

Ringling the changes – from bean counters to leaders



Terry McLaughlin
BUSINESS FORUM

directors and officers across the top 10 are our members.

NZICA is focused on attracting more of the best and brightest of all ages, genders and ethnicities into the chartered accountancy profession, which is shaking off its reputation for being a clan of middle-aged men. Indeed, our largest percentage increase in new members is among Asian women.

Leadership in our profession has been at the forefront as we celebrated the annual NZICA Leadership Awards last week. The winners illustrate the immense value, skills and knowledge that CAs deliver to their employers, clients and indeed, the accounting profession in general.

NZICA Crombie Lockwood Chartered Accountant of the Year 2011 is the very capable Jan

Dawson. An NZICA Fellow and the first female to head a big-four accounting firm in Australasia, KPMG NZ, Dawson's outstanding achievements as a business leader and chartered accountant at the pinnacle of her career exemplify the huge value of the accounting profession to our economy.

Cultural diversity is also crucial, and one accountant who has taken the challenge of increasing that diversity is Westpac Outstanding New Member of the Year Joe Hanita. Aged 32, Hanita heads the finance team of the country's second largest tertiary provider.

Chair of Nga Kaitatau Maori o Aotearoa (the Maori accountants' network), his passion is promoting chartered accountancy among Maori. As he sees it, with Treaty



Enterprising bunch: James Agnew, second from left, and his team from St Thomas of Canterbury College.

of Waitangi settlements coming to a close more Maori accountants are needed to ensure that the Maori asset base is managed to generate intergenerational growth.

Attracting young people into the profession means showing

leadership and presenting opportunities. NZICA this year has supported the Youth Enterprise Scheme (YES) Awards by sponsoring the inaugural NZICA Young Managing Director of the Year Award. Our first winner gives me great hope for our future business leaders. James Agnew, aged 17, is managing director of a team of six Christchurch students who have achieved outstanding success in taking their concept for an emergency power generator from the backyard to shop shelves. James has demonstrated the financial expertise, strategic vision and leadership that is required to make an idea into a commercial reality.

However, it's not enough to perform well domestically, we

need to achieve best practice on the global stage. NZICA, as a part of the Global Accounting Alliance, is showing leadership by developing strong ties internationally. In 2013 we will launch a training programme, the trans-Tasman Chartered Accountants Programme in collaboration with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (ICAA). The programme's joint delivery marks another step towards strengthening economic development between our two countries, while supporting the increasing globalisation of the chartered accountancy profession.

Ultimately, chartered accountancy is evolving in response to the needs of the market – both in the private and

the public sector. The government is in need of improved financial performance and we see the chief financial officer (CFO) as playing a pivotal role.

To highlight excellence in this sector, NZICA this year introduced the Ernst and Young Public Sector CFO of the Year Award. Winner Scott Scoullar, CFO of Inland Revenue, has played a major role in delivering savings to the taxpayer, but also working to embed a long-term and forward-focused approach to the organisation's strategy.

We are fortunate to have these quality role models in our mix for the James Agnews of this world to aspire to and learn from.

Terry McLaughlin is the chief executive of NZICA.