



founding partners

27th Annual Ethnic Business Awards Gala Winners Announcement.

A family who fled war-torn Lebanon to create a new life in Australia has taken out one of the top prizes at the prestigious Ethnic Business Awards.

Joseph Kairouz and his brother worked in the meat industry to support their 10 other siblings.

Now Cedar Meats Australia, based in Brooklyn, Victoria, employs more than 400 people, exporting to the US, EU and China.

It won the Medium to Large Business award at a glittering ceremony in the Adelaide Hilton on 6th November.

In its 27th year, the Ethnic Business Awards is a celebration of multicultural endeavour.

As Founder and Chairman so eloquently put on the evening; “ just as diversity *and* adversity breed opportunity and success breeds success, so this great country gives birth to global role models.... Citizens, that make not only Australia proud, but nations all over the world. It is for this very reason that the good management of our diversity, of our minorities, is so important because it guarantees us a peaceful, prosperous and harmonious future.”

Inspired by the struggles of his grandfather, an Aboriginal World War 1 veteran, Derek Flucker won the Indigenous in Business award for RBY Project Pty. Ltd.

Derek created his own business model to reduce the dependence on welfare in local communities, becoming the biggest Indigenous business in Queensland’s resource sector, employing more than a hundred people and tripling turnover in one year.

Another Queenslander, Takeshi Takada, took out the Small Business award for his company, Alt.Vfx, in Fortitude Valley.

After arriving from Japan at the age of 12 with no English, Takeshi went to a school for migrants before graduating from Brisbane Boys Grammar.

He’s now the most awarded Executive Producer in Australia, more than doubling Alt.Vfx’s turnover since last year.

Each winner takes home a hand crafted crystal trophy, a \$10,000 cheque from the National Australia Bank and all finalists enjoyed luxury accommodation, travel and transfers.

The 2015 Ethnic Business Awards will be broadcast on:

SBS One: Saturday 14th November 15:30 to 17:30

NITV: Saturday 21st November 19:30 -21:30

Aurora Community Channel (Channel 183 on Foxtel):

Saturday 14th November 20.30 – 22:30

Sunday 15th November 12:00 – 14:00

Sunday 15th November 19:30 – 21:30

More broadcast times will be advertised on the news page of the Ethnic Business Awards website www.ethnicbusinessawards.com

For interviews, please contact maria@ethnicbusinessawards.com (0420) 312 995 or tracey@spicercommunications.biz (0411) 281 854.

(Editor's note: Summaries of individual finalists are provided below – Winners have been highlighted in bold. Should you wish to interview finalists, please contact us so this can be arranged. Video and stills are available.)

Indigenous in Business Category Finalists

Pacific Services Group Holdings (PSG Holdings) – Troy Rugless – Botany, NSW

What started as a chat about the need for good business practice in the building and cleaning industries quickly led to an Indigenous-owned enterprise, Pacific Services Group Holdings. Over the past four years, Troy and his co-founder Shane have built a strong reputation for outstanding customer service, reliability, on time delivery and quality, more than doubling their turnover in the past 12 months.

Terri Janke and Company – Terri Janke – Roseberry, NSW

The birth of her second child made Terri realise she wanted to do something to make her children proud. Starting as a sole trader focusing on Intellectual Property Law with one international client, Terri Janke and Company provided specialist advice in law and cultural matters. In 2012, the company was included in the Attorney General's Legal Service Multi Use list.

RBV Project Pty Ltd - Derek Flucker – Capalaba, QLD

Inspired by the struggle of his grandfather - an Aboriginal World War I veteran - Derek was determined to achieve his dream of creating a business. Derek built his model on the reduction of welfare dependency by employing local Indigenous people in the resource sector. It soon became the largest Indigenous business in the resource industry in Queensland, employing more than 100 people, and almost tripling turnover within a year.

