



MEDIA RELEASE – For immediate release

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Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year 2012 announced

Reknowned for taking New Zealand film to the world, Sir Richard Taylor of Wellington, has been named the *Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year 2012* at a glittering Awards gala in Auckland last night attended by 500 guests.

Sir Richard Taylor who was presented his Award by the Governor General, His Excellency The Rt. Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, has set a shining example by being a global player in the international movie industry, but decidedly choosing to base himself in New Zealand.

Richard Taylor is an extraordinary New Zealander who demonstrates exceptional achievements whilst remaining true to his Kiwi values. His company Weta, is a huge success, employing well over 1000 people and with annual revenues in the hundreds of millions per annum. But most importantly, Richard is a passionate and articulate New Zealander, committed to this country, and committed to showing New Zealanders that we can do it here.

Despite his enormous list of Hollywood successes and multiple Oscars, the work he is most proud of is the TV series "Jane and the Dragon", whose message is "girls can do anything". He has a strong vision for New Zealand as a place of talent where we develop and earn from our own intellectual property.

Sir Richard was selected from a shortlist of exceptional Kiwis, including finalists Dame Suzie Moncrieff, creative visionary, arts educator and founder of the internationally recognised World of Wearable Arts, and Dr Sharad Paul, a medical doctor who's Skin Surgery Clinic in Auckland gives free skin cancer checks and who also funds literacy programs in low decile Auckland schools.

Award's patron Jim Bolger said that "Sir Richard is an outstanding New Zealander who has brought amazing creativity to the world of movies and has won admiration across the world. He richly deserves to be named New Zealander of the Year."

Other inspirational Kiwis were honoured as winners in the other four categories at the awards presentation:

- Malcolm Cameron from Dunedin, named the *Countdown Senior New Zealander of the Year* for dedicating his life to establishing a successful youth development Trust.
- Sam Johnson, from Christchurch, named the *Coca-Cola Amatil Young New Zealander of the Year* for his work establishing and leading the Student Volunteer Army in the aftermath of the Canterbury quakes and other disasters.
- Henare O'Keefe from Hastings, awarded the *Kiwibank Local Heroes Award* for his extraordinary work with at-risk youth and family violence prevention.
- The Paeroa Community, given the *Mitre 10 Community of the Year Award* for their outstanding community development achievements.

The Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards honour the contributions of remarkable individuals, organisations and community groups throughout New Zealand who inspire us through their commitment, hard work and achievement.

"The special thing that unifies all the nominees is that they make you feel proud to be a New Zealander, and none more so than Sir Richard. He has demonstrated amazing innovation, imagination and technological skill. Truly inspirational", Kiwibank CEO Paul Brock said.

Last year's Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year winner was one of New Zealand's most highly respected scientists, Sir Paul Callaghan who shared his vision for New Zealand with the audience in a poignant video presentation.

Entertainment highlights of the Awards presentation included surprise special guest, Lucy Lawless performing with big band, Tuxedo Swing and the chart topping Babysitters Circus led by OPSHOP's Jason Kerrison performing their as yet unreleased new single.

The five award winners who were announced from a list of three finalists in each category were initially selected and judged from hundreds of nominations made by the New Zealand public during 2011. Each winner received a custom made New Zealand trophy and \$5,000 towards their work from principal sponsor Kiwibank.

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Notes to editors:

- **Awards website www.nzawards.org.nz (full profiles on each winner & finalist)**
- **To request interviews, photography or for more information about the awards and winners please contact:**

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