



Media release

Apprentice of the Year named at national construction industry awards

Local structural steel industry serious about developing tomorrow's skilled workforce

28 October, 2023 – Queenstown – Red Steel employee Caleb Ireland has been recognised as the best apprentice in New Zealand's structural steel industry for 2023. It's the second year in a row that Napier-based Red Steel has produced an Apprentice of the Year, and the third time since the award was introduced in 2016.

Steel Construction New Zealand's (SCNZ's) Apprentice of the Year award celebrates those whose skills, drive and willingness to learn has helped them to achieve outstanding outcomes. It recognises well-rounded people who demonstrate not only talent, but display traits important to the industry – commitment, innovation and agility.

The award also reflects the industry's commitment to upskilling young members of the trade and investing in the future of the local structural steel industry.

Red Steel is committed to building a pipeline for tomorrow's skilled workforce. "Training apprentices is a must-do," says Bob Hawley, Managing Director of Red Steel. "You can't just leave it up to other companies to train. We're all finding it difficult to get skilled labour."

When awarding Ireland the title, the judges noted that he possesses maturity beyond his years and is a leader of the future.

Red Steel was impressed with Ireland's passion to develop himself. "Caleb has become a diligent and dependable employee who inspires others with his ability to learn quickly and collaborate," says Alister Varcoe, Workshop Manager of Red Steel. "He maintains a high level of quality and requires little motivation to achieve agreed deadlines, even on the most challenging of projects."

SCNZ Chair David Moore says it's pleasing to see more and more young people choosing a trade as a career path.

"People now recognise that trades offer numerous avenues for success, thanks to New Zealand's robust construction sector and growing demand for exceptional performance and delivery capability," says Moore.

“As a well-established industry we have a duty to ensure we impart our knowledge and skills to the next generation of structural steel specialists. This will safeguard the future of the sector and support our economic recovery.”

The industry is practising what it preaches. More than 10 percent of the total workforce employed by local structural steel contractors are in a training programme, and 70 percent of structural steel contractors employ an average of five apprentices.

Ends

Note to editors

High-resolution images available on request.

About SCNZ

Steel Construction New Zealand Inc. (SCNZ) aims to advance the interests of New Zealand’s diverse steel construction industry by promoting the benefits of steel solutions in building and infrastructure projects. Members include manufacturers of structural steel and steel products, distributors, fabricators, designers, detailers, galvanisers, and paint and building supply companies. SCNZ provides its members with technical advice on the latest in steel design trends and standards, networking opportunities and a representative voice with key industry and government decision-makers. For more information please visit www.scnz.org.

About Red Steel

Based in Hawke’s Bay, Red Steel provides steel structures to projects throughout New Zealand, with a particular focus on the lower North Island. The company is a member of Steel Construction NZ and an accredited member of the Steel Fabrication Certification scheme.

Media contact:

Lisa van Beurden
E. lisa@xcubed.nz
M. 0274 377 579