

## **Victoria and Tasmania's best in franchising announced at Excellence in Franchising Awards**

**21 August 2015**

The Franchise Council of Australia (FCA) recognised franchising's best in Victoria and Tasmania on Thursday at the Seek Commercial FCA VIC/TAS Excellence in Franchising Awards for 2015.

Held at the Hilton South Wharf in Melbourne and featuring guest presentations from Retail Zoo CEO, Scott Meneilly, and Olympian Steve Moneghetti AM, the awards recognised Lisa & John Puglisi from Bakers Delight in Tasmania as the VIC/TAS Multi-Unit Franchisee of the Year.

Trish Jones, of First Class Accounts in Craigieburn, was named the VIC/TAS Single-Unit Franchisee of the Year with less than two staff, Spudbar's Kate Hopley was named VIC/TAS Franchise Woman of the Year and Laxman Bhardwaj of Chokolateria San Churro took home the VIC/TAS Field Manager of the Year Award.

John and Lisa, who purchased their Eastlands franchise in 2006 and their Kingston franchise in 2014, describe their journey to becoming multi-unit franchisees as "a long one, but a good one."

"Baker's Delight have provided a lot of support and a lot of opportunities that we probably wouldn't have got elsewhere," said Lisa, who first started with the franchise as a junior sales assistant in 2001, the year after John had commenced as a Bakers Delight apprentice.

It's now been almost a decade since the pair undertook the Bakers Delight Fresh Franchise program (a program run by the franchise system to provide employees with an avenue to become franchisees) and entering the Awards provided them with a chance to reflect on just how far they've come.

"It was really cool to put the last 10 years on paper," said Lisa. "It's just not something that you do. You do business plans, but they're more forward thinking. You don't sit back and see this is where we were, and this is where we are now."

Kate Hopley has a similarly long involvement in franchising, which stretches from her first casual job at McDonalds at age 15 to her current role as Spudbar's Operations Manager. Along the way, she discovered she enjoyed following a franchise system and passion for working with people.

"My passion more than anything is helping people find their goals in life and helping them move forward," said Kate, who describes her role as "ninety percent building relationships with our current franchisees and our new ones."

Entering the Awards provided Kate with a chance to take stock of her role and what she wants to achieve.



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“Sometimes when you’re just working every day you don’t stop to reflect,” said Kate. “It was a really good process to be able to stop and think about where I want to head, where Spudbar was heading and where our franchisees were heading.”

The Awards process also proved to be a pleasant surprise for Trish Jones, who was a management accountant for 20 years before becoming a First Class Accounts franchisee in 2010.

“The nomination process forced me to look my business quite in depth and there were a few things in there that I hadn’t really measured over the whole five year period. I was surprised at how well I’d done,” said Trish.

## **WINNERS**

*Images available on request*

### **VIC/TAS Multi-Unit Franchisee of the Year**

Lisa and John Puglisi, Bakers Delight

### **VIC/TAS Single Unit Franchisee of the Year, less than two staff**

Trish Jones, First Class Accounts, Craigieburn

### **VIC/TAS Franchise Woman of the Year**

Kate Hopley, Spudbar

### **VIC/TAS Field Manager of the Year**

Laxman Bhardwaj, Chocolateria San Churro

### **Future Awards:**

Seek Commercial FCA SA Excellence in Franchising Awards Friday 28 August

## **ENDS**

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