

## University Employability Excellence Awards

Innovative thinkers, Google interns and local businesses going above and beyond to give students exceptional workplace experiences have all been celebrated at the University of Newcastle's 2022 Employability Excellence Awards. The awards celebrate the achievements of students and the work of staff and industry partners in preparing life-ready graduates, through Work Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences, or professional placements.

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Mark Hoffman explained the awards reflect the university's increased focus on providing students with practical experience as part of their degrees.

"Our University is committed to creating graduates who are equipped with the skills to succeed. Work Integrated Learning provides students with real, on the job experience that helps them to develop skills that prepare them not only for their future workplace, but also for life after they graduate."

"Last year over 30,000 practical learning experiences were undertaken by students. The most employable graduates develop a portfolio of experiences that demonstrate essential workplace skills that build on the knowledge of their degree.

"We understand that these skills are often learnt away from the classroom and beyond textbooks, which is why WIL is so important."

This year awards recognised eight students who have excelled in their placement, five university staff and 13 businesses who have helped students to have an impactful practical work placement experience.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO explained the importance of recognising the impact of staff and businesses in the awards.

"A Work Integrated Learning experience can give students meaningful, first-hand experience in their chosen field to help them get a taste of their future career and understand the areas that they enjoy the most.

"As a University that is committed to our region, we also recognise the contributions of businesses who take on students.

"For businesses, taking on a student not only gives them practical experience, it creates a pipeline of future talent, helping businesses to identify high quality graduates and attract and retain students before they graduate.

"We also recognise that our staff play an integral role in helping to create and facilitate these experiences for students and I thank them for this commitment and dedication."

The winners were:

### Students

- **Student Employability Excellence Award:** Abigail Hall
- **Student Employability Excellence Award:** Mitchell Burton
- **Student Intern/Cadet of the Year:** Jessica Haugh
- **Work Integrated Learning Student of the Year:** Brittany Sharpe
- **Work Integrated Learning Student of the Year:** Alix Loades
- **Work Integrated Learning Student of the Year:** Stephanie Kelly
- **Work Integrated Learning Student of the Year:** Maggie Fulwood
- **Student Entrepreneur of the Year:** Sarah Williams

### Staff

#### Work Integrated Learning Staff Member of the Year

- Hemal Patel
- Cameron Beard and Kim Maund (Joint)
- Meegan McHugh
- Peter Gogarty
- Saskia Behan

### Industry

#### New Partner in Employability

- Elekta Pty Ltd

### Work Integrated Learning Hall of Fame

- Hunter School of Performing Arts
- NSW Health Pathology – Forensic Medicine Social Work
- The Dietetics Department at Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital
- Health Campus
- Snowy Hydro
- St John the Baptist Primary School
- Barwon Health
- Queensland X-Ray
- Regional Youth Support Services Inc
- Australian Taxation Office (Newcastle Office)
- Newcastle High School Cooks Hill Campus
- Callaghan Colleges
- Early Links

## Jayco Newcastle wins NSW Dealer of the Year

Jayco Newcastle has again been recognised for its continued business excellence, taking out NSW Dealer of the Year at the 2022 Annual Awards of Excellence, the fifth time it has collected this prestigious award.

The leading caravan business was handed the win on November 8, 2022 at the awards coordinated by the industry's peak industry body, the NSW Caravan and Camping Industry Association (CCIA) and the Land Lease Living Industry Association. The awards recognise businesses and individuals that excel in terms of service, innovation and best practice.

Jayco Newcastle Managing Director, Damian Charleson, said the win is a reflection of the entire team at the dealership.

"Our focus is to really push for ongoing change, while adding value for our customers. I am so proud of our team and how they are each continuing to grow within our business."

This distinction is another achievement in Jayco Newcastle's exemplary history having taken out the award in 2015, 2016 and 2017 as well as being subsequently inducted into the Hall of Fame for this run before winning the award again in 2019.

The dealership's 2022 win follows a two-year hiatus from the awards in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CCIA NSW President Mark Lindsay said it was an honour to award the hard work and dedication shown by Jayco Newcastle and the rest of the industry.

"As our industry bounces back post-covid, businesses like Jayco Newcastle continue to make a positive contribution to our economy and we are pleased to be recognising the great achievements of our industry through these Awards of Excellence."

CCIA Chief Executive Officer Lyndel Gray said the caravanning sector provided a boost for the tourism industry in particular, for which caravan and camping holidays now account for over 13 million domestic trips each year.

"The caravan and camping sector generates over \$4 billion in economic activity across the state each year, directly employing close to 10,000 people and supporting the creation of a further 50,000 jobs," she said.

"As our industry bounces back post-covid, these businesses continue to make a positive contribution to our economy and we are pleased to be recognising the great achievements of our industry through these awards."

