

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 26/07/2021 at 8pm

Salute to Excellence Winners Announced!

26/07/21

Winners have been revealed for the Queensland Tourism Industry Council's (QTIC) 24th annual Salute to Excellence Awards. The program recognises outstanding secondary students, employers, schools and registered training organisations for their contribution to skill development in the tourism and hospitality industry.

It was a tough competition, with 33 people involved in the program this year, one of the highest number of participants in years.

Brisbane came away with five winners; Cookery Runner Up: Erik Brown – Rochedale State High School, Food and Beverage Runner Up: Jay Lyblác – Tafe Queensland, Brisbane State High School, Tourism Winner: Linh Nguyen – Albany Creek State High School, Tourism Runner Up: Georgia Newell – Albany Creek State High School and Teacher/Trainer Winner Leah Cremen – Calamvale Community College.

QTIC Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind congratulated the winners and said the program is a great way to encourage and foster the next generation of leaders in our industry at a time when tourism is in desperate need of more staff.

“Well done to all winners and finalists! The past 12 months has been turbulent for our industry but to see the passion and enthusiasm in both students and teachers for our industry is encouraging.

“The Salute to Excellence Awards is a great stepping-stone into the industry and we take pride in seeing participants continue their journey to go on to be a chef, hotel manager, travel consultants, event managers and more,” Mr Gschwind said.

To date QTIC has had more than 128 schools across Queensland participate in the awards including 600 finalists, and 73 winners. Encouraging people to consider the tourism and hospitality industry as a career choice is essential to the growth of the sector.

Minister for Training and Skills Development, Di Farmer, said it is great to support programs such as the Salute to Excellence Awards that acknowledge emerging professionals who undertake school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

Minister Farmer said it is great to support programs such as the Salute to Excellence Awards that acknowledge emerging professionals who undertake school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

“It’s an absolute pleasure to see the excellent training that’s being delivered in the tourism and hospitality industries, and I want to congratulate all the winners and finalists on their achievements.

MEDIA CONTACTS.

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“Wherever you are in Queensland, you deserve access to the very best training to help you get the job of your dreams.

“The Palaszczuk Government is absolutely committed to providing these opportunities to Queenslanders, which is why we invest in training and skills in our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan and it’s why there was over \$1 billion for it in the recent budget.

“I look forward to seeing what today’s winners and finalists go on to accomplish.”

The tourism and hospitality sector is made up of a successful partnership between employees, Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe congratulated this year’s winners and finalists, highlighting the importance of building up a professional workforce to meet future demand for when Queensland tourism rebounds.

“The Salute to Excellence Awards is a terrific way to promote careers and to inspire both students and teachers in the incredible opportunities in tourism.

“Quality training leads to quality services and quality experiences for visitors - a vital ingredient for Queensland’s continued success.

“We need to celebrate the passion and achievements of these young, aspiring professionals and support them on their tourism journey.

“The Palaszczuk Government is committed to supporting the tourism industry and maximising the tourism opportunities as we embrace a 2032 Olympic Games in Queensland. employers, government, and industry organisations.

A special thanks to our judges for this year; Douglas Innes-Wil (Executive Chef, GOMA), Rahul Raj (Director of Food and Beverage (Accor – Mercure and IBIS Brisbane), Adrienne Putelli (Human Resource Manager Hilton Hotel Brisbane), Michelle Christoe (Director NightQuarter an Malt Shovel Taphouse), Karen Hellsten (Managing Director Mountain Wine Tours), Abbey Filko (Marketing and Sales Manager Airtrain), Arwen McGregor (Director Devon Pixies), Helen Shoubridge (Manager Hinchinbrook Resort), Dr Natasha Montesalvo (Principal Consultant, Destinations, Strategy and Insights EarthCheck).

An event like this would not be possible without supportive industry sponsor; Queensland Government, Tafe Queensland, Hostplus, The Hotel School, Fun Over Fifty, Riverlife, The Star Culinary Group, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Job Skills Queensland, Outback Spectacular, Surf Connect, Institute of Culinary Excellence and Australia Zoo.

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Winners:

Cookery Category

Winner: Abbey Kuhnell – Mount Saint Patrick College Murwillumbah

Runner Up: Erik Brown – Rochedale State High School

Finalist: Charlotte Fehser – South Bank Tafe

Finalist: Ethan Alborn – Helensvale State High School

Finalist: Hayden Drewett – Brisbane Bayside State College

Finalist: Henry Bibby – Brisbane Bayside State High School

Finalist: Cadence Purkis-Arthur – Kirwan State High School

Finalist: Shaeleigh Shearer – Calamvale Community College

Finalist: Liam Wooltorton – Helensvale State High School

Food & Beverage Category

Winner: Paris Foody – Riverside Christian College

Runner Up: Jay Lyblác – Tafe Queensland, Brisbane State High School

Finalist: Ava Croatta – Endeavour Christian College

Finalist: Emily Hudson – Riverside Christian College

Finalist: Jharlee Mcdermott – Kirwan State High School

Finalist: Micah Johnson – Riverside Christian College

Finalist: Sophie Doyle – Riverside Christian College

Tourism Category

Winner: Linh Nguyen – Albany Creek State High School

Runner Up: Georgia Newell – Albany Creek State High School

Finalist: Clay Robertson – St Patricks College

Finalist: Leisel Clements – Albany Creek State High School

Finalist: Chloe McConnell – Kirwan State High School

Teacher/Trainer Category

Winner: Leah Cremen – Calamvale Community College

Runner Up: Donna Jenkin – James Nash State High School

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