

## **Ambitious Australian Initiatives Win Huge Cash Prizes at Ethical Enterprise Conference**

The winners of the highly-anticipated Ethical Enterprise Award were announced yesterday at Moral Fairground's Ethical Enterprise Conference held at Melbourne University.

Winners Kokonut Pacific, a radically innovative social enterprise, were ecstatic to receive the \$10,000 cash prize from Australian Ethical Investment, for their work with rural populations in tropical countries to help better lives by improving utilisation of coconuts, through the production and sale of Virgin Coconut Oil.

"Kokonut Pacific have already shown a rich history of true and deep-seeded impact, so we were delighted to award them first prize," said Moral Fairground's Founder, Susanna Bevilacqua.

"We were blown away by the quality of all applicants and the high level of innovation and impact they displayed," said Bevilacqua.

Second prize, of \$7,000 donated by Lush Australia, was awarded to i=change, a cause marketing platform for e-commerce, where brands give back, and customers choose where it goes and can track the impact in real-time.

Third prize received a ticket to the Trusted Negotiator Bootcamp and six one-on-one coaching sessions to help them unlock value and build trust with their key stakeholders, valued at a total of \$6,000.

This was awarded to VOPO Earth, a wilderness impact adventure company who designs immersive and challenging remote experiences that support community-based sustainability projects.

"Trying to narrow it down to three award-winning initiatives was a challenge, but it's inspiring and impressive to see Australia's growing interest and passion for ethical enterprise," said Chief Customer Officer of Australian Ethical Investment, Allyson Lowbridge.

The winners were announced as part of Moral Fairground's annual Ethical Enterprise Awards Dinner, hosted by University of Melbourne.

The conference brought together a diverse group of industry trailblazers, thought-leaders, budding changemakers and more, to discuss issues around this year's theme of 'future proofing businesses with purpose to ensure sustainable growth and impact'.

“We were extremely proud to host a mix of startups and larger Australian brands, and provide them with the tools to predict and manage future trends, explore new possibilities, expand boundaries and ensure successful businesses of today transition seamlessly into the thriving enterprises of tomorrow,” said Ben Neville, Associate Professor, Faculty of Business & Economics Director, Asia Pacific Social Impact Centre.

“We’re already looking forward to 2019 and watching Australian enterprises continue to thrive on a global scale.”

## **ENDS**

Media are invited to attend the awards on Thursday 25 October at: 6pm (winners announced at 6:50pm), Woodward Conference Centre, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, Melbourne Law (Building 106), Melbourne University, 185 Pelham St, Carlton, VIC, 3053. Please get in touch to advise if you intend on attending.

More information, high-res images or interviews, please get in touch with Skye Vadas at TOWNHALL on 0451 959 909 or [hello@townhallpeople.com](mailto:hello@townhallpeople.com)

### **Kokonut Pacific**

Kokonut Pacific, based in Queanbeyan East in New South Wales, was formed as a for-profit social enterprise with the philosophy of "trade, not aid". When Kokonut Pacific started in 1994, there was no virgin coconut oil industry, nor fair-trade or organic certification for coconut oil. They designed a radically innovative virgin coconut oil production process. This process empowers remote tropical coastal villages by enhancing their financial returns from the remarkably sustainable coconut resource. Over 400 presses have been sold globally, and Kokonut Pacific is completing the full value chain for virgin coconut oil in the Solomon Islands. <http://www.kokonutpacific.com.au/>

### **i=Change**

i=Change, based in Cremorne in Victoria, makes it simple for online retailers to give back to best-practice women and girls' development projects, and turns their brand purpose into a meaningful customer experience with every purchase. From an idea at 3am five years ago, i=Change has partnered with almost 60 online retailers and has raised over \$780,000, positively impacting the lives of over 240,000 women and girls in 14 countries. i=Change exists to build the capacity of best-practice NGOs to deliver outcomes focused on health, wellbeing, safety and development of women and girls globally. <https://www.iequalchange.com/>

### **VOPO**

VOPO is an organisation based in Wurtulla in Queensland, with a mission to safeguard Earth's remaining wilderness and empower remote underserved communities. VOPO meticulously designs immersive and challenging remote travel experiences that support community-based sustainability projects. They partner with NGOs and community groups to develop locally-owned social enterprises and waste management solutions to support the growth of sustainable industries through eco-experiences. Destinations are chosen based on factors including prevalence of pollution, risk of immediate effects of climate change, and economic dependence on unsustainable industries. <https://vopo.earth/>