

For Immediate Release

New Awards Set to Celebrate the Year's Greatest New Zealanders

*All Kiwis get the chance to make nominations for inaugural
New Zealander of the Year Awards.*

New Zealanders are making extraordinary contributions, to an extraordinary number of people, in an extraordinary number of ways, every day of the year. Now a new awards programme is set to create a new sense of national unity and pride by recognising these incredible achievements.

The inaugural New Zealander of the Year Awards will present individual awards to The New Zealander of the Year, Senior New Zealander of the Year, Young New Zealander of the Year and Community of the Year, as well as partnering with local communities throughout the nation in the presentation of Local Heroes Awards.

The New Zealander of the Year Award recipient will be selected for his or her major contribution to our nation, and that person will have demonstrated an ability to inspire us all through achievement and outstanding service to the country and its people.

The Senior New Zealander of the Year Award will be open to those aged 60 and over, and will celebrate an amazing ongoing contribution, while the Young New Zealander of the Year will be between 15 and 30, and will have already made a positive impact on the nation. The Local Heroes Awards will be presented at the regional level, and will recognise outstanding contributions to those communities and their people.

Former Prime Minister The Rt Hon Jim Bolger has accepted the role of Patron of the New Zealander of the Year Awards and says he is honoured to be a part of such an overdue initiative.

“The New Zealander of the Year Awards will recognise the diverse talents and achievements of many New Zealanders, seeking out and acknowledging the positive contribution that individuals and community groups are making to economic, social, cultural and environmental issues,” he says.

“Ultimately, these Awards will give all of us the opportunity to say thank you and give encouragement to individuals and community groups for their dedication and contributions to New Zealand.”

Awards National Coordinator Grant McCabe says this is a chance for all of us to think about our concepts of greatness and nominate those who may otherwise never achieve prominence at a national level.

“The New Zealander of the Year Awards is a chance for us to essentially select the very best of us!” He says.

“There are many organisations in New Zealand that present awards – from community groups, to charity groups, to public services, to creative industries– and The New Zealander of the Year Awards is a chance to bring all of those strands of our society together to find and to celebrate the very best of all.”

The Awards are proudly sponsored by Kiwibank, Mitre 10, Coca-Cola Amatil New Zealand, Ryman Healthcare, and presented by Fairfax Media, Prime and Newstalk ZB. As principal sponsor of the awards, Kiwibank is assisting with funding for the \$25,000 prize pool as well as with the organization and implementation of the event.

Kiwibank Acting Chief Executive Paul Brock says they are delighted to be supporting the initiative.

“When Kiwibank began a little over seven years ago we set out to make a difference for New Zealand. Now that we’ve established ourselves, we want to help others to make a difference for their fellow New Zealanders. Supporting these Awards fits perfectly with this philosophy.”

The New Zealander of the Year Awards will be officially launched in Wellington on September 1 at which time Mr Bolger will open the call for nominations. Nominees must be New Zealand Citizens and must have been resident in New Zealand for no less than two years.

The Awards will seek nominations from all fields and entry into the awards is free. Nominations close on November 20 and judging will commence in January with the Awards Gala ceremony planned for Friday, February 5, 2010.

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The New Zealander of the Year Awards in Brief:

- The New Zealander of the Year Awards will recognise, acknowledge and reward the individuals and community groups that demonstrate the greatest contribution to New Zealand and New Zealanders.
- The New Zealander of the Year Awards will be presented at an Awards Gala Luncheon on February 5, 2010.
- Awards will be presented to The New Zealander of the Year, Senior New Zealander of the Year, Young New Zealander of the Year, Community of the Year and the national Local Hero Award.
- There will also be Local Heroes Awards presented in 19 regions throughout the country. From these winners 3 nominees will be selected for the national Local Heroes Award judging.
- Nominations are open from September 1, 2009 and will close on November 20, 2009.
- Nominees must be New Zealand citizens and must have been resident in New Zealand for no less than 2 years.

Background information on Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Patron, the Right Hon. Jim Bolger, ONZ

The Right Hon. James B Bolger was Prime Minister of New Zealand from October 1990 to December 1997. During his 25-year career in politics he led the National Party for almost 12 years, was a Minister for 16 years and had three consecutive terms as the country's head of government.

Under his leadership the New Zealand economy was transformed from having the lowest growth rate among the 29 OECD nations to one of the strongest.

On 31 December 1997 Mr Bolger was appointed a member of the Order of New Zealand (ONZ), New Zealand's highest honour.

From June 1998 to January 2002 Mr Bolger was New Zealand's Ambassador to the United States.

Today Mr Bolger is the Chancellor of the University of Waikato and the chair of New Zealand Post and its subsidiary Kiwibank.

He also chairs the Advisory Board of the World Agricultural Forum, St Louis, USA, is chairman of the Board of Directors of the Ian Axford Fellowships in Public Policy, Chairman of the KiwiRail Group the Gas Industry Company Limited, Chairman of Express Couriers Limited, Chairman of Parcel Direct Group Australia, Chairman of Trustees Executors Limited, Trustee of the Rutherford Trust, President of the NZ/US Council. In May 2007 he became the Founder Patron of NZ United World College Trust.

In 1963 he married Joan Riddell whose work in public life was recognised in 1997 when she was honoured with the award Companion of New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM). Jim and Joan have 9 children and 11 grandchildren.

Background Information on New Zealander of the Year Awards Limited

The driving force behind the New Zealander of the Year Awards is Mr Jeffrey Hopp who has a distinguished career in both the management of charities and the delivery of the well-established and successful Australian of the Year Awards.

After overseeing one of Western Australia's largest charities for 15 years, Jeffrey set up his own awards company, Awards Australia, and partnered with the Australian Federal Government to deliver the Australian of the Year Awards from 1994 until 2002.

Jeffrey felt a deep desire to establish similar awards in New Zealand and after more than 16 years of discussions with various New Zealand organisations, invested his own capital in 2007, establishing a small staff and offices in Auckland to make this a reality.

Jeffrey is Managing Director of The New Zealander of the Year Awards, a New Zealand registered company. Any profits, advancement and progress of the awards will be solely NZ based.