

GIPPSLAND ENTREPRENEURS LEADING THE WAY

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Four Gippsland entrepreneurs have been shortlisted as finalists in the 2020 Excellence in Agribusiness Awards, an industry recognition program run by Food & Fibre Gippsland. The entrepreneurs acknowledged as finalists include:

- Berry Sensation, Shady Creek
- Burra Brewing, Korumburra
- Little Bumble Wraps, Warragul
- South Gippsland Dairy, Korumburra.

The Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award is one of 15 categories that make up the Excellence in Agribusiness Awards – a program that celebrates all food and fibre sectors to recognise agribusinesses (pre and post farmgate) that have demonstrated innovation, excellence and business practices that maximise productivity and profitability.

The Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award recognises a single individual displaying entrepreneurial spirit, vision and innovation to develop and drive a unique and successful thriving service, business, product or outcome.

A fine example of a passionate Gippsland entrepreneur is Laura Eddington who founded Little Bumble Wraps in Warragul and is a subsequent finalist in the category. Laura Eddington, Founder & Director of Little Bumble said *"a key strategy for sustaining our rapid growth has been to stay nimble as a business and to stay connected to our customers and focus on solving their problems. This has more crucial now than ever and has helped us to thrive during turbulent conditions."*

On being named a finalist in the Excellence in Agribusiness Awards she added *"We are on cloud from being selected as finalists, it's an absolute honour."*

Little Bumble Wraps have revolutionised fresh food storage by providing a plastic free alternative that significantly reduces the 10-billion-dollar food wastage crisis in Australia.

Utilising a blend of beeswax, a by-product of honey, natural plant oils and cotton fabric they manufacture premium reusable food wraps that keep food fresher for significantly longer. Established in 2017 Little Bumble experienced rapid growth that has seen them employ up to nine employees and move to a commercial premises with over 100 stockists nationwide.

They have begun partial automation and are now exporting to Singapore. By implementing several pivots since March this year, they have experienced an online growth of 300% compared to last year and have defined themselves in the industry as leaders, being mentioned as food wrap stars by Choice.

Kate Wallis, Executive Agribusiness Manager at the Commonwealth Bank and category sponsor of the Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award said *"Our organisation is really proud to support the Excellence in Agribusiness Awards as we love seeing all the Gippsland entrepreneurs within our region celebrated."*

Her colleague Donna Krzanic added *"The Award winner will have great knowledge in not only innovation but also Gippsland as a region. We see this winner being fresh, innovative, creative, passionate, motivated and having a general desire to succeed."*

MEDIA RELEASE

Excellence Awards Program Manager Kate Gunn is pleased with the incredible lineup of finalists.

“These Awards are an important vehicle for recognising success, sharing achievements and inspiring others in our region. The entrepreneurs shortlisted are shaping the future of Gippsland. We need to tell their stories and position Gippsland’s food & fibre sector as leaders in the country and beyond. Because quite simply, that’s what they are.”

Deputy Judge of the Awards program, Stuart Quigley, was impressed with all finalists in this particular category noting *“Each of the finalists have demonstrated the ability to think out of the box and to bring new ideas to market through a combination of clever technology and innovative business models/ value chains. They are all excellent examples of innovative Gippslanders' who are passionate about the food and fibre sector and prepared to back themselves. For some they have been able to demonstrate an ability to pivot their business models rapidly when confronted with the Covid 19 pandemic this year.”*

The winners of the Excellence in Agribusiness Awards will be announced at an event scheduled for 20 November 2020. With ongoing COVID-19 restrictions still likely to impact the ability to stage a large scale gala presentation dinner, organisers are working on an engaging online event to celebrate and showcase the Award winners.

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Image attached: Laura Eddington and her team at Little Bumble Wrap, finalist of Excellence in Entrepreneurship. (Photo credit: StartUp Gippsland)

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