

# Exceptional results



*MC and Entertainer Frankie Stevens, Continental's event catering operations manager Karen Abraham with the Exceptional Tourism Provider Award and category sponsor Graeme Abbot, general manager of Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa.*

**J**udged a business "that is a shining example of the path to success" Continental Event Catering and Event Hire was named **Exceptional Business of the Year** as well as winner of its category for **Exceptional Tourism Provider** at the North Canterbury Business Awards Gala Dinner last month.

The panel of seven judges commented that choosing the supreme winner had not proven difficult.

"With a long history in the region (43 years) Continental provides an inspirational example for all other local businesses."

Started as a husband and wife operation, the Rangiora-based business undertakes event catering and hires marquees and event equipment throughout the South Island as well as venue management services to key sites in Canterbury.

The company has grown to the point where it now employs more than 100 permanent staff (part-time included) and up to 100 additional casual staff but still retains its sense of family, noted the judges.

"It manages to excel in a competitive industry and create evangelists of its customers."

Earlier in the evening, Continental was also named **Exceptional Tourism Provider**, a category Continental entered to some

people's surprise, said Continental's event catering operations manager Karen Abraham when accepting the Award.

"We're generally known in the community for our hosting of weddings and other special occasions in people's lives.

"But we actually now do the largest percentage of our work serving different tourism markets – be it via coach tours, cruise liners, visitors to some of Canterbury's key attractions or business tourism such as conferences and corporate events."

Karen said the key to the company's success came down to the simple point of genuinely caring about the people they work with – both clients and staff.

Manager of Enterprise North Canterbury Heather Miller said she was thrilled with the level of entries, and the broad cross-section of businesses in the community they represented.

Heather says Enterprise North Canterbury initiated and managed the Awards with an aim to give local businesses an opportunity to showcase their success which may not always be known locally. This is the inaugural year with 60 entries in six different categories.

"We have such talented and exceptional businesses in our midst; it's important that we applaud their success and recognise their pivotal role in our community."



*Continental's event catering operations manager Karen Abraham holding the Exceptional Business of the Year Award and Exceptional Tourism Provider Award, with supreme award sponsors Allan Berge, managing director of MainPower NZ Ltd (left) and Gill Cox, chairman of MainPower NZ Ltd.*

**Other categories, sponsors and winners were:**

- Exceptional Service Delivery Award sponsored by the North Canterbury Community College: Oxford Post Shop, Oxford
- Exceptional Workplace Award sponsored by the Department of Labour: Amberley Preschool and Nursery Inc
- Exceptional Sustainability Award sponsored by Landor Developments Ltd: Hurunui Complementary Health Clinic and Wahine Acupuncture, Cheviot
- Exceptional Innovation Award sponsored by Ray White Rangiora (Trends Realty Ltd): Bellfarm Electronics Amberley
- Exceptional Niche Marketing sponsored by Northern Outlook: McLaren Excavating Limited, Waikuku