



**MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT**

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**Fone Zone Reigns Supreme as Australia's Best Retailer**

Fone Zone has retained its crown as Australia's best retailer for the second consecutive year, receiving the prestigious Supreme Reward at the National Retail Association (NRA) Rewards for Excellence.

Fone Zone received the Supreme Reward for Best Retailer in recognition of its market leadership in the highly competitive telecommunications industry and for its innovative approach to sales and emphasis on customer service and staff development.

Fone Zone Chief Operating Officer, Maxine Horne, who was honoured with an individual achievement award, was elated that Fone Zone had been recognised across the board with awards in four categories.

"Fone Zone's success at the NRA Rewards for Excellence is especially rewarding for our 800 employees because without their dedication to customer service, Fone Zone would not be the strong company that it is today," Ms Horne said.

"It is Fone Zone's vision to be the top mobile communication specialist in by providing outstanding service to our customers and giving our team members a rewarding career path. Receiving the Supreme Award two years running shows us that we are achieving that goal."

Fone Zone also received the Award for Innovation in Retail and the Training and HR Award.

The Innovation in Retail award was presented for the company's CARE (Customers Are Really Everything) Program, an innovative and progressive customer service initiative aimed at providing excellent value, service and advice to Fone Zone customers.

The Training and HR category was awarded to Fone Zone for their ground-breaking HR and training programs, particularly for their myTeam benefit program launched in July last year, which comprises a range of industry-leading benefits including child care subsidies of up to 50%, baby bonuses of \$1,000, up to one weeks' additional paid leave for getting married and annual long-service bonuses of up to \$5,000, to name a few.

The NRA Rewards for Excellence is considered one of the retail industry's premier accolades and is designed to recognise outstanding Australian retailers and to promote the pursuit of excellence in retailing.

Maxine Horne said Fone Zone appreciated the retail industry's recognition of Fone Zone's innovative approach to retailing.

"We've never gone out of our way to win awards for the way we do business," she said. "It has always been our priority to look after our two most important assets – our customers and our team – to the highest possible standard and every team member has played a role in Fone Zone again receiving the Supreme Award."

Fone Zone's swag of awards comes hot on the heels of Maxine Horne winning Australian winning CEO of the Year at the Customer Service Institute of Australia's 2005 Australia Service Excellence Awards in May.

Ms Horne: "The telecommunications industry in is extremely competitive, however we continue to grow at a phenomenal rate because we understand that if we look after our customers, they will look after us," she said.

“The fact that our customer service program is the acronym for Customers Are Really Everything conveys our belief that without customers, we wouldn’t be in business.

“We see excellent customer service as the main differentiating factor between Fone Zone and our competitors and the extensive training our team members receive throughout their career with us ensures we maintain our high standards and reputation.”

Over the past five years, Fone Zone has been recognised as a business and retail leader by some of the country’s most prestigious industry and media organisations in the retail, telecommunications and business communities, winning over 20 awards in recent years.

Ms Horne said that although Fone Zone has been twice awarded the highest accolade in the retail industry, the company would not rest on its laurels, rather will be inspired to achieve even greater levels of excellence.

“Although we see the Supreme, Innovation in Retail and the HR and Training Awards as recognition of our efforts so far, we will continue to strive to make sure we retain our position as industry leaders,” Ms Horne said.

“Our CARE program continues to evolve and we are constantly adding, reviewing and updating it as a result of customer research, employee feedback and annual assessments.

“By approaching every aspect of our business with the same attitude of responding to the needs of our customers and team members so that we never stagnate, we believe Fone Zone will stay on top of the mobile telecommunications industry in Australia.”

Fone Zone was selected from a field of 180 nominees Australia-wide. The awards were presented in a ceremony at Star City in Sydney on Saturday night.

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