

Challenges of Christchurch

Greg Greenwood – Broker of the Year

Broker of the Year is an award that represents the very best attributes of what the general insurance industry is about – helping and engaging clients, problem solving, intimate business and organisation knowledge, together with sound, practical advice that has a deep impact on people's lives and businesses. This year's award went to Christchurch based Greg Greenwood, South Island Operations Manager and Director of Rothbury Insurance. The Judges said that it was a difficult decision to make and highly commended all of the finalists, but a winner had to be found and that winner was selected largely because of two features that stood out with Greg.

First was the demonstration of a very clear philosophy and measurable approach to servicing and retaining clients.

Second, and of not inconsiderable importance, was the results achieved by Greenwood in terms of customer service and key financial measures.

Greenwood started his 21-year insurance career in South Africa, where in 1996 he started his own broking company. In 2000, he came to work for a New Zealand broker and three years later, joined Rothbury where he has two roles: Senior Broker and South Island Operations Manager. He has many other roles including Canterbury Branch Chair for IBANZ and he is a regular speaker for the Canterbury Business Association, helping community groups with earthquake issues.

After the trials and tribulations that the industry has faced over the last 12 months, being awarded against the backdrop of this past year - over any other - has been the greatest honour, says Greenwood.

"I'm pretty humbled to be awarded, especially against the toughest year the industry has had," he says. "Any one of Christchurch's brokers could have been up there. It has been a year of many challenges, where you've got personal challenges but really trying to focus on putting clients first and meeting their needs. It's definitely good to be acknowledged this year." What Greenwood loves about being a broker is the client advocacy.

"I love dealing with clients and understanding clients' individual businesses... I enjoy dealing face to face with the business owners, that's what excites me."

"Being a commercial broker means I deal with so many various different industries, and business sizes and owners, and getting an understanding of the passion my clients have for their businesses while trying to meet their needs from an insurance view."

Greenwood has played a key part in the Rothbury's earthquake response. "It has been extremely challenging," he says. "We speak about having large events in our life but I don't think any of us ever imagined seeing the scale of the devastation that we have had in this city and how it has affected people's personal assets and also how it has affected business assets."

"The thing with facing the clients is we're dealing with their personal tragedy, so you've got to be sympathetic to their needs in dealing with the



Greg Greenwood
Broker of the Year

complexities of the insurance companies and making sure we're getting claims, if not settled, at least dealt with in a timely manner."

The environment that the earthquakes have created for Greenwood leaves him in a totally new business model, dealing with the complexities of insurance policies and the insurers, managing clients' expectations of when and how claims are going to be settled, and trying to do the day-to-day work of increasing sums insured and writing new business.

"Those sorts of things we just took for granted are no longer there," he says.

As much as Greenwood agrees with the general consensus that this is the toughest year the industry has ever faced, he also says it's an exciting time to be in insurance."

"We're seeing a lot of changes in our market and we're still there to work with our clients, to service their needs and build a future; we're going to be part of rebuilding a city, and I don't think anyone will have that opportunity again."

From a personal point of view, Greenwood and his family suffered some damage to their

home, though fortunately it wasn't too significant and the family have been in the position to help others who have suffered, and are hosting two other families since the February earthquake.

While criticism has been levelled at insurance companies, Greenwood says that, as a general rule, the industry has coped extremely well under the circumstances.

"The direct insurers and the EQC have definitely had a negative impact, but I think as a whole, brokers and insurers have responded really well in the midst of a serious crisis."

In the aftermath and recovery, to move forward, Greenwood says there's definitely a need for the industry to consolidate.

"The insurers are definitely thinking about their risk exposure in Canterbury and how they manage that. I think one of the biggest things the Canterbury insurance industry has to face is how we start the rebuild process and when is it a prudent time to start writing new business."

"We're faced with capacity issues and our clients are faced with higher deductibles and premium increases."

Looking at the insurance industry as a whole, insurers and reinsurers have paid out in excess of \$50 billion in the Asia Pacific area over the last year. "For the industry to recoup what they've spent, or will spend, in the Canterbury rebuild will take years, if ever. What we're facing as an industry is how we protect what we've got. New Zealand is one of the most insured countries in the OECD and we've got to look at how we continue that cover, and at an affordable rate – to businesses and to mums and dads."

"We've seen the increases in the earthquake levy, and insurance is going to come at a cost. Looking at how we manage that is going to be one of the big challenges."



2011 General Insurance Awards

It was a night of high emotion, celebration - and even a few tears - as the industry gathered at the end of the most difficult year it has ever faced, to honour its top achievers at this year's General Insurance Industry Awards.

