



**Veuve Clicquot
BUSINESS WOMAN
AWARD**

**THE VEUVE CLICQUOT BUSINESS WOMAN AWARD
2012 FINALISTS ANNOUNCED**

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The judges of the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award today announced the Australian shortlist for the **Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award 2012**, bringing together five shining examples of female entrepreneurship and business success across sectors ranging from fashion to food to industrial products. The finalists are:

- **Lorna-Jane Clarkson**, Founder and Creative Director, Lorna Jane
- **Elena Gosse**, Director and Company Secretary, Australian Innovation Systems
- **Ronni Kahn**, Founder and CEO, OzHarvest
- **Kris Lloyd**, CEO and Head Cheesemaker, Woodside Cheese Wrights
- **Maryanne Shearer**, CEO, T2

Regarded as the ‘Oscar’ of female entrepreneurs and business leaders, the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award, now in its **40th year**, is held in **16 countries** and is the first international award created specifically to recognise the contribution that women have made to business life. In addition to the financial results and commercial success of the nominees, judges around the world take into consideration a number of other important factors such as each business’s commitment to the community, employees and the environment.

The Australian winner of the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award 2012 will be announced on **International Women’s Day, Thursday 8 March, 2012**, at a lunch attended by 100 of the country’s most influential businesswomen. The winner will receive return business class travel to Reims, France, to join past and present laureates from other countries at the Annual Veuve Clicquot International Businesswomen's Forum, where a vine will be christened in her name. Each year on Madame Clicquot’s birthday, she will receive a gift of La Grande Dame champagne.

The Australian judging panel comprises: Chairman of John Holland Group **Janet Holmes à Court AC**; The Honourable Justice **Annabelle Bennett AO**; Director of Marketing and Special Events for Consolidated Press Holdings, **Deeta Colvin**; Group General Manager of Pacific Brands, **Colette Garnsey**; Director, Paspaley Pearls Group, **Marilynne Paspaley AM**; Chief Country Officer of Citi Australia, **Stephen Roberts**; Managing Director of Moët Hennessy Australia, **Boris de Vroomen**; and Managing Director and Chief Executive of Graincorp Limited, **Alison Watkins**.

Janet Holmes à Court, Chairman of the Award, commented: “This year, on the 40th international anniversary of the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award, the finalists are an extraordinary group, all leaders and true innovators in their chosen fields who conduct their businesses in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. They are an inspiration to other female entrepreneurs, and to us all. Every one of them would be a worthy winner of the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award.”

The Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award was established in France in 1972 to commemorate Madame Clicquot, the legendary founder of Veuve Clicquot, and to honour women who also possess her qualities of vision, innovation, entrepreneurial drive, leadership, individuality and tenacity.

For further information on the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award 2012, please visit www.veuveclicquotaward.com.au.

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THE VEUVE CLICQUOT
BUSINESS WOMAN AWARD 2012
FINALISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

LORNA JANE CLARKSON, Founder and Creative Director, Lorna Jane

Lorna Jane Clarkson is the Founder and Creative Director of Australian activewear label Lorna Jane.

Lorna first began making gym clothes while working full-time as a dental therapist, driven by her frustration with the limited range of fashionable exercise clothing available on the market. As demand for her stylish designs grew, Lorna saw that fitness fashion was her calling, so she moved to Brisbane and began working as an aerobics instructor, sharing her fashionable yet functional clothing range with people in her classes. Lorna quickly realised that she had stumbled upon an important niche market, as people started to notice her designs and demand grew rapidly. Before long, Lorna had moved from her small backroom studio to a large warehouse in order to meet the demand and with husband Bill Clarkson by her side, Lorna launched the label's first retail store in the heart of Brisbane's CBD in 1990.

