Labour MP Louisa Wall who laid down a challenge for the organisations of Aotearoa to reach out to our Pacific neighbours and our local communities, to encourage support of rainbow initiatives and events.

Many of the organisations who entered and virtually attended the Awards chose to have at-home or work-bubble celebrations (relative to regional Covid alert-level restrictions), sending a clear signal that not even Covid could dim today's rainbow festivities.

The big winner on the day was a first-time entrant who only recently gained Rainbow Tick certification.

The winner of the 2021 Westpac Supreme Award is Spaceworks Interior Architecture. They have offices in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown.

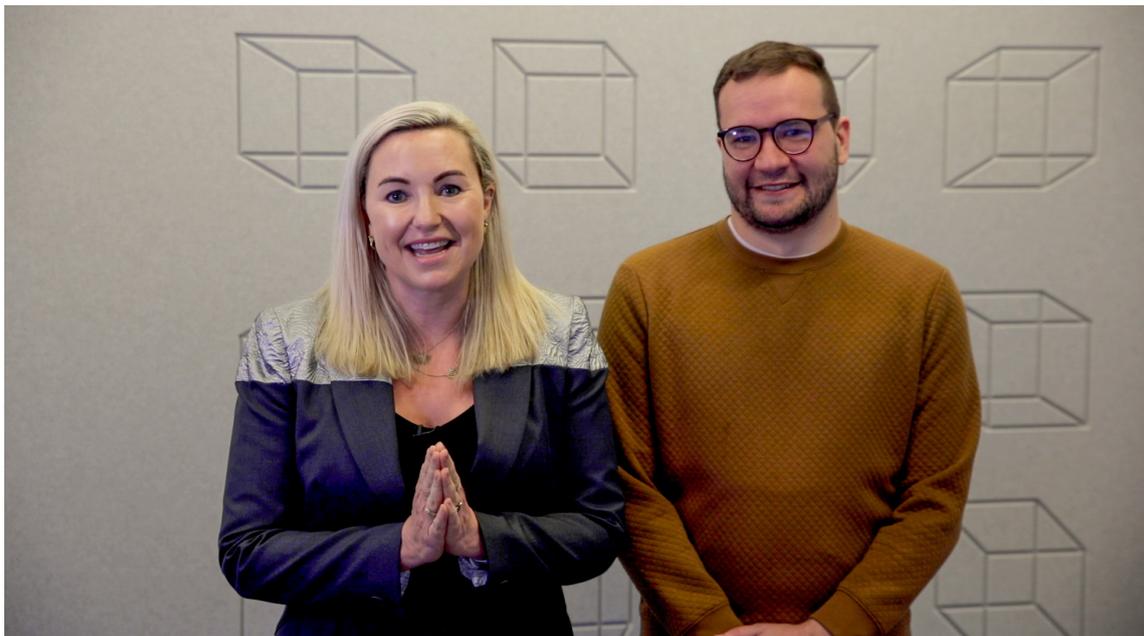
New Zealand Rainbow Excellence Awards, Director and judging convenor, Martin King, says; "Spaceworks are a shining example of how businesses of any size can weave rainbow inclusion into the fabric of their everyday workplace experience. As a new-comer to the Awards, they have been on a fast-paced journey towards making a measurable impact and setting a standard that other organisations can aspire to. We are incredibly proud to call them this year's Supreme Winner.

"I would also like to extend my congratulations to all of the entrants and finalists who have boldly shared their stories and are committed to this journey. The judges were impressed by the continued advancement of rainbow inclusion initiatives despite disruptions from Covid."

The 2021 New Zealand Rainbow Excellence Awards category winners are:

- Westpac Supreme Award: Spaceworks Interior Architecture
- The SKYCITY Community and Advocacy Award: ASB Bank
- The Simpson Grierson Impact Award: The New Zealand Defence Force
- The Partners Life Emerging Award: Spaceworks Interior Architecture
- The Newmarket Business Association Executive Leadership Award: Lizzi Whaley, CEO Spaceworks Interior Architecture
- The Chorus Ambassadorship Award: Shelly Thompson – New Zealand Intelligence Community
- The Grant Thornton Innovation Award: EY
- The Purple Sherbet Representation in Marketing Award: Les Mills International
- The Rainbow Tick Training and Development Award: Chorus NZ Ltd
- The Rainbow Tick Non-Commercial Sector Award: The New Zealand Defence Force
- The Westpac SME Rainbow Inclusivity Award: Spaceworks Interior Architecture

Martin King also echoed Louisa Wall's comments; "If there was ever a time when organisations should be accelerating their commitments to Diversity and Inclusion, it is now. "Covid has forced change upon organisations to work differently and with the rise of day-to-day video conferencing, employees have been thrust into bringing their whole selves to work like never before; inviting people into their homes, garages, living rooms, and everyday lives. Employers need to embrace and celebrate the diversity of our workforce – it's here to stay!"



Depicted: Lizzi Whaley and Dugan Weitz of Spaceworks Interior Architecture



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