

MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional entrepreneurship and innovation to be celebrated

The spotlight will soon shine on outstanding innovation in regional Victoria with shortlisting complete for the prestigious Champions of the Bush (COTB) Spirit of Entrepreneurship (SOE) Award.

The SOE Award, which recognises outstanding entrepreneurship and innovation in regional Australia, will be presented by Victorian Minister for Services, Innovation and Small Business, Louise Asher, at a COTB gala dinner to be held at Brown Brothers Milawa Vineyard on 8 May.

COTB Chairman Dr Greg Walsh said the organisation was committed to championing the cause of regional and rural Australia and a major aspect of this promotion was the prestigious SOE Award.

“This award is a celebration of ingenuity and the age-old adage of simply having a go. Our nominees are all fine examples of showing initiative in regional areas and proving we can successfully and economically provide services often associated only with metropolitan-based operations.”

The finalists in this year’s awards are:

Advanced Cabinetry (Ballarat)

Advanced Cabinetry provides regional Victorians with professionally designed and constructed Kitchens, with the very latest accessories and fittings.

Australian Turntable Company (Kangaroo Flat)

Australian Turntable Company (ATC) is a family owned and operated business, started in 1987 by Paul and Annette Chapman. ATC provides large-scale construction turntables for residential, industrial and exhibition purposes.

Design Experts (Bendigo/Echuca/Shepparton)

Design Experts is a website design studio that in just four years has grown four-fold. Now operating from three regional locations - Echuca, Bendigo and Shepparton, the expansion has recently seen the appointment of a full-time sales person in Sydney and in Bundaberg, Queensland.

GippsAero (Morwell)

GippsAero produces a family of aircraft designed specifically to meet the niche market needs of skydive, aerial survey, aerial surveillance, tourism, regional freight and air charter organisations.

Ryan Moves - Freight (Warrnambool)

Ryans Freight prides itself on an ability to cater for deliveries, large and small; from full loads of groceries (dry and frozen), aluminium, timber, beer and soft drinks, machinery, farm supplies, various building materials right down to the smallest of cartons.

Safescape (Bendigo)

Safescape is a provider of underground ladderways to the mining industry and is currently marketing its 'Laddertube' product internationally, specifically into Canada and North America.

Sungold (Warrnambool)

Sungold Milk is the fresh milk brand from the Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory. Sourced from nearby farms each load of milk is carefully monitored, tested and selected for quality, composition and frothing ability to ensure customers can rely on taste and consistency.

Timboon Distillery (Timboon)

The Timboon Distillery concept involves development of the 'factory door' experience to further incorporate a provedore hosting an abundance of local produce, a café/restaurant and the commissioning of a 600-litre copper pot still to make whisky.

Dr Walsh said he was once again extremely impressed to see a vast array of business types, sizes and localities nominate for the awards.

"World-class innovation is alive in regional areas and we continue to see dreams being achieved in our own backyards. The large assortment of industry highlighted in these nominations is an extremely positive sign for regional Australia and shows that with dedication and resourcefulness, nearly anything is possible."

The winner of the Spirit of Entrepreneurship Award will receive a grant to fund study in a field to further their businesses success.

COTB was formed in 2002 and has brought together individuals and businesses that are passionate in their commitment to rural and regional areas. Members have made a major investment in the country, both personally and financially, and are committed to sustainable regional development.

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