Since then, Lorna has grown her business to 120 stores nationwide and overseas, with further expansion scheduled for 2012. The fitness-inspired brand has grown to include gym and sportswear, yoga and lifestyle clothing, intimates and accessories, and Lorna Jane has become a household name synonymous with active living. As an advocate for women's health and wellbeing, Lorna has developed a brand which inspires the women of Australia to live actively. Lorna lives her life by three principles: Move, Nourish, Believe. She aims to move her body every day, nourish from the inside out with nutritious food, and believe in herself and that anything is possible if you work hard enough. Lorna has implemented this philosophy and encourages all women to follow these three principles in order to live their best life.

Highlights of Lorna's career include opening her first retail store, winning numerous RAQ Fashion Design awards, showcasing her collections at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival and the opening of the group's 100th Lorna Jane store. With international expansion already underway, Lorna Jane's 21st birthday sees the organisation continue its impressive growth and further secure its enviable position as industry leader in the fitness category.

ELENA GOSSE, Director and Company Secretary, Australian Innovation Systems

Elena Gosse is the Director and Company Secretary of Australian Innovation Systems, a company specializing in chlorinators and water treatment.

Elena began her career in the 80s as an actress in her home country of Russia, where she started one of the country's first private entertainment companies, 'Kamerton'. The early 90's was a tumultuous period for Elena: in 1992 she separated from her husband of eight years, and her youngest daughter was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. The following year, she emigrated to Australia with a new husband and her two daughters, no social network and a poor grasp of English.

Since arriving in Australia, Elena has put herself through English school and university and now speaks fluent English and holds a Bachelor degree in Business Accounting. In 2000, Elena and her husband acquired Australian Innovative Systems (AIS), Queensland manufacturers of chlorinators, chlorine generators, activated anodes and spare parts for the swimming pool and alkali industries. Specialising in manufacturing of electrolyses systems for residential and commercial water disinfection, AIS has established itself as a world force in cost effective, eco-friendly water treatment innovation.

In her current role as Director and Company Secretary of AIS, Elena has successfully grown a humble team of three into 63, and driven the company to achieve outstanding international success. Elena has developed a high performing business culture and strategies, channeled investment into R & D, grown talent, empowered and enabled implementation while overseeing PR and financial management. Elena has led the company through many historical changes including broadening AIS's focus from the swimming pool industry, its specialisation for almost two decades, to the more lucrative and future-proof area of commercial water treatment.

Elena shares her skills and success via her various voluntary roles including lifestyle, business and career mentoring. She is the former President of the Queensland Russian Community Centre, member of the Rotary International, and an avid supporter of organisations empowering women.

RONNI KAHN, Founder and CEO, OzHarvest

Ronni Kahn is the founder and CEO of Ozharvest, a not-for-profit organization that collects and delivers surplus food to charities.

Ronni was born and schooled in South Africa, migrating to Australia with her family in 1988. She went on to establish a successful twenty year career in the events industry and ran her own events company, Ronni Kahn Event Designs (RKED). In her event business, Ronni was stunned by the amount of food she observed being wasted by the hospitality industry and she decided to do something about it. In 2004, she created OzHarvest, a food rescue organisation based on a model that she found in the USA.

In its first month, OzHarvest delivered 4,000 meals to fourteen shelters using one van. OzHarvest now delivers over 330,000 meals each month, saving 120 tonnes of good food per month from going to waste. It uses a fleet of fourteen vans delivering to 398 charities across Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle, Canberra and more recently in Adelaide and Brisbane. Since its inception, over ten million meals have been delivered to women, children and men in need.

OzHarvest rescues its food daily from restaurants, cafes, hotels, retailers and food outlets throughout these cities then delivers this food (including fresh food, pre-prepared meals, fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and seafood products and packaged food) to its charities around Australia. Through Ronni's perseverance, the law has been changed in New South Wales, the ACT, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia to ensure that food donors are safe from liability. OzHarvest has had a profound impact on the environment by saving thousands of tonnes of food from landfill (over 4,000 tonnes annually), and on clients of charities who are able to eat quality, nutritious food. In 2011, Ronni also found a way to assist and teach communities and individuals in rural Australia to set up their own food rescue service, with the introduction of a regional food rescue program, REAP.

