

New print standards reached

Rising print standards underlined by great awards night.

The rising standards of the New Zealand printing industry were underlined by a massive attendance at the industry's 12th Pride in Print Awards at the Rotorua Sportsdrome on the evening of May 20.

An estimated 800 people turned up to view the country's elite print jobs, in areas as diverse as business forms and annual reports, labels and packaging, and to see which would take out the prestigious Supreme Award.

INCREASING EXCELLENCE

It is in the process of being launched on the international market by the New Zealand company LOMAK International and has been tipped to transform the lives of the disabled.

While the keyboard took the top honours, there were also 115 Gold Medals and 169 Highly-Commended awards, as the cream of New Zealand's print industry vied for recognition.

Pride In Print Awards manager Sue Archibald said the event underlined the increased standards of innovation and excellence in New Zealand print standards.

"We had over 900 entries and the ratio of entries that gained some level of recognition was higher than in the past, but this is because printers themselves are raising the bar in terms of the calibre of their entries.

"The quality is rising, which makes the judges' task more arduous. We are also finding that more companies are entering the Awards, which means that the philosophy of the Pride In Print concept is being embraced, not just by an elite few printers, but by a broad cross-section of the industry.

"That philosophy was to increase levels of excellence, so that the New Zealand print industry can match international standards.

"In the 12 years the Awards have been in existence, it is certainly true that instead of New Zealand work being sent away to printers overseas, offshore work now comes to New Zealand."

VISITORS AMAZED

Retiring convenor of judges Warren

Johnson, who was awarded an honorary gold medal for his services to the print industry, reinforced the impact that the Awards have had on the printing industry.

"The purpose of the Pride In Print Awards was to act as a vehicle to promote the industry and to raise standards, and I would have to say it has even over-achieved. There is absolutely no doubt that it has lifted the quality of print output.

"Visitors to New Zealand have come to our Awards and been amazed by what we have managed to do. I don't think anyone else has anything quite as good."

The success of the printing industry in grasping training initiatives and boosting apprentice levels was praised by Printing Industries New Zealand chief executive Joan Grace.

APPRENTICESHIPS GROWING

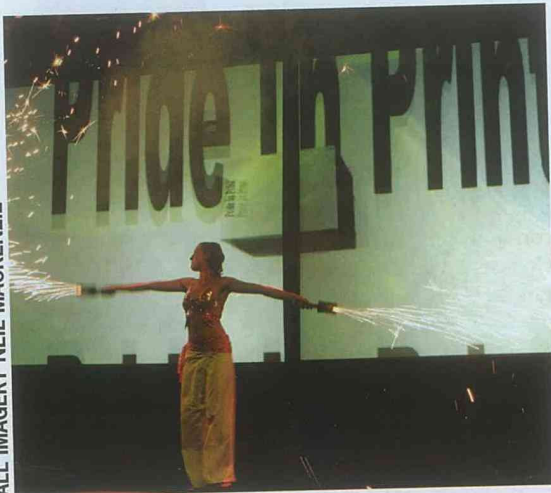
She told the delegates that the statistics for 2004 speak for themselves — apprentice training numbers reached 500 for the first time since the early 1990s; and 250 businesses were involved in training.

This represented a significant increase, including 24 companies training for the first time last year and another ten beginning this year.

The Printing and Allied Industries Training Council Apprentice of the Year was named as Steffan Pedersen of Sealed Air in Porirua.

The Pride In Print Awards are backed by principal patrons Heidelberg New Zealand, Nova Inks and Chemicals, Spicers Paper and Fuji Xerox, and 29 other sponsors, including FMCG.

ALL IMAGERY NEIL MACKENZIE



That went to a screen-printed computer keyboard, described as "a brilliant innovation and revolutionary breakthrough in both design and technology for the disabled."

The Light-Operated Mouse and Keyboard (LOMAK) connects to an ordinary desktop or laptop computer and is used to assist tetraplegics to communicate by mounting a light on their forehead, so they can then direct the beam to the appropriate key on the keypad.

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