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## **ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE IN QUARRIES**

It's a turnaround for most people to recognise that quarrying operations can be havens for the environment. But this year's prestigious **MIMICO Environmental Excellence Awards** were presented to four companies for their work to enhance the natural world.

The awards were judged by former Commissioner for the Environment, Dr Morgan Williams, and sponsored by MIMICO, a well-respected company that sells, hires and services heavy machinery to the quarrying, mining, contracting, construction, recycling and forestry industries.

Entries were judged on

- the degree of positive environmental impact,
- originality and innovation and
- the degree of difficulty involved as well as
- if the project was voluntary or mandatory.

Particular note was taken of the extent of and nature of relations with local tangata whenua, though this criteria was not part of the formal scoring.

### **Gold Award:**

The Gold Award went to **Rodney Aggregate Supplies, Whangaripo Quarry, Matakana.**

Jason Hinton, Quarry Manager, sums up the teams approach, "*Quarries are part of the community, and although we may not be everyone's first choice of neighbour, it is possible for us to be a good neighbour.*"

The site liaison group is represented by the local community iwi, and quarry management meet regularly to set actions plans for environmental management. In the past months this has included native plantings, maintenance of existing plantings and managing weeds and animals. The quarry has also worked closely with the landowner to schedule screen-planting to achieve coverage while minimising impact on his farming operations.

The quarry has also established a Wai Care programme to monitor stream quality and enhance wetlands systems. The water health and water quality monitoring tools, provided in a simple and quick to use field kit used by Wai Care, include tests for pH, temperature clarity

nitrates and nitrites, phosphorous and dissolved oxygen. It is also encouraged to take macro invertebrate samples to complete the overall 'picture' of water quality/health.

These resources and the water quality data collected can be accessed by people and organisations, including care groups, councils, universities, and government agencies such as Landcare Research and the Department of Conservation.

### **Silver Award:**

The Silver Award was presented to Tony Hunter, General Manager of **Blackhead Quarries**, Dunedin for **Logan Point Quarry**.

The Logan Point Quarry is in the city and the focus of the entry was its rich history, and the proactive approach the quarry team has always taken to managing its effects on the city and its people. Tony Hunter provides an excellent example of how a quarry retains its 'social licence' to operate by always recognising its impacts, responding early, being open to visits and focusing on providing value to a multitude of small business customers.

Key highlights were:

- the quarry has a 132 year history that has obtained, without legal challenge, consents for another 50 years that include the slow filling of the quarry and its transition to new roles.
- The team has long been leaders in environmental measurement, commissioning the construction of instruments to record vibrations long before they could be purchased off-the-shelf. As a result they have stayed ahead of any concerns their neighbours or the council may have had.
- As good neighbours there has been proactive sponsoring of quarry visits by all who are interested - from community groups, schools, university and professionals.

Tony Hunter said "*Best practice is always getting better*", and at Logan Point they are.

### **Bronze Awards:**

Two Bronze Awards were presented to

- **Fulton Hogan Ltd, Gore Crushing, Gore**, and
- **Winstone Aggregates, Three Kings Quarry and controlled fill, Auckland City**.

The highlights of the Fulton Hogan [Gore] entry included:

- The strong focus on water qualities – very important given the crushing plant's proximity to the Mataura River.
- The detail of good environmental management and compliance but
- The whole team was impressive - all staff undertake an onsite environmental management training module. There is a well developed environmental management and safety plan which is clearly displayed on the office work-room wall.
- It has an established community liaison group of near neighbours and encourages community and other group visits.

On site, and in the whole Fulton Hogan team, there is excellent leadership on all matters environmental.

The Three Kings Quarry and fill is a small inner city quarry in transition from extraction to re-fill. The entry focused on several innovative engagements with the drivers of re-filling trucks to reduce the environmental impacts of their movement and enhanced driver safety.

Key highlights included:

- The passionate and innovative leadership of environmental management and compliance by the Three Kings quarry and wider Winstone Aggregates team.
- As the quarries' Environmental Coordinator, Elyse Laface, says *"A non compliance incidence, even if from a storm, is considered a personal failure regardless of whether the results are minor"*
- The team is committed to liaison with local community groups via quarterly meetings and quarry visits by community groups.

All four entries were very good examples of what can be achieved by committed staff in companies that truly understand the value of being a good neighbour and operating their sometimes challenging business in an environmentally sustainable way.

They are all excellent illustrations of good leadership and passion to do things better.

*"MIMICO is pleased to be able to continue our support of the industry through our sponsorship of the MIMICO Environmental Excellence Awards," says Rex Davies, MIMICO's Managing Director. "I'm pleased to see the high calibre of entries this year and I'd like to congratulate all the winners."*