

THE ARC ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2005
28 July 2005
Held in the Council Chamber, Auckland Regional Council
21 Pitt Street
Auckland

Opening address by Chairman, Michael Lee

Toitu te marae o Tane

Toitu te marae o Tangaroa

Hihei mauri ora

Nau mai haere mai ki tenei whare o tatou

Te Rauhitanga Taiao (Auckland Regional Council)

Mihi Conservation Week

Welcome to the ARC Environmental Awards 2005.

The Environmental Awards presented by the ARC since 2001, celebrate those who care for or who work to protect the environment.

There is the **Environmental Leadership Award** for a teacher providing inspiration for young people trying to improve their neighbourhoods through better environmental practices, the **Environmental Guardians of the Future Award** for an individual or group of school pupils who have made a major contribution to a local environmental project after being inspired, perhaps, by their award-winning teacher. There is another prize awarded to a **business or industry**, which has demonstrated leadership in getting new environmental management practices implemented thus enhancing the environment for its workers and the community.

Just as important, there is an award for a **community group** which has demonstrated a commitment to enhance its neighbourhood or the wider environment and awards also for a **rural group, individual, business or family** who have exhibited excellence in agricultural or horticultural practice that helps protect and sustain the rural environment of the region.

This year to mark 2005, as the **Year of the Built Environment**, we have three additional awards to **recognise people in the property sector, local government and community** who have

contributed towards quality urban design – improving the amenity value and enhancing, to use a very neglected phrase from the Resource Management Act, the ‘aesthetic coherence’ of our urban landscapes. In other words, making our urban environment more liveable, more enjoyable and even, more beautiful. We are all aware that urban design has become an issue of intense public interest in Auckland in recent months.

In all of these awards the judges, who include ARC councillors and staff as well as external experts, have chosen winners who have clearly achieved and demonstrated environmental benefits and/or improvements in community participation and projects of significance to local communities.

Here I must mention the specialist staff of the ARC, many of whom have been involved in these awards by helping in the judging or offering advice because of their technical expertise or knowledge. They know just how difficult it can be to introduce change especially when it comes to environmental protection change. A handle on reality helps in a project such as this when you are trying to determine who should win one of these prestigious awards.

I can report from personal experience that regional council staff, like you, really are committed to protecting the environment and making things better for future generations.

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*Therefore before we present the prizes, I want to thank all the finalists, indeed all of the participants for your work. We at the ARC salute you as community leaders who are **thinking globally and acting locally** to enhance our environment right across the Auckland region.*