

AUSTRALIAN MORTGAGE AWARDS

CELEBRATING THE INDUSTRY'S STANDOUTS

After a challenging year for broking, the 16th annual Australian Mortgage Awards on 27 October was a night to forget the hardships and set aside the to-do lists to celebrate the best brokers in the industry and the top-notch service they provide. Here are some of the industry's stars

SIMON ORBELL



FBAA Broker of the Year – Independent

DIRECTOR & SENIOR MORTGAGE ADVISOR, SMARTMOVE

SIMON Orbell was outside the awards ballroom congratulating and celebrating his colleague Misa Huynh when the award he was nominated for was being presented. He rushed back in just in the nick of time as he was being announced as the winner.

He was totally shocked and stunned; after all, he had been nominated for this category so many times before he'd nearly lost count (somewhere around eight or nine times). "After having that happen so many times, you just don't expect to have your name read out," he said. "I only just got back in the room as they were announcing the last three finalists, so it was a complete shock – number one that I'd nearly missed the whole thing, and number two that my name was read out."

By Monday morning, it still hadn't

totally sunk in. "Getting to the office today, everyone's been so complimentary and congratulating me, but it still doesn't feel real at the moment to be honest," he said.

Orbell said the award meant a lot to him because it was recognition of the effort that he'd put in, as well as the commitment and support that his family, colleagues and clients had invested in him.

"It's just lovely to be recognised, and there's a real sense of pride as well. I get a real sense of pride to be named in such a prestigious environment," he said.

Orbell made sure his awards application this year included more testimonials from customers and industry participants, and he backed that commentary up with data. He

believes that having those voices in there might have made the difference with the judges this year.

As for where things go from here, he says nothing from a day-to-day perspective will change. "It will just provide new and existing clients with the reinforcement of how we do things and how we go about things, and it will also allow any new team members that are hoping to join our team to know that they're joining an operation that believes heavily in training, believes heavily in the customer, and it will give them the confidence that we're the right place for them from a long-term career perspective."



MISA HUYNH



ING Young Gun of the Year – Independent

MORTGAGE ADVISOR, SMARTMOVE

MISA Huynh came to Australia as an overseas student from Vietnam with very limited English. She was alone and knew no one. She never would have imagined that on 27 October 2017 she would be celebrated for being the best young independent broker in the country, a career she once knew nothing about.

"It's huge. It means everything to me. It showed me that hard work pays off," she said.

Huynh started working at Smartmove in 2013 after getting her master's degree in accounting. She started as a mortgage documents specialist and supported Nichol Cullen, who soon became her mentor. After a year and a half under Cullen's tutelage, Cullen encouraged Huynh to become a broker herself.

"I was so freaked out. I did not grow up here, I did not have anyone, and I didn't have any friends. Where was I going to find clients?" she said.

With her mentor's assistance, Huynh was able to build her own network of clients. She's now been a broker for a year and loves what she does.

"I love my clients so much, and most of them became my friends. I love helping them and they show the love back by writing lots of Google reviews for me. Maybe the judges saw that," Huynh said.

Not only do customers rave about her, but Huynh also does good deeds outside of work. She's fundraised to support infrastructure projects in Vietnam, including the construction of a new bridge to replace a dangerous

dilapidated one that linked two towns in western Vietnam. She raised more funds than she needed, so the extra was used to build two schoolyards. Now she's looking to fund a road project in eastern Vietnam where flooding often makes it impassable.

She's incredibly modest about her volunteer work, but that's one of the things that makes Huynh more than just a good broker: she's a standout citizen.

For aspiring young guns, her advice is this: "Do everything that you feel in your heart; just go for it. I've just really dedicated my time to it and I love it so much, so do what you're passionate about and as long as you do that and you love your clients, everything else will come to you."