Rusca Bros Services – Sidney Rusca – Darwin, NT

A member of the Stolen Generation, Sidney Rusca asked himself one day, "What am I going to leave the kids?" With the motto of "no work, no pay", Sidney created an earthmoving company, which

became Rusca Bros, as his children demonstrated the strong work ethic of their father. With a combined workforce 300-strong, Sidney's operation is an Indigenous owned and operated company in the mining, civil, construction and training sectors.

Small Business Category Finalists

Xocolatl– Christos Partsioglou – Kew East – VIC

In 1970, eleven-year-old Christos arrived in Australia with his parents from Greece, carrying one suitcase for a family of five. Struggling with language, he entered the rag trade. After 20 years, the business diminished due to overseas manufacturing, and Christos, along with his two daughters, followed his second passion, desserts and handmade chocolates, creating Xocolatl.

Pocket Group – Christophe Lehoux – Darlinghurst – NSW

Christophe, originally from France, was enticed by two Aussie entrepreneurs to start a Sydney restaurant/cocktail bar/club. Seeing a gap in the market for nightlife options, he and business partner Karl Schlothauer jumped on a licence opportunity, spanning a six-venue portfolio between New South Wales and Paris.

Heather Brae Shortbreads - Bassam Wakim – Thomastown – VIC

Coming to Australia by ship in 1965 with his mother and five siblings, a six-year-old Bassam struggled as a migrant child. Melbourne was a far cry from his rural upbringing in Lebanon. After 10 years in civil engineering, Bassam and his wife bought a small, struggling company, building its workforce from 12 to 40. Heather Brae now supplies all supermarkets in Australia, as well as exporting to New Zealand, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Alt.Vfx – Takeshi Takada –Fortitude Valley – QLD

Takeshi arrived in Australia from Japan at the age of 12, spending the first eight months in an English language school before developing a love of rugby at Brisbane Boys Grammar. After school, he returned to Japan to work in IT and advertising, before coming back to Australia to own and run a specialist visual effects/post production company with five other professionals, called Alt.Vfx. The company has more than doubled his turnover since last year.

Medium to Large Business Category Finalists

Galipo Food Company – Sebastian Galipo – Dry Creek – SA

Sebastian migrated to Australia as a four-year-old. By selling his father's home grown produce, Sebastian developed sales skills as a 12-year-old which later became invaluable when starting Galipo Foods. What began with a one tonne truck and a few domestic fridges/freezers in a home garage, has grown into a 'One Stop Shop' for the Foodservice Industry, employing 120 people. With a fleet of 36 trucks, Galipo delivers more than 6,500 different food products to businesses throughout South Australia.

Australian Innovative Systems (AIS) - Elena Gosse – Tingalpa, QLD

After leaving behind an entertainment career in Russia, arriving in Australia with her two young daughters, Elena overcame personal and professional challenges to become a successful CEO. Now in the water disinfection industry, Elena has transformed AIS from a 3-staff operation to a 50+ staff, multi-million dollar, local and export success story. Its workforce comprises immigrants from 14 countries, people with disabilities and mature aged staff. Elena also champions gender equality, running a female mentorship program.

Cedar Meats Australia – Joseph Kairouz – Brooklyn – VIC

With the help of his brother, who had migrated to Melbourne in 1967, Joseph and 10 other siblings came to Australia from Lebanon in 1973. The younger siblings went to school to learn English while Joseph and his older brother worked to make ends meet. A small butchery has evolved to process 7000 animals a day, employing more than 400 people. Exporting to countries including the USA, EU and China, Joseph attributes steady and consistent growth to the continued focus on quality and customer service.

Halikos Group – John Halikos – Darwin – NT

Migrating from Greece to Darwin with his family in the early sixties, John was encouraged to work hard by his father. When Cyclone Tracy devastated the city in 1974, John's father took the family back to Greece. However, John knew little of his mother tongue, and decided to move back to Darwin to live with an Aunt. In 1987, a small operation called Halikos Roofing Pty Ltd began. 28 years later, the Halikos Group of Companies has grown into seven specialist operations, employing more than 350 full and part-time Territorians.

SPONSORS

