

Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence finalists announced

- **WARREN THOMSON AND MEGAN DRAPALSKI**
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WSABE finalist Laura Saad makes designer cakes and sweet treats. Picture: Peter Kelly

FORTY-EIGHT western Sydney businesses have been short-listed for the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence.

Expert judges selected by the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce had the tough task of deciding who will take home a WSABE award at the gala dinner at Waterview in Bicentennial Park on August 14.

WSABE committee chairman Roger Byrne said becoming a finalist was a great achievement due to the thorough judging process. "We've successfully continued to have judges who are prominent business leaders and influencers," he said.

"With our strict score guidelines, the judges had to be particular with the scoring of each answer.

"Every business and person who qualified as a finalist should be proud of this accomplishment because we know what the competition looked like."

There are 16 categories for the 2015 awards, including the prestigious business of the year award. Many of the 48 businesses are finalists in multiple categories.



WSABE finalist Laura Anne makes designer cakes and sweet treats out of her home.

Sweet dream a great reality

LAURA Saad is living her childhood dreams.

Ms Saad is a finalist in the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence Rising Star (WSABE) category for her business Laura Anne – Designer Cakes & Sweet Treats.

The Dundas resident has always loved baking.

“I tried to go into the industry when I left school, but the 2am starts as an apprentice are hard when everyone else wants to go out,” Ms Saad said. “So I went into a corporate job and did baking as stress relief.”

Eventually, the hobby started to morph into something more.

Ms Saad baked a cake for a friend’s sister as a favour and that started a roll-on effect.

“After 12 years the corporate job was starting to do my head in, so I left, enrolled at TAFE in a patisserie course and built my business.”

Ms Saad has won 45 ribbons in shows and competitions for her creations, including the Sydney Royal Easter Show blue ribbon.

The rising star is still working from her kitchen at home and said long-term she planned to open a shop front to sell her designer cakes and sweet treats.

“My favourite thing to make is celebration cakes as I get to design bespoke creations with the clients,” Ms Saad said.

“I also play a part in their special event and often I receive an invitation to attend as we work so closely together for a number of weeks beforehand that I become part of the family.”



Alexandra 9, Emily 7, Annaleise 7, Ava 7, Olivia 7, Jaymi 7 and Ruby 6 (sitting) with Tania MacLeod from Tania's Strictly Dancing.

Tania's Strictly Dancing is en pointe

TWO decades of passion and dedication have seen Tania MacLeod build a highly successful dance studio.

The mum of four is a finalist in six categories in the 2015 Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence (WSABE) for her business Tania's Strictly Dancing.

Ms MacLeod is no stranger to WSABE, taking out three different categories over the past three years.

“It's been 21 years of commitment, dedication and surviving the ups and downs and never giving up,” she said.

“I've tackled every opportunity head on and given it my total best.”

Tania's Strictly Dancing caters for all levels and about 85 per cent of the staff have trained at the school for their entire careers.

“They started 15 to 20 years ago and now they're teaching my daughters, I never could have seen that coming,” she said. “It's been a wonderful journey and the greatest reward is being able to have an impact and teaching girls to overcome

issues in their lives and have the confidence to believe they can do anything they want to.

“It gives me the motivation to do the long days.”



A cat relaxes during its holiday at Pet Resorts Australia Dural.

Pampered pets have paws-itive experience at resort

PETS aren't missing out on all the fun when western Sydney families go on a holiday, checking into a resort of their own.

Getting up and going out for a fun day in beautiful surrounds with new friends or a going on a guided walk is all part of the experience at Pet Resorts Australia.

After a fun day, pets can settle in and enjoy a relaxing bath before having a Skype session with their parents.

Pet Resorts Australia Dural's great experiences for pets and their owners haven't gone unnoticed, with the business being named a finalist for excellence in customer service at the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence.

Resort manager Kasey Fyfe said customer service is crucial for her business.

“Our staff are passionate about animals and like to instil trust so that customers keep coming back,” she said.

“Developing a good relationship with their furry buddies is very important to us. If the customers don't trust us, they won't come back.”

It is the first time Pet Resorts Australia Dural has been a finalist for the WSABE awards.

Ms Fyfe said winning the category would a massive boost for the business.

The winners will be announced at a gala dinner at Waterview in Bicentennial Park on August 14.

Door open at 7pm and attendees will have the chance to enjoy pre-dinner drinks and canapés and network with guests, finalists and VIPs before the awards night starts at 7.30pm.

Tickets cost \$130 or \$1200 for a group of 10 and are available at wsabe.com.au, which also offers accommodation and transfer packages from hotels.



Skye Blackburn is a finalist for her edible bug shop.

FINALISTS

- AUSvance
- Bam Bam Music
- Build on Bookkeeping
- Butterfly Skye's Bug Shop
- Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta
- Children's Medical Research Institute
- CPC Credit Solutions
- Designpluz
- Elders Real Estate Toongabbie
- Evocca College
- Evolve Housing
- Flirtalla Pty Ltd
- GFP
- Grabowski Financial Planning
- GWS Giants
- Harris Mackay Group
- Heavenly Curves
- HMHR
- Hogs Breath Cafe Penrith

- Know My Business
- Laura Anne - Designer Cakes & Sweet Treats
- Marketingheads Australia Pty Ltd
- Melinda Hird Photography
- Montessori Merrylands
- myFLO
- Norwest Recruitment Pty Limited
- Pacific College of Technology
- Penrith Hogs Pty Ltd
- Pet Resorts Australia
- Power Creative
- Price Financial Intelligence
- RBK Nutraceuticals Pty Ltd
- Red Arc Solutions
- Residential Gardens for the Spanish Speaking Frail Aged Ltd
- RKH Enterprises Pty Ltd
- Ruth Fattal Haute Couture
- Schon G. Condon
- Skye Blackburn
- Southern Cross Security Group
- STARStv
- Strathfield Chiropractic
- Studio Dance NSW
- TAFE NSW - South Western Sydney Institute
- Tania's Strictly Dancing
- Vogue Real Estate Australia
- Wet'n'Wild Sydney
- White River Design
- You Marketing Solutions