

## Fitness New Zealand Recognised for Outstanding Leadership

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**FROM: Fitness New Zealand and The New Zealand Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)**

**Fitness New Zealand have been awarded the prestigious 2013 Australian Fitness Network Inspiration Award for outstanding leadership and contribution to the fitness industry in the wake of the Christchurch earthquake**

It has been over two years since the Christchurch earthquakes, but even now we are hearing new stories of resilience and support from businesses and organisations in the time immediately after the quake, and in the redevelopment of business from then until now.

It is cause for celebration that Fitness New Zealand's community efforts have been acknowledged by being awarded the **2013 Inspiration Award** by the Australian Fitness Network at their annual conference in Sydney. The award was presented to Fitness New Zealand for outstanding leadership and contribution to the fitness industry in the wake of the Christchurch earthquakes.

For many at the Australian awards ceremony, it was their first time to hear about the devastation from those who were in Christchurch, but also for many more, it was the first time hearing about how Fitness New Zealand, and the New Zealand Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs), stepped up in the days following the earthquake and in the time since.

In presenting the award, Ryan Hogan of the Australian Fitness Network spoke of the creativity, ingenuity and spirit seen in the wake of the earthquake, and in the efforts to re-establish the fitness industry in the months and years afterwards.

Within a few days of the first earthquake in September 2010, many of the cities fitness facilities opened their doors to allow the people in Christchurch access to showers, a luxury for many who were without water or power at the time.

Following the devastating February 2011 earthquake, Fitness New Zealand quickly realised that most of the fitness facilities in Christchurch were out of action, or destroyed beyond repair. This left many personal trainers and fitness instructors without a home base, support and income and without future earning potential. The team at Fitness New Zealand and REPs stepped in quickly to create and support a number of initiatives that helped at that time, and are still contributing to the growth and development of the industry in Christchurch.

Areas of particular recognition, which the Australian Fitness Network acknowledged, were:

- PT in the Park which was an initiative which provided free exercise sessions run by REPs Registered Trainers, to support the people of Christchurch to have some time out from the stresses of the earthquakes, and a chance to get back into the normality of exercise. These free sessions are still running.
- Fight Back Friday free seminars for those working in fitness to help them dealing with post quake trauma, and help on how to set up business without a facility.
- Using their networks, Fitness NZ masterminded an extremely successful fundraising campaign to assist Christchurch based trainers get back on their feet.
- A 'match making' service connecting facilities that were still operating, with affected trainers who needed space to keep running their business.

Fitness New Zealand also offered free use of their own offices and facilities for affected exercise professionals and facilities to send email, make phone calls, photocopying etc. to help fitness facilities and trainers keep operating and supporting their clients after the earthquake. Fitness New Zealand and REPs also provided important support in the way of meetings, phones calls, and other communications to ensure affected exercise professionals and facilities were supported and not left feeling isolated during the challenging times after the earthquakes.

In accepting the award, Fitness NZ CEO Richard Beddie acknowledged the many people in the industry who had helped with all the initiatives that supported the people of Christchurch. While speaking later of this support Richard said; "It was, and still is, very much appreciated, and a reminder to us all how of how fantastic this industry is to work in".

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