

Her Businesswoman of the Year 2012

We congratulate the highly deserving winners of the Her Businesswoman of the Year awards



Her Businesswoman of the Year 2012 & Best SME: Cecilia Robinson

Cecilia Robinson started Au Pair Link in 2007 at the age of 21, and has since gone from strength to strength. Au Pair Link is now Australasia's largest Au Pair agency and was the first Au Pair agency in the world to become licensed through the Ministry of Education as a home-based service.

Today Au Pair Link is the 5th (out of 300 licensed services) largest home-based Early Childhood Education provider in New Zealand and by the end of the FY 12/13 it aims to be ranked number 3.

"It is truly an honour to accept these awards and I want to thank the judges and Her Business for their support. I also want to congratulate the other finalists – who are outstanding leaders and business women in their own right. I have the privilege of working in a business that has the most dynamic, driven and passionate group of individuals and this award is not only a recognition of me but the entire Au Pair Link team. Our team believe in our concept and put their hearts and souls into the ongoing success of the company. Personally, this award means a lot to me as it recognises the journey that Au Pair Link has

undertaken in the last five years – from winning 'Best New Business' in 2009' to winning the 'Businesswoman of the Year' in 2012."

Due to contracts with the Ministry of Education Au Pairs can access the best supported Au Pair programme in the world and Host Families can feel confident that their Au Pair is supported in educating their children. Au Pair Link has established key partnerships with the world's largest and most accredited Au Pair providers to ensure quality and integrity across its service. Through its partnerships, Au Pairs are the best screened in the world and must meet rigorous screening and training criteria.

Au Pair Link was the first Au Pair agency in Australasia to become a full member of the International Au Pair Association. Cecilia was also nominated for the board in March 2010 in recognition of her work and commitment to the Au Pair industry. In an effort to raise industry standards in New Zealand, Cecilia also founded the New Zealand Au Pair Association in 2008. Cecilia remained the Chairperson of the Association until June 2011.

Au Pair Link has lead and re-shaped the New Zealand Au Pair market through working alongside the Department of Labour and other authorities. Through its commitment to the industry, Au Pair wages now meet international guidelines and have increased by on average 75% in the past five years.

Now 27-years-old with her first child on the way (due in August) Cecilia's business has grown to employing 35 individuals in eight regions throughout New Zealand.

"Our vision is to become the world's largest Au Pair agency and New Zealand's largest Home Based Early Childhood Education provider. Au Pair Link will be viewed as an innovative and high achieving industry leader in the Early Childhood Education sector and the international student/youth work and travel markets, by our customers, Government departments, our suppliers, our competitors and our staff."

Cecilia joins past Her Businesswoman of the Year winners including Cilla Hegarty of NZ Tax Refunds Ltd, Brigit Blair of Linden Leaves, Peri Drysdale of Snowy Peak Ltd, and the event's current organiser, Stretton Group CEO, Annah Stretton.

"I would recommend anyone who wants to challenge themselves and their business to enter the awards. Being part of the awards means that you get to bench mark your business against other businesses that are a similar size and have had a similar journey. Au Pair Link was a finalist in the 'Her Business Awards' in 2010 – however did not win any of the awards. In 2011 we took a step back and decided to allow our company to have another year of significant growth prior to entering the awards in 2012. We have thoroughly enjoyed this journey and would recommend everyone to enter the awards."

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