As insurers, adjusters and brokers gathered from all over New Zealand at Auckland's new Viaduct Events Centre, the overwhelming sentiment of the night was the shared consensus that this truly had been the most difficult and trying year for all. No one, from 40-year veterans down to the young emerging professionals, has ever seen a year like this and each has their own tales of struggle and triumph, long hours, complicated claims and distraught customers. Even guest MC for the night, TV3 news anchor Mike McRoberts, couldn't help but notice and comment on the mood, and the obvious passion the people of the industry clearly felt for their work.

"I just wish that more of my colleagues could be here tonight to witness what I have seen," he said. "I can honestly say that I now have a far greater understanding of the people who work in insurance, their motivations and the responsibility they feel towards the people of Christchurch."

Highlighting the extraordinary year it has been, a special one-off award was presented to the NZI Claims Team, in recognition of their outstanding performance in response to the earthquakes. The NZI team were chosen by IBANZ members

in Canterbury because they "went above and beyond the call of duty in responding to the exceptional circumstances encountered".

"To be acknowledged for 'doing our job' is fantastic, in what has been the most challenging time in the insurance industry in New Zealand," said Mick Miller, General Manager Claims NZI. "The claims team are the real stars here. Dealing with brokers and customers whose lives have been turned upside down requires empathy, grace and humility, and I've been delighted to see this consistently displayed by our people. In particular, the claims team in Christchurch have risen to the challenge on a daily basis, when their own lives have also been so seriously impacted."

"People take out insurance in the hope that if they have to make a claim, someone will respond by helping them to return their life to normal as soon as possible. I think this is what the team has done and I'm immensely proud of them for their achievement."

The claims team's success was repeated twice more for NZI, when it took home two more awards - Insurance Professional of the Year for National Corporate Business Manager, Matt Chandler-Wall, and the coveted Insurer of the Year. "Being voted Insurer of the Year at the Awards

is very humbling," said NZI Executive General Manager Karl Armstrong. "This award is even more special because the acknowledgement comes in what's undeniably been the most challenging year the insurance industry and customers have experienced. I'd like to acknowledge the support for NZI, and passion for customers, that brokers have demonstrated. I sincerely thank you for that."

Armstrong also congratulated the other winners and noted, as everyone did, the moving speeches of the winners.

"It confirmed just how much passion there is for our customers, and reiterated how much hard work and sacrifice had been made by many, many people in the past year."

The Claims Professional of the Year award went to Crombie Lockwood's Myles Noble, who impressed judges with the systems he has put in place to measure performance in order to improve the business, his very high level of commitment to the insurance industry and his intense client focus.

Keeping it in the Crombie Lockwood family, the group's Wellington branch was named Broking Office of the Year.

Facing stiff competition, judges said this office



Top, Left to right: Greg Greenwood, Rothbury and Andrew Aitken (left) from Yero. Karl Armstrong from NZI. Matt Chandler-Wall, NZI and Jason Walker (left) from Hays Recruiting Experts in Insurance. Myles Noble, Crombie Lockwood and Adrian Riminton (right) from Zurich NZ.

Middle, left to right: Gillian Stretch, Cunningham Lindsey and Grant Macdonald from DLA Phillips Fox. Sean Long, Willis and Dean Edwards (left) from Lumley. Hayley O'Neill, Lumley and Martyn Norrie from Cunningham Lindsey. Crombie Lockwood, Wellington.

Bottom, left to right: Stream Group. DLA Phillips Fox, Peter Leman with Robert Johnson (left) from Benefitz. NZI Claims Team. Faith Hill with Val Graham (right) from QBE.

was selected largely because of two features that stood out: the first was its excellent culture, and second, of not inconsiderable importance, were the results achieved by this broking office. Innovation of the Year and Support Services to the Industry went to Stream Group and DLA Phillips Fox respectively.

In the emerging categories, Sean Long of Willis was named the Emerging Professional Broker, and Hayley O'Neill took home the Emerging Professional Insurer of the Year Award. QBE awarded an IBANZ College Scholarship to Faith Owens, of Bridges Insurance.

Finally, Guy Harvie was honoured and made an IBANZ Life Member.

2011 Award Winners

Award	Recipient
Broker of the Year:	Greg Greenwood, Rothbury Group
Insurer of the Year:	NZI
Insurer Professional of the Year:	Matt Chandler-Wall, NZI
Claims Professional of the Year:	Myles Noble, Crombie Lockwood
Loss Adjuster / Assessor of the Year:	Gillian Stretch, Cunningham Lindsey
Emerging Professional Broker:	Sean Long, Willis
Emerging Professional Insurer:	Hayley O'Neill, Lumley
Broking Office of the Year:	Crombie Lockwood Wellington
Innovation of the Year:	Stream Group
Support Services to the Industry:	DLA Phillips Fox
Special Award:	NZI Claims Team
QBE / IBANZ College Scholarship:	Faith Owens, Bridges Insurance

Guy Harvie was the recipient of an IBANZ Life Membership.

