

Girls grab business gold

Australian Olympic team coach Laurie Lawrence has awarded a “gold medal” for motivational excellence to eight small businesses from around Australia following a nationwide search in which businesswomen were prominent.

The Telstra Business “Go For Business Gold” competition was designed to find outstanding motivators among the country’s two-million-plus small to medium businesses and culminated in two events in Sydney in July.

Entrants were asked to submit a brief video online or written summary that showed how they excelled at motivating staff, themselves or their customers. Half the finalist businesses were owned or managed by women.

A winner from each state and territory won a visit from an Olympian or Paralympian after the London Olympic Games, as well as PR and marketing support, plus a load of other prizes.

Finalists attended an exclusive small business Master Class in Sydney with leaders in business management and marketing.

They then spent a night networking at an Olympic-themed Business Gold function at the Museum of Contemporary Art with Telstra Australian Business Award winners and other business experts.

The event was MC’d by Brooke Hanson, a mum, TV host and Olympic swimmer.

The diversity and quality of finalists were major talking points. The successful businesses represented by women included:

- **Canberra Furnished Accommodation**, an ACT company established in 2003 by Laurie McDonald. While on maternity leave Laurie furnished and rented her investment property and seeing the demand for the short-term stay property in the Capital, she soon added another rental property and applied the same formula. The business grew to offer 40 properties in central Canberra and Laurie now has a business manager and up to five employees.
- **Magic Browbands**, which is based in Bakers Hill in regional Western Australia and produces show horse browbands and a range of other equine related accessories. This is a business that started as a hobby but has continued to grow. Owner Melody Semmler operates online and handmakes elegant show browbands to full-on ‘bling’ articles.
- Electronics engineering firm, **Novaris**, which is also the 2012 Tasmanian Telstra Business Awards Medium Business of the Year, which was represented by director and

co-founder Diane Tompson.

- Innovative Darwin personal training company **HGFitness**, which is run by triathlete and former soldier Hollie Goodall. Laurie Lawrence judged the eight winning entries and was video-conferenced into the function via high speed Telstra broadband from London, where he was working with the Australian team in the Olympic village.

“It was a tough job selecting winners from the finalists but they were all worthy,” Laurie said.

“As a small businessperson with a couple of swimming schools, I know that to be successful in small business, you’ve got to put the hours in. The same applies in elite sport.

“Telstra Business Go For Business Gold has been a fantastic way for small businesses to get into the Olympic spirit and also share their motivations and learn along the way.”

Group Managing Director of Telstra Business, Will Irving, said “Go For Business Gold” was one of the ways Telstra celebrated the successes of small business.

“Every one of the finalists in Sydney showed the passion, energy and creativity that typifies the best Australian businesses,” Mr Irving said. 



Penelope Hyde of Canberra Furnished Accommodation, Brooke Hanson and Laurie McDonald of Canberra Furnished Accommodation



John Bonnicioli, Brooke Hanson, Hollie Goodall of HGFitness, Helen Wilson (Guest of Hollie’s) and David Coventry



Brooke Hanson, Melody Semmler of Magic Browbands and David Coventry



John Bonnicioli, Executive Director of Small Business Sales and Service for Telstra Business; Brooke Hanson, Olympian and emcee of the event; Diane Tompson of Novaris; Matthew Turner of Novaris; and David Coventry, Executive Director of Assigned Sales for Telstra Business.