In 2010, Ronni was recognised as Australia's Local Hero as part of the Australian of the Year Awards.

KRIS LLOYD, CEO and Head Cheesemaker, Woodside Cheese Wrights

Kris Lloyd is CEO and Head cheese maker of Woodside Cheese Wrights, a specialist cheese maker of goat and cow cheeses.

With a background in marketing, Kris took over the business in 1999 and one day said to her cheese makers, "Show me how to make cheese". Kris is now the CEO and Head Cheesemaker, supported by a passionate team who produce cheeses to traditional methods and who have introduced innovative packaging and presentation as well as pioneering a range of cheeses to take advantage of seasonal variations in milk supply. She works closely with chefs around Australia to develop cheeses exclusively for their menus.

Woodside Cheese Wrights produces around 70 tonnes per annum of fresh, white mould and matured cheeses, with distribution throughout Australia and export to the Philippines. It employs a team of around fifteen people including cheese makers and cellar door operations. Kris grew the business fourfold over the years 2002 to 2004 and continues to expand the business year on year. Woodside Cheese Wrights has won numerous cheese awards throughout Australia, including the Grand Dairy Award in 2004, and has won the South Australian Premiers Food Award both for innovation and excellence in small business in 2002, 2005, 2006 and 2007. Woodside Cheese Wrights was awarded gold medals at the World Cheese Awards in 2008, 2009 and 2011.

In 2004 Kris established the South Australian Specialist Cheese Association "CheeseSA" to promote specialty cheese and introduce industry driven education and training programs in South Australia. Kris is currently the Chair of the association and also the Chair of CheeseFest, Australasian Alfresco Cheese Festival, a Board member of the Dairy Industry Development Board and The Premiers Food Council. In 2010, Kris was also appointed as one of the Board of Directors for the South Australian Tourism Commission and in 2011, she was awarded the Adelaide Food Legend award for her commitment to the South Australian food industry. Kris continues to be involved in many aspects of cheese and food in South Australia, writes a monthly cheese column for Adelaide Review and is also working on a book.

MARYANNE SHEARER, CEO, T2

Maryanne Shearer is the founder and CEO of T2, a leading tea retailer with the largest range of teas and tea-wares in Australia.

Maryanne began her career working in fashion and interiors, where she held creative positions and honed her skills in product development and visual merchandising. It was whilst working in her own homewares company, over a steaming cup of tea, that the idea for T2 was born. An avid tea drinker at a time when coffee was exploding, Shearer realised there was a gap in the market for a new retail experience in the tea category. She realised there was an opportunity to apply her background in fashion to give tea a modern edge; to re-invent it to appeal to a new generation of tea drinkers.

Maryanne opened the first T2 store in Brunswick Street Fitzroy in 1996. It was a brand new concept, set against a conservative market that previously knew only supermarket tea bags. Through T2, Maryanne pioneered a unique educational retail concept, with in-store daily tea tastings, a table filled with a wide range of T2 teas in open canisters and a team of staff who encouraged customers to smell, taste, touch and compare the different ingredients and aromas of the teas.

T2 is now a leading tea retailer, with the largest range of teas and tea-wares in Australia. With over 30 stores and 300 employees, it has in addition a successful wholesale division which co-ordinates the sale of teas into some of the country's best cafés, restaurants and hotels. Maryanne has created an innovative brand, a new retail category and a new approach to selling.

Maryanne believes that success depends on constant reinvention, and she travels regularly so she can bring fresh eyes and new ideas to the business. She has also adopted an aggressive digital strategy that has seen the business grow rapidly. Expansion internationally is next, with Europe and Asia firmly in her sights. Maryanne has a very strong interest in wellbeing, health and nutrition, and has a fulfilling family life, with a partner and three children – twin boys who are 10, and a girl who is 11.