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PRESS RELEASE

26 APRIL 2022

EMBARGO TILL 10 AM

## **Applications open for the 2022 Waikato Business Awards**

The Waikato Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, proudly supported by Foster Construction Group, are open to applicants from 10am today, Tuesday, April 26. The prestigious awards celebrate the success of local businesses in the Waikato. Last year's Awards saw a record number of applications, evidence of the region's innovative and high-performance business spirit.

DEC Pharmaceutical won the Supreme Award for 2021, placing first in the competitive International Trade and Service Excellence categories. CEO Ryan Marra praised the award process, highlighting how beneficial it was to apply.

“We were quite surprised by how much work goes into the application but found the reflection process rewarding, looking back and seeing what we’ve achieved. It can be challenging for a little Kiwi company to blow your own trumpet and put ourselves forward sometimes, but we’re so glad we did.”

Aspiring businesses have until midday July 15 to submit a written entry highlighting the strengths and achievements of their business. The judging team of more than 30 Waikato business leaders, headed by the University of Waikato’s Dr Heather Connolly, reviews each application before selecting who will progress to stage two. Stage two involves a two-hour site visit with judges asking questions about the application and the business. Finalists will then be selected, with the winners of each category announced at a Gala Dinner on November 4.

“It’s a great opportunity for any business to increase their exposure, and receive professional insights and recommendations on their strategy,” said Chamber CEO Don Good.

"All entrants will receive detailed feedback from the judge's assessment, which can then be used to grow, develop and improve their business. It encourages goal setting, and we constantly hear how beneficial that feedback is for our entrants. The opportunity to network with the rest of the Waikato business community is invaluable, and the winners join a long list of awards Alumni that include Foster Construction, Gallagher and Montana Food & Events."

The awards themselves would not be possible without the support of primary sponsors, Foster Construction Group, and other sponsors Air New Zealand, Chow:Hill Architects, Company-X, Deloitte, Mitre 10, Montana Food & Events, SkyPoint Technologies, Sleepyhead, Tompkins Wake, Trust Waikato, the University of Waikato and Wintec.

This year the Waikato Chamber of Commerce will host a launch event, inviting past award winners, sponsors and business partners in the community to celebrate 26 years of the annual business awards. This event will be held at Rabobank in Union Square, the newly developed Foster Construction project, on May 12.

Like past years, the Chamber will be hosting drop-in info sessions for people wanting to know more about the process. These will take place on May 20, June 17 and July 8 and are open to everyone. Attendees will receive guidance on how to write an impressive application and learn what stands out to the judges.

There are multiple categories to apply for, including Business Growth & Strategy, Community Contribution, CEO of the Year and Innovation. Excitingly, with the success of last year's awards, the number of award categories will be expanding this year, from 12 to 13.

"For the first time, entrants will now be able to apply for the People & Culture award. We know the Waikato has many excellent businesses that would be well-deserving of this award, and we can't wait to see who puts themselves forward," said Don.

For more information on the awards and to begin your application visit [www.waikatochamber.co.nz/business-awards/](http://www.waikatochamber.co.nz/business-awards/